

DCBA Bill Tracker:

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Under the Dome, Week 3

Highlights of the Week

The first full week of work kept legislators in the House and Senate plenty busy. Committees saw full workloads and the Joint Budget Committee continued to review and approve supplemental budget requests from state agencies to carry them through the end of the state fiscal year on June 30th. In a preview of what is expected to be a bigger budget fight during the FY 2017-18 figure setting process, the Department of Human Services request to receive General Fund monies to offset their indirect operational costs was not voted on by the JBC. The Department argues that since the Division of Vocational Rehab moved to the Department of Labor and Employment last year, they don't have enough money to pay for indirect operational costs. However, the JBC and JBC staff raised concerns that how money was spent for indirect costs lacked much needed transparency. For the FY 2017-18 budget year, the Department of Human Services is asking for money from the child welfare block grant to pay for their indirect costs. This would decrease money to the counties for the administration of child welfare services and negate money they've received over the last two years to increase child welfare caseworkers by 184 FTE statewide. Next week, the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting will have the opportunity to go before the JBC and make their case for any supplemental requests that weren't granted or no action was taken.

The infamous "kill" committee in the House and Senate – State, Veterans, and Military Affairs committee, got their first opportunities to act this week. The House State Affairs Committee took up HB 1013 which aimed to protect and enforce religious freedom Colorado. The bill is a response to the baker who refused to bake a cake for a gay couple's wedding and was brought to court for discrimination. Under the bill, the baker's choice would have been protected as religious freedom. Indiana passed a similar bill in 2015 which resulted in economic fall out for the state. After hours of testimony in support from various private citizens and in opposition from the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Anti-Defamation League, the Governor's Office among others, the bill died 3-6 on a party line vote. The Senate State Affairs Committee reviewed legislation that would increase the penalty for texting and driving – SB 027. Under Senator Court's bill the fine for texting while driving would increase from \$50 and one point assessed against your license to \$500 and five points against your license for a first offense and \$750 and 6 points assessed against your license for additional offense. After a long afternoon of emotional testimony, the Senate State Affairs Committee decided to not take action on the bill and see if amendments might make the bill more palatable to the majority of the committee.

As promised, the Senate Republicans continued to pursue a deregulation agenda with the passage of SB 043 and SB 001 out of the Senate Business, Labor, and Technology Committee this week. SB 043 removes the medical certificate requirements for individuals interested in driving for TNC's like Lyft and Uber. This move will put requirements to drive for TNCs in line with all other states and remove a large

barrier to entry in the market. The bill passed unanimously out of committee and will be considered on the Senate floor next week. SB 001, the Regulatory Relief Act of 2017, passed out of committee Wednesday with only one no vote. Friday was the annual Military Appreciation Day at the capitol. Members from all branches of the military descended on the capitol to participate.

Unfortunately, still no transportation funding bill or full package of construction defects legislation, the Senate and House leadership continue to work together on both issues working towards bi-partisan solutions.

Bills of the Week

Transparency in Direct Pay Health Care Prices In a show of bipartisanship, Senator Lundberg and Senator Aguilar are co-prime sponsors to SB 065. The legislation requires health care professionals and healthcare facilities to make available to the public the health care prices they assess directly for common health care services they provide. During the hearing before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee on Thursday, the Colorado Hospital Association, brought an amendment to ensure facilities will only post “self-pay” prices for the 50 most common DRGs and 25 most common CPT codes if there are at least 11 occurrences in a given year. With the amendment CHA supported the bill and the legislation passed out of committee unanimously. It will next be heard on the Senate floor.

Local Governments Liable for Banning Fracking Preempting possible harmful legislation to the oil and gas industry, Representative Perry Buck and Senator Tim Neville introduced HB 1124. The legislation clarifies that local governments that choose to ban hydraulic fracturing are liable to the mineral owner for the value of the mineral interest. The bill also states that local governments that enact fracking bans must compensate oil and gas operators, mineral lessees, and royalty owners for all costs, damages and losses of fair market value due to the ban. Similar legislation has been run and died in the Democrat controlled House in the past. HB 1124 is assigned to the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Marijuana Materials Resource Bank This fall the Marijuana Cost Benefit Interim Committee moved forward several different pieces of legislation including SB 025. SB 025 directs the Department of Education to create and maintain a resource bank for public schools to use without charge. The resource bank will include materials related to marijuana use. It will also provide technical assistance to schools in developing age appropriate curriculum on marijuana use. The bill sailed through the Senate Business Committee with a unanimous vote.

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