

Under the Dome, Week 15

Highlights of the Week

On Thursday, the General Assembly hit the 100 day mark of the 2016 legislative session. Of the 645 bills that have been introduced, 171 have been killed and the Governor has signed 147. With less than 20 days left, more than 300 bills are still awaiting final action. The House spent long mornings on the floor to pass as many bills as possible over to the Senate for consideration. On Friday, the House stayed on the floor through late in the afternoon and took action on more than 30 bills. There was extensive debate on HB 1388 (ban the box) which would prohibit private sector employers from asking about a candidate's criminal history on an initial application for employment. This would not apply to the public sector which Republicans harped on during the floor debate. House Minority Leader Brian DeGrosso also expressed concern about the negative affect this bill would have on the private sector. Sponsor Representative McCann argued that such a bill will help previous offenders become productive members of society through employment and thereby reduce recidivism. After over an hour, the bill was passed on a voice vote. It will receive a final vote Monday before it heads over to the Senate where it will likely die.

The House also considered HB 1274 by Representative Singer and Senator Ulibarri. The legislation is aimed at improving a program that provides undocumented individuals with drivers licenses. The program is currently only available in 3 DMV offices and the bill would expand the program to 9 offices. It would also clean up the section that defines which documents can be used to obtain the license. The House passed HB 1274 on a voice vote with surprisingly little discussion. Despite the long day Friday, the House has yet to take up debate on legislation to enterprise the hospital provider fee (HB 1420) or HB 1421, which allocates money to transportation, higher education, severance tax, and education in HB 1420 passes. In fact, late on Thursday, HB 1450 was introduced to take the place of HB 1421. HB 1450 is similar to HB 1421 (\$50 million to transportation, \$16.2 million to severance tax, \$40 million to education, and \$49.5 million to higher education) except it has a broader title so amendments can be added, and it specifies that the \$50 million for transportation should be spent on the following improvement projects: Highways 550 and 160 near Durango, US highway 160 from Alamosa to Durango, US highway 50 in Pueblo, state highway 13 from Rifle to Meeker, I-25 in Northern Colorado, I-25 from Monument to Castle Rock and interchange improvements from Colorado Springs to El Paso County, ports to plains corridor, north metro rail and state highway 119 bus rapid transit projects, and mudslide and rockslide prevention and mitigation in Cottonwood Canyon.

The Senate enjoyed a more relaxed week which is sure to mean they will spend next week working longer nights. The charter school funding equity package received its first test in the Senate Education Committee this week. SB 187 and SB 188 both passed the committee with bipartisan support. Parents, advocacy groups such as Democrats for Education Reform and Colorado Succeeds, as well as Denver Public Schools, Douglas County Public Schools and Mesa County Public Schools testified in support of the bill. Opponents included the Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Boards, and school districts such as Academy 20 and Brighton 27j. Both bills are headed to the Senate floor for debate. The Senate Health and Human Services extensively amended HB 1377 which originally aimed to create a task force in the Department of Human Services to examine the collection and security of digital images of evidence of child abuse and neglect. The task force is required to examine current practices by county departments of human services, best practices and safeguards concerning digital images, the

role of law enforcement and medical professionals, and to make recommendations. Amendments by the sponsor looped in other entities besides cities and counties including school districts, another that potentially restricts law enforcement's ability to conduct a thorough evaluation, and one making adjustments to definitions, which will limit the ability of the taskforce to complete their work. As a result of the amendments, organizations that supported the bill now oppose it.

The Joint Budget Committee met twice this week to discuss whether to introduce any additional bills this session. To introduce a bill as a JBC bill, all six members of the JBC have to support it. The JBC moved forward the following bills: requirements for higher education institutions who utilize the bond intercept program, a taskforce to look at potential new funding formulas for child welfare, and cyber security for Colorado. Next week, the JBC will meet for a final time to consider whether to carry a bill that would alter the state's senior homestead property tax exemption.

Bills of the Week

HOV Transponders The House Transportation Committee killed a bill this week that returned to last session's debate over public private partnerships for transportation. SB 123 would have removed a requirement for all vehicles traveling in HOV/HOT lanes to purchase a \$15 transponder. The Governor's office and transportation advocates vehemently opposed the bill, and instead CDOT agreed to end the practice of charging HOV users with 3 or more occupants as well as motorcyclists for responders. CDOT also agreed to credit those who have already purchased a transponder.

Regional Transportation Development Projects On Thursday, Senator Scott and Representatives Moreno and DelGrosso introduced legislation to help local governments take a leadership role in completing state transportation projects that have not been completed due to a lack of state and/or local funding. Under this legislation, local governments that can make a showing that commercial areas around a state highway or regional-transit system are languishing due the inadequacy of the nearby transportation system can apply to the State (CDOT) to keep a portion of the increased sales tax revenue generated within the revived commercial area to help fund those transportation improvements. SB 194 is assigned to the Senate Transportation Committee.

Ski Towns Child Care Centers Immunizations HB 1425 specifies that a licensed child care center is not required to obtain immunization records for any enrolled child that attends the center on a short-term basis which is defined as up to fifteen days and no more than twice per year with at least 60 days between 15-consecutive-day periods. Although the bill reduced immunization requirements there was no testimony in opposition to the bill. The bill was initiated by Ski Country USA. It passed the House Public Health Care Committee unanimously and passed second reading on the House floor on Friday.