

# COLORADO STATE SENATE

MAJORITY OFFICE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2014

## The Colorado Senate -- week in review



DENVER -- The legislature is on day 101 with only 19 days left. A total of 654 bills and resolutions have been introduced. As of Monday, April 14, Gov. Hickenlooper signed 132 bills into law.

To help everyone keep pace, here is a week in review of the Senate. It was a busy week, so bear with us. This "Week in Review" is long!

### **MONDAY, APRIL 14**

**SB 14-064: RESTRICTING THE USE OF ISOLATED CONFINEMENT; sponsor: Sen. Jessie Ulibarri, D-Westminster**

The Senate approved SB 14-064 on a 34 to 0 vote. The bill restricts the use of isolated confinement for people with serious mental health issues. Studies prove that prisoners with serious mental health issues will not improve in isolation, but -- to the contrary -- their conditions will likely deteriorate. Next stop for SB 14-064: the House of Representatives.

### **TUESDAY, APRIL 15**

**SB 14-001, THE COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY ACT; sponsors: Sen. Andy Kerr, D-Lakewood, Sen. Cheri Jahn, D-Wheat Ridge**

The Senate approved SB 14-001 on a 34 to 1 vote. The bill invests an additional \$100 million into higher education, with \$40 million of that going to financial aid. The act puts a six percent cap on yearly tuition increases for resident undergraduate students. Next stop for SB 14-001: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-088, SUICIDE PREVENTION; sponsor: Sen. Linda Newell, D-Littleton**

In 2012, more than twice the number of people died from suicide than motor vehicle accidents in Colorado. To reverse the statistics, on a 22 to 13 vote, the Senate approved SB 14-088, which establishes a commission of experts to provide recommendations regarding suicide prevention in the state. Next stop for SB 14-088: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-179, FLOOD DEBRIS CLEANUP; sponsor: Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, D-Gilpin County**

The historic September floods clogged watersheds with debris, blocking water from flowing and posing future flood risks. On a 34 to 1 vote, the Senate approved SB 14-179 to clean up the debris, investing \$2.5 million into stream restoration grants, allowing local governments and private entities to mitigate future flood risks. Next stop for SB 14-179: the House of Representatives.

**ADDRESSING CYBERBULLYING**

Pres. Morgan Carroll, D-Aurora; Speaker Mark Ferrandino, D-Denver; Sen. Linda Newell, D-Littleton; Sen. John Kefalas, D-Fort Collins; and Rep. Rhonda Fields, D-Aurora issued a formal request to the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice for recommendations on solutions to cyberbullying, sexting, and revenge porn.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16**

**HB 14-1017, AFFORDABLE HOUSING; sponsor: Sen. Jessie Ulibarri, D-Westminster**

The need for affordable housing continues to grow in Colorado with rent increasing 27 percent in the past 10 years. The Senate approved HB 14-1017 on a 20 to 15 vote to address that problem by expanding two programs within the Division of Housing: the Home Investment Trust Fund and the Housing Development Grant Fund, and reinstating the state Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Next stop for HB 14-1017: the House of Representatives will consider the Senate amendments.

**SB 14-174, RURAL PROSECUTOR FELLOWSHIP; sponsor: Majority Leader Rollie Heath, D-Boulder, Sen. Mike Johnston, D-Denver**

The Senate approved SB 14-174 on a 26 to 9 vote to create the Prosecution Fellowship Program in the Department of Higher Education. The fellowship will be available to Colorado law school graduates who want to be prosecutors in rural areas. Next stop for SB 14-174: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-167, OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS; sponsor: Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada**

In an effort to help high-risk students attain a high school diploma or equivalency, the Senate approved SB 14-167 on a bipartisan vote to create the Opportunity Schools Pilot Initiative. The initiative will provide additional resources for alternative education campuses. Next stop for SB 14-167: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-166, BY COLORADO; sponsors: Pres. Morgan Carroll, D-Aurora, Sen. George Rivera, R-Pueblo**

Money spent at locally owned businesses circulates at least three times more in the community compared to money spent at a non-local chain. In an effort to boost the economy, on a 27 to 8 vote, the Senate approved SB 14-166, which establishes the “By Colorado” database to easily connect Coloradans with local businesses. Next stop for SB 14-166: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-157, BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE STUDY; sponsors: Pres. Morgan Carroll, D-Aurora, Minority Leader Bill Cadman, R-Colo. Springs**

The U.S. Dept. of Defense will start the next Base Realignment and Closure evaluations in 2015. In an effort to retain and even expand Colorado bases, on a 34 to 1 vote, the Senate approved SB 14-157, which commissions a study on the strategic and economic advantages of military missions in Colorado. Next stop for SB 14-157: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-150, SCHOOL COUNSELORS; sponsors: Sen. Nancy Todd, D-Aurora, Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arizona**

The current student to school counselor ratio is nearly 400:1. To address the insufficient numbers of school counselors in Colorado public schools, on a bipartisan vote, the Senate approved SB 14-150, which makes several changes to the School Counselor Corps Grant Program. It doubles the total annual grant funding to \$10 million from \$5 million; expands eligibility to all middle and high schools; and extends grant funding cycles to four years from three years. Next stop for SB 14-150: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-144, RURAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM; sponsors: Sen. Irene Aguilar, D-Denver; Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, D-Gilpin County**

