



Please see the link to the bill tracking report: <http://statebillinfo.com/SBI/index.cfm?fuseaction=Public.Dossier&id=20215&pk=619&style=pinstripe>

## Highlights of the Week

The first big snow of the Colorado winter forced the General Assembly into another four day week. The House and Senate both had high priority bills in committee Monday, including an attempt to reverse the large-capacity ammunition magazine ban, and leadership wanted to ensure that citizens were able to get to Denver from throughout the state for the hearings. On Tuesday morning, the Senate honored former Senator Regis Groff who passed away last year. Senator Groff, a Denver Democrat, served in the Senate minority for 20 years. His son Peter Groff, the first African American elected to serve as Senate President (2007 – 2009) came for the memorial.

The oil and gas taskforce appointed by the Governor in August met for the final time on Tuesday and submitted nine majority recommendations. Majority recommendations had to receive 2/3<sup>rd</sup> support from the taskforce; the remaining 27 recommendations were sent to the Governor in a minority report. Disappointment in the recommendations have already been expressed by Congressman Jared Polis, who was behind the original local control ballot measures; Gwen Lachelt, Co-Chair of the Taskforce; and Speaker of the House Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, who all expressed that the recommendations do not adequately address the concerns of local communities. Commissioner Lachlet was even quoted in the Denver Post that “ballot initiatives might be revived.” On the other hand, the Governor and the Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Mike King lauded the efforts of the taskforce. Governor Hickenlooper referred to the recommendations as “significant in both breadth and the level of consensus they achieved.” ***Final report attached.***

The Joint Budget Committee took a break this week from figure setting for the FY 2015-16 budget but they will start again next week in full force. They are scheduled to consider figure setting for the Division of Child Welfare, Office of Early Childhood, Human Services County Administration, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Natural Resources,

and the Office of the Governor. The March Revenue forecast, which will be presented in a few weeks, will give the Joint Budget Committee a rough estimate of available future revenues as well as an update on the impact of the TABOR refunds on available money. If TABOR refunds set in as expected, key funding for transportation and capital development projects will disappear. In 2009, the legislature passed SB 228 which specified that when personal income growth hits 5%, 2% of total general fund revenue would transfer to the HUTF and Capital Construction. The caveat was the money to both entities would be cut in half or entirely eliminated if a TABOR refund occurred. Unfortunately, this scenario is currently playing out. Business and the construction industry are asking the Joint Budget Committee to honor the commitment made through SB 228. However, there are many competing interests vying for money including K-12 education, higher education, healthcare providers, and tax credits for a number of interests. This week, the House Business Committee passed HB 1158, which will provide tax credits for data centers. The bill passed with only one no vote, although some concerns still exist around the estimated \$10 million cost. The Senate floor gave final approval to HB 1029 which expands access to telehealth throughout the state of Colorado.

## Bills of the Week

**Colorado Crowdfunding Act** HB15-1246 by Representative Dan Pabon looks to make it easier for individuals to invest in a private start-up company. The legislation will allow any Colorado resident to invest up to \$5,000 into a private start-up company without accreditation. Currently, only accredited individuals with \$1 million net worth can invest. HB 1246 also requires the company and investors to be located in Colorado. The bill has two Senate co-sponsors listed but not a Senate prime sponsor. The bill was assigned to the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee.

**Workforce Development in Colorado** Workforce Development is a top priority for all four caucuses this legislative session. HB 1170 by Representative Kraft-Tharp and Representative Wilson creates a Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Statewide Coordinator to work with school districts, businesses, higher education institutions, and the Colorado Department of Education to develop programs and best practices to help high school students decide which post-secondary path is right for them. The bill passed 10-1 and will next be heard in the House Appropriations Committee.

**Charter School Networks** This week, the House Education Committee unanimously passed HB 1184. The bill by Representative Lontine defines the concepts of charter schools in practice and creates new requirements for charter school networks that operate more than one school. For example, it allows all schools in a network to operate under one governance board. The bill also allows charter schools within the same network to apply for grants separately.

**Oversight of Connect for Health Colorado** SB15-052, which passed the Senate on partisan lines, died on Thursday in the Health Insurance and Environment Committee on a 6-7 vote. The bill by Representative Jon Keyser, would have given the Legislative Health Benefit Exchange Committee oversight of all bonuses for employees and executive leadership at Connect for

Health Colorado. The bills' opponents believe that appropriate oversight already exists and hence did not move the legislation forward.

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