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## Highlights of the Week

The week kicked off with hearings in the House and in the Senate to repeal gun control legislation passed in 2013. The gun repeal bills heard by the House State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee all died on partisan votes, with Democrats controlling the committee. The bills heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee passed on a partisan vote, with Republicans controlling the committee. **On Tuesday, the Speaker of the House conducted two swearing in ceremonies. Newly appointed Lang Sias, is now officially the State Representative for House District 27 and Representative Kevin Priola, who missed the first three weeks of session due to a skiing accident, was sworn in for his final term.** The legislature is moving through bills fairly efficiently, taking each morning on the House and Senate Floor to take action on bills that have passed out of committee. Many controversial bills were heard in committee this week as well. The Death with Dignity legislation (HB 1135) was heard in the House Public Health Care and Human Services Committee. There was over eleven hours of emotional testimony from opponents and proponents. In the end, for a variety of reasons, the legislation died on a 5-8 vote. In the House, the Education committee killed legislation to roll back requirements under the Breakfast After the Bell Program. Two years ago, legislation was passed which required schools with 70% free and reduced lunch (FRL) students to provide Breakfast After the Bell to all students. For the first two years, schools with 80% FRL had to implement the program and schools with 70% FRL were required to implement starting in 2015. HB 1080 was going to limit the program to schools with only 80% FRL students. In a standoff between advocates opposed to changes and some school districts supporting it, the legislation was killed on a party line vote. The Senate Education committee passed legislation to create a tax credit for parents who send their children to private schools, and the Republican-sponsored "Parent's Bill of Rights," SB 070. The Senate Health and Human Services Committee spent Thursday afternoon debating child care regulation. Senator Lundberg sponsored SB 070 which would allow child care centers

and homes with less than 10 children to go unregulated, arguing that deregulation would cut the cost of child care in Colorado. A host of organizations came out in opposition including the Colorado Children's Campaign, The Children's Hospital, The Kempe Foundation, Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children, LiveWell Colorado, and others. The committee laid the bill over for action at another date. The Senate approved SB 71, legislation allowing for substitution of interchangeable biosimilars, by a vote of 34-1.

The HB 14-1366 marijuana edibles working group presented their recommendations report to the Joint Health Committees. The purpose of the working group was to bring together industry, law enforcement, public health and the Department of Revenue together to determine the best way to label and regulate edible products. Many legislators were disappointed when the published reports asked for clarification from the General Assembly on whether edible retail marijuana products must be identifiable outside of their packaging. Legislators expected the working group to make a recommendation on this issue. Representative Pabon and Senator Hill also introduced legislation this week, SB 136, to repeal the HB 1366 working group, which was scheduled to meet for one more year. The legislation was scheduled to be heard on Thursday but was pulled from committee.

The Governor's Oil and Gas Taskforce met in Denver this week. Fourteen members of the 21 member committee backed recommendations to bring local governments into the fold with oil and gas operations. However, there is still no agreement about allowing local governments to prevent an oil and gas operation in their community. A 2/3rds vote is necessary to deliver any recommendations to the Governor. The taskforce meets once more before recommendations are due to the Governor on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Bills of the Week**

**Review of all Tax Credits** Representative KC Becker and Representative Saine introduced HB 1205 this week. This legislation creates a committee to review all tax credits offered by the State of Colorado. The committee has the authority to make recommendations in regards to improving or repealing tax credits. The bill could have wide ranging implications, as it's estimated that there are more than \$2 billion in state tax incentives on the books. The bill was assigned to the House Finance Committee and currently has no senate sponsor.

**Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness** Workforce development has been a top priority for members of all four caucuses. Currently, post-secondary and workforce readiness and closing the achievement gap are two of the performance indicators that the Department of Education must use to measure a public school's/district's level of performance. HB 1170 by Representative Kraft-Tharp, Representative Wilson, Senator Hill and Senator Heath adds the percentages of high school graduates who enroll in a career and technical education program, community college, or 4-year institution in the school year immediately following graduation as a measure for each of these indicators. The Department must give each post-secondary enrollment option equal weight in calculating performance. The bill will be heard in the House Education Committee.

**Felony DUI Convictions** On Thursday, the House Judiciary Committee met to consider charging repeat DUI offenders with a felony offense. The victims of drunk driving car accidents came from across the state to testify in support of the legislation. Currently, a DUI, no matter how many an individual has received, is a misdemeanor offense. HB 1043 would make a person's fourth DUI or DWAI conviction a class 4 felony punishable by 2 to 6 years in prison. A third DUI within seven years would subject the offender to possible community correction, including residential treatment, and could be charged as a felony if any of several aggravating factors are involved. A second DUI would require the offender to have an ignition interlock device installed in his or her vehicle. HB15-1043 passed out of the House Judiciary Committee unanimously.

**Urban Renewal** Last year, the state legislature passed legislation to overhaul tax increment financing and urban renewal laws in Colorado. However, the Governor vetoed the bill. Similar legislation is back in the form of SB 135. SB 135 attempts to bring counties more into the fold through several measures such as increasing the maximum number of allowable commissioners on an URA from 11 to 13. It will also allow a commissioner of the authority to be appointed by the board of county commissioners where the governing board of the municipality is the authority. The legislation has bipartisan sponsorship with Senator Cheri Jahn and Senator Beth Martinez Humenik as the prime sponsors. It is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Local Government Committee on Tuesday February 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

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