To ensure rural and underserved areas of Colorado have access to quality primary health care services, the Senate approved SB 14-144 on a 31 to 4 vote. Through the development of family medicine residency programs, the bill will provide opportunities for new family medicine physicians to train in rural areas and encourage them to move to rural Colorado. Next stop for SB 14-144: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-002, SAFE2TELL; sponsors: Pres. Morgan Carroll, D-Aurora; Minority Leader Bill Cadman, R-Colo. Springs**

After the Columbine massacre, a program named Safe2Tell was established to give K-12 students an anonymous hotline to report school safety problems to authorities -- including planned school shootings, bullying, drug and alcohol use, planned suicides, and more. The nonprofit-operated Safe2Tell was at risk of shutting down, primarily due to a lack of grant funding. To keep the program running the Senate unanimously approved SB 14-002 to move the operation from the nonprofit sector to the Colorado Attorney General's Office. Next stop for SB 14-002: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-073, BROWNFIELD CLEANUP; sponsor: Sen. Cheri Jahn, D-Wheat Ridge**

Brownfield areas are environmentally contaminated areas that have been left abandoned, unused, or underused. To help rural and urban communities to redevelop brownfield areas in a healthy way, the Senate approved SB 14-073 on a 32-2 vote. The bill extends a state tax credit for environmental remediation and redevelopment activities, effectively leveraging private funds to clean up brownfield areas. Next stop for SB 14-073: the House of Representatives.

**SB 14-185, RESOURCES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; sponsors: Sen. Mike Johnston, D-Denver; Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada**

The Senate Education Committee approved SB 14-185, which establishes a pilot “Pay for Success” program. Through the Pay for Success program, philanthropists can invest capital in early learning and development programs to help kids under 5 years old. If the programs meet specified conditions of success, the philanthropist can recoup his or her initial investment from the state. Next stop for SB 14-185: the entire Senate.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION:** The Senate Business, Labor, and Technology Committee unanimously approved five telecommunications bills.

*HB 14-1328; sponsors: Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, D-Gilpin County; Sen. Larry Crowder, D-Alamosa*

*HB 14-1327; sponsor: Sen. Lois Tochtrop, D-Thornton*

*HB 14-1329; sponsors: Sen. Andy Kerr, D-Lakewood; Sen. Mark Scheffel, R-Parker*

*HB 14-1330; sponsor: Sen. Lois Tochtrop, D-Thornton*

*HB 14-1331; sponsors: Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, D-Gilpin County; Sen. Andy Kerr, D-Lakewood*

Together the bills will increase access to high-speed internet across Colorado, and they will strengthen existing telecommunications infrastructure, 911 emergency and traditional landline telephone services. Next stop for HB 14-1328, HB 14-1327, HB 14-1329, HB 14-1330, HB 14-1331: the State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

**HB 14-1288, IMMUNIZATIONS; sponsor: Sen. Irene Aguilar, D-Denver**

The Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee approved HB 14-1288. The legislation had previously addressed vaccination exemption requirements, but was amended to zero in on data transparency and educational resources. It establishes a new online educational resource, and requires schools to disclose their immunization and exemption rates. Next stop for HB 14-1288: the entire Senate.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 17**

**HB 14-1298, THE SCHOOL FINANCE ACT; sponsors: Sen. Andy Kerr, D-Lakewood; Sen. Pat Steadman, D-Denver**

The Senate Education Committee approved the School Finance Act, HB 14-1298. The bill increases base per-pupil state funding to school districts by 2.8 percent, to \$6,121; funds an additional 5,000 seats for half- or full-day preschool or full-day kindergarten; boosts programs for English language learners by \$30 million; and increases

funding to the Board of Cooperative Educational Services by \$2 million to support rural schools. Next stop for HB 14-1298: the Senate Finance Committee.

**HB 14-1292, THE STUDENT SUCCESS ACT; sponsors: Sen. Mike Johnston, D-Denver; Sen. Jessie Ulibarri, D-Westminster**

The Senate Education committee approved HB 14-1292, the Student Success Act. The bill provides schools with an additional \$120 million to begin restoring recession budget cuts; invests \$10 million into a literacy program; builds on existing financial transparency to ensure parents, educators, and taxpayers know how K-12 funds are used; and provides \$13 million in charter school capital construction. Next stop for HB 14-1292: the Senate Finance Committee.

**SB 14-003, CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY; sponsor: Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, D-Gilpin County**

To ensure parents have affordable, safe child care while they are at work, the Senate Health and Human Services Committee approved SB 14-003. The bill modifies the existing Cliff Effect Pilot Program under the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. It gives counties flexibility to use a sliding scale for childcare assistance, helping families slowly phase off of assistance, as opposed to being deemed ineligible abruptly. Next, the bill must go to Senate Appropriations Committee.

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**About Sen. Rachel Zenzinger:** Sen. Rachel Zenzinger serves Colorado Senate District 19, which spans most of Arvada and the Jefferson County portion of Westminster. She was appointed to her seat and sworn into office on Dec. 13, 2013. She serves on the Senate Education Committee, Senate Local Government Committee and she is a Senate advisor to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Her professional background is in education, and she was coordinator of the Regis University Master of Arts in Education program. For more information about Sen. Zenzinger, please go to [www.RachelForColorado.com](http://www.RachelForColorado.com) or call her at 303-866-4840.