

Colorado Legislative Update - CoSEA April 19, 2024

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As of Friday morning, 671 bills had been introduced, 460 in the House and 211 in the Senate. Only 617 bills were introduced during the whole 2023 session. Friday was the 101st day of the 120-day session.

A note on the backlog of bills – As of Thursday, roughly 100 bills were sitting in House Appropriations, and two dozen were in Senate Appropriations. House Appropriations passed out 13 bills Friday morning, and Senate Appropriations approved 17.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNDER THE DOME

Firearms bills dominated legislative debate on Friday, the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Columbine High School shootings.

Things got going right away in the House when time-limited debates started on three measures - [HB24-1270](#) (firearms liability insurance), [HB24-1353](#) (licensing requirements for firearms dealers, and [HB24-1349](#) (firearms and ammo excise tax). Mixed in with those three was debate on [HB24-1372](#), which proposes to restrict police use of prone restraint. The liability insurance and prone restraint bills had passed by mid-day.

The issue has hung over the House all week. During a rare Sunday session on April 14, the chamber finally passed the proposed assault weapons ban, [HB24-1292](#). And the House was meeting over the weekend.

On Friday, the Senate eased into the gun issue, getting other business out of the way before starting debate at 10:30 a.m. on two gun bills, [HB24-1348](#) (safe firearm storage in vehicles) and [HB24-1174](#) (concealed weapons permits and training).

Otherwise, it was a big week for bills on housing, one of 2024's top issues. Among other developments:

Governor Jared Polis signed the measure to ban most municipal limits on residential occupancy ([HB24-1007](#)).

- The bill to require cause for evictions ([HB24-1098](#)) has been sent to the governor.
- The House passed the accessory dwelling units bill ([HB 24-1152](#)) and the transit-oriented housing measure ([HB24-1313](#)).
- The House also passed the bill that would limit local government's ability to require parking spaces for residential buildings – but it had only a two-vote margin of victory.
- The Senate approved [SB24-174](#), which would set up a system to identify state housing needs and strategically plan for future growth.
- And [SB24-033](#), which proposed higher taxes for some short-term rental properties was killed in committee.

Other news of note this week included:

- House Education Committee approval of [HB24-1448](#), House Speaker Julie McCluskie's complex and expensive proposal for reform of the state's school funding formula. This could be a big issue in the session's closing days.

The defeat of [SCR24-001](#), a proposal to let voters decide whether to repeal the current statute of limitations on childhood sexual assault lawsuits. It failed to get the required two-thirds Senate approval by one vote.

- Strong opposition forced sponsors of the RTD restructuring bill, [HB24-1447](#), to back off plans to dramatically change the agency's elected board.
- Final Senate passage of [SB24-184](#), which would create a rental car fee to raise funds – and attract federal matching money – for the Front Range rail project.
- Sen. Faith Winter, D-Westminster, returned to the Senate this week for the first time since beginning substance abuse treatment.

TALLYING THE BILLS

Both Senate President Steve Fenberg and House Majority Leader Monica Duran told the Colorado Sun this week that they have some concerns about finishing work on the big stack of remaining bills.

But two big bills were introduced this week. [HB24-1460](#) proposes to strengthen the police misconduct law passed four years ago, [SB20-217](#). And [SB24-210](#) proposes a long list of changes in election law, always a touchy subject at the Capitol.

Still missing in action is any proposal for either a stopgap or long-term property tax reform proposal. Fenberg also told The Sun he doesn't know whether the legislature will act on that issue, although it is rumored there may, once again, be a special session called to address the issue.

THIS WEEK AT THE JBC

This milestone was little noted among the general Capitol hubbub, but the House last Sunday approved the conference committee report for the long bill, [HB24-1430](#), and re-passed the measure.

This week, the budget committee had to clean up differing amendments to four budget package bills. Both chambers have re-passed three of those. They are [HB24-1390](#) (school food programs), [HB24-1410](#) (timing of Just Transitions program), and [HB24-1422](#) (financial threshold for controlled maintenance project). Only [HB24-1413](#) (transfer from severance funds) awaits final floor ratification.

But JBC still has some work ahead of them. There are the [ARPA "swaps."](#) In order to avoid losing any ARPA money that can't be spent by a federal deadline, legislative and executive branch fiscal experts have been working on plans to use roughly \$1.7 billion of that money for normal state expenses like salaries and to use it up by Dec. 31, 2024. Doing that would free up state General Fund money to be used on multiple special, time-limited programs that originally were funded with ARPA money.

It will also require a couple of complicated bills. The JBC this week has found it extremely difficult to find meeting times, and it looks like it won't review the "swap" bills until next Tuesday.

The CoSEA Public Policy Committee meets regularly throughout the legislative session and takes positions on legislation on behalf of CoSEA. If you have an interest in serving on the Public Policy Committee, please email governmentrelations@cosea.org.

To see what other legislation CoSEA is following, check out the bill tracker linked below:

<https://www.statebillinfo.com/SBI/index.cfm?fuseaction=Public.Dossier&id=34275&pk=486&style=pinstripe>