

Colorado Legislative Update January 12, 2024

Opening Day Ceremonies

The Second Session of Colorado's 74th General Assembly convened Wednesday, January 10, 2024 with the typical pomp and circumstance: parliamentary business, leadership speeches, corridors and floors crowded with legislators' family and friends.

The Colorado General Assembly immediately got off to a troubled start on Wednesday, when multiple groups of pro-Palestinian protesters shouted from the House gallery, bringing the chamber's business to a brief halt. Up until then, the opening day of this year's legislative session in Colorado had been business as usual. The protests were expected — activists also temporarily shut down the chamber's special session last November, when lawmakers approved legislation that sought to offer tax relief to homeowners. The protesters drew the attention of the Colorado State Patrol and House sergeants, who spent several minutes going from one side of the gallery to the other, as protesters unfurled a Palestinian flag over the gallery railing and shouted, "Free Palestine." They also called for a ceasefire in the Hamas-Israel war.

One opening day tradition is speeches by the House Speaker, President and the two minority leaders. All of their opening remarks on focused in large degree on legislative decorum, colleagues having respect for one another and maintaining civility. Other overarching themes from the Democrat speeches included affordable housing, addressing property taxes, bringing a front range rail system to fruition, mental and behavioral health, gun violence and paying off the \$1B debt to K-12 education, known as the budget stabilization factor. Republican leader's speeches focused on ensuring their members have a voice in debate, the high cost of business regulatory burden in the state and making changes to construction defects law to address the housing affordability issues.

Governor Polis Delivers the State of the State

The Governor gave his State of the State speech on Thursday. In addition to highlighting his accomplishments from 2023, the Governor focused on addressing property taxes, transit and the front range passenger rail opportunity, affordable housing, reducing crime in the state, increasing safety, the environment, education and the workforce, the economy, and inclusion and civility.

The Governor's full speech can be found [here](#).

Legislative Update

As of Friday morning, the third day of the 120-day Session, 128 bills had been introduced - 86 in the House and 42 in the Senate.

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- [SB24-001](#), to make permanent the temporary youth mental health services program known as I Matter
- [SB24-002](#), allowing local governments to offer property tax incentives for property owners who expand housing
- [SB24-003](#), providing more than \$1.69 million to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation to investigate illegal activity involving firearms
- [SB24-005](#), banning the installation, planting or placement of nonfunctional or artificial turf or invasive plant species on commercial, institutional or industrial properties or in transportation corridors
- [SB24-033](#), reclassifying the tax status of short-term rentals
- [SB24-041](#), strengthening privacy protections for children
- [HB24-1007](#), barring residential occupancy limits
- [HB24-1027](#), creating a sales tax holiday for back-to-school items and a tax exemption for baby and toddler products
- [HB24-1051](#), strengthening regulation of the towing industry

such changes in the law and of legislative work, since permission for the introduction of bills is routinely and liberally granted.

SMART Act Hearings

After lawmakers return to the Capitol next week, most of their time next week will be consumed by House and Senate “[SMART Act](#)” hearings, during which joint committees are briefed by state agencies about their work and by Joint Budget Committee members about executive branch budget requests for FY2024-25.