



## **Under the Dome, Week 4**

### *Highlights of the Week*

This week kicked off with both Democrats and Republicans introducing resolutions and legislation to respond to the variety of executive orders signed by President Trump in his first week of office. The House spent most of Tuesday morning debating HJR 1013: Rescind Executive Order Regarding Immigration and engaged in debate over HR 1005: Reproductive Health Care Access on Wednesday morning. At the state legislature resolutions are non-binding and are run to make a political point as they do not have the force of law. The debate remained civil though there were strong opinions and passion on both sides of the issues. Republican freshman representative Dave Williams introduced the "Colorado Politicians Accountability Act." HB 1134 creates a civil remedy against the state, a political subdivision and its elected officials for passing sanctuary city policies. It also creates a crime that can be brought against an elected official for creating a sanctuary city or town. The bill was assigned to the House State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee and isn't likely to pass the House. Immigration proponents are expected to introduce legislation in the next few weeks aimed at protecting Colorado's undocumented population.

Club 20, Action 22, and Progressive 15 all descended upon the Capitol this week to lobby legislators about issues facing Colorado's rural and frontier communities. Club 20 represents the interest of communities in Western Colorado, while Action 22 speaks for Southern Colorado, and Progressive 15 is composed of communities in northeast Colorado. Despite their geographic diversity, the number one issue they all united behind was a comprehensive statewide solution to funding for transportation. Leadership on both sides of the aisle continue to discuss potential solutions though a bill has yet to be introduced.

The JBC wrapped up their supplemental funding discussions for the current fiscal year and a handful of supplemental bills were introduced Friday night and the rest will be introduced in to the full General Assembly next week. The JBC dived into their first figure setting discussions for the FY 2017-18 budget this week as well. Next week the JBC is slated to conduct figure setting for the Department of Local Affairs, the Department of Transportation, the Office of the Governor among others. The budget must be finalized by the last week of March but the JBC can receive an extension from leadership. The only two things the legislature must complete are passing a balanced budget and a school finance act.

The Senate and House have full schedules on the docket for next week. Senator Tim Neville's legislation to prohibit employers for requiring employees to join a union is in committee Monday. Jim Smallwood's bill to repeal Connect for Health Colorado is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday along with Senator Lundberg's SB 039 which would create an income tax credit for those who contribute to scholarships or send their children to private schools. The Senate Education

committee will also take up debate SB 061 which will equalize mill levy funding for charter schools. In the House, the Education Committee will hear Representative Buckner's bill to allow parents to take leave to attend their child's parent teacher conference along with other activities. The Business Affairs Committee will consider legislation to create a tax credit for advance industries and the State Affairs committee will spent Wednesday afternoon into the evening discussing a variety of bills that will loosen current gun control laws.

### *Bills of the Week*

**Construction Defects Reform** The second bill related to construction defects was introduced on Wednesday. SB 156, supported by the Homeownership Opportunity Alliance, is sponsored by Senator Hill, Representative Wist, and Representative Saine. The bill preserves a homeowner's right to sue for faulty condominium construction, while also protecting homeowners from actions taken by their association boards. The bill does not preclude a single homeowner from pursuing legal action for allegations of construction defects against a builder. SB 156 is assigned to the Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee. There will be more bills introduced on the issue. SB 155 was also introduced by Senator Tate, Concerning the statutory definition of a construction defects. The House is expected to introduce their own set on defects bills early next weeks, as both chambers work to solve the issues driving cost and availability of affordable housing and condos units in Colorado.

**Conservation Easement Tax Credits** Freshman Representative Kimmi Lewis and Representative Jon Becker presented HB 1066 in front of the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee this week. The legislation provides that when disputing a conservation easement claim, no surety bond or other deposit is required and no interest and penalties are to accrue for both the administrative appeal process and the district court appeal process. It also specifies that a court may exercise its equitable jurisdiction to terminate a conservation easement for which a tax credit has been claimed in certain circumstances if that claim has been rejected. Conservation easement tax credits have been controversial for some time and land owners throughout Colorado have gone to the legislature to ask for help improving the system and process. This approach proved controversial however, and the bill died on a party line vote and was postponed indefinitely.

**Freedom of Speech on Higher Education Campuses** On Thursday, the Senate Education committee spent three hours listening to witness testimony in support of SB 062 by Senator Tim Neville. The bill prohibits higher education institutions from restricting a student's constitutional right to speak in any way in a public forum. It also included a provision that institutions can't impose unreasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of freedom of speech. Testimony in support came from the ACLU, college students, the Alliance Defending Freedom, along with a few college republican groups. The bill passed unanimously after an amendment was offered that exempted private colleges from the bill.

**Consumer Access to Healthcare** Senator Crowder introduced SB 151 this week. The bill puts various new requirements on health insurance carriers and most notably will prohibit a carrier from creating incentives to reduce or deny coverage authorizations or medical necessity determination. The house sponsor of the bill is Representative Ginal. The bill will be heard in the Senate Business Labor and Technology Committee.

Mary Marchun

THE CAPSTONE GROUP LLC

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[mmarchun@capstonegroupllc.com](mailto:mmarchun@capstonegroupllc.com)

1576 Sherman Street Suite 300 | Denver, CO 80203

C: 303.594.8198 P: 303.860.0555

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