

Sue Schafer
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House District 24



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Town Meeting—Legislative Update March 28, 2009

What's Your Opinion? Contact Sue!

Important Bills Passed by the House

- ✓ **SB 108: FASTER by Sen. Shaffer:** to repair deficient bridges and roads and to create ≈8000 jobs; average citizen will pay \$3.50/month for \$200 million of repairs per year.
- ✓ **HB 1001: Income Tax Credit for Companies Creating New Jobs by Rep. Rice:** provides an income tax credit to firms that create jobs in Colorado.
- ✓ **HB 1292: Oil and Gas Commission Rules by Rep. McGihon:** new rules which strike a fair balance between the oil and gas industry and the environment and wildlife interests.
- ✓ **HB 1293: CO Healthcare Affordability Act by Rep. Riesberg & Sen. Keller:** creates a hospital fee to match \$625 million of Medicaid to provide 100,000 more Coloradans with health insurance.
- ✓ **HB 1243: Dropout Prevention Program by Rep. Middleton:** creates the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement to increase the high school graduation rate.

Legislation of Interest

- ✓ **HB 1299: National Popular Vote by Rep. A. Kerr**

In its current form, the bill would enter Colorado into a compact agreement with other states to cast presidential electoral votes for the winner of the national popular vote. The agreement takes effect when a group of states possessing a majority of the electoral votes in the Electoral College (270) have enacted the agreement.

States Already in Compact (50 Votes)

Hawaii (4) Illinois (21)
Maryland (10) New Jersey (15)

States Considering the Compact Now * (41 Votes)

Colorado (9) Arkansas (6)
New Mexico (5) Oregon (7)
Vermont (3) Washington (11)

** States have only considered the measure in one chamber*

Pros:

1. Guarantees that Colorado's 9 electoral votes go to the top vote getter nationally.
2. Means each voter becomes a "battle ground voter".
3. Encourages top candidates to campaign in CO.
4. US Constitution gives states control of awarding their electoral votes.

<http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>

Cons:

1. May subvert the intent of the Constitution.
2. Voters in smaller states could be disadvantaged.
3. The winning candidate in the state may not receive Colorado's electoral votes.
4. CO relinquishes its independence in selecting a presidential winner.

<http://tiny.cc/3qzKO>

<http://tiny.cc/AEJdi>

✓ **SB 228: Flexibility to Use State Revenues by Sen. Morse**

Repeals a number of automatic measures constraining the CO General Fund and allows legislators to appropriate money where it is best serving the state. Includes repealing:

- 6% growth limit on state spending
- Automatic diversions to the Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF)
- Automatic transfers to Capital Construction Fund
- ✓ Provides legislators the ability to restore cuts to human services and higher education
- ✓ Retains TABOR provision for voters to approve tax increases

(In House Transportation and Energy Committee)

✓ **SB 148: Safe Sharing the Road with Bicycles and other Vehicles by Sen. Brophy:**

This bill requires motorists to keep clear of bicyclists by 3 feet who must stay to the far right and in the right turn lanes. *(House 2nd reading on 3/26/09)*

✓ **HB 1094: Cell Phone Use While Driving by Rep. Levy**

Prohibits drivers under 18 from using a cell phone at all while driving. It also requires drivers over the age of 18 to use “hands-free” devices while driving. *(In House Appropriations Committee)*

Sue’s Bills’ Update:

✓ **HB 1224: Gender Ratings in Individual Insurance Policies**

This bill addresses the issue of prohibiting gender rating in individual health insurance policies, and directs the Interim Health Care Task Force to study the issue. *(Passed House on 2/24/09, Passed Senate on 3/24/09)*

✓ **SB 030: Child Mental Health Treatment Act with Sen. Keller**

The bill continues the Child Mental Health Treatment Act through July 1, 2019. This bill provides better continuity of residential care to 50 seriously mentally ill children not covered by Medicaid. *(Passed Senate on 2/17/09, Passed House on 3/20/09)*

✓ **SB 053: Allow TANF Recipients (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) to Receive Unpaid Back Child Support with Sen. Tochtrop**

Under current CO law, a TANF recipient is not entitled to collect unpaid back child support. The federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requires that TANF recipients be able to receive unpaid back child support. If CO does not pass this law, CO will lose \$136 million from the federal TANF block grant. *(Passed Senate on 1/27/09, Passed House 2nd Reading on 3/26/09)*

✓ **SB 245: Children’s Placement And Guardianship by Kinship (Adult Relatives and Caretakers) by Sen. Sandoval and Rep. Schafer**

This bill changes portions of the Colorado Children's Code to comply with the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. It also establishes a kinship guardianship assistance program, pending funding, that helps grandparents who have become the primary caretaker of their grandchildren. *(In Senate Appropriations)*

NOTE: All bills can be read in full and tracked at www.leg.state.co.us
Click on House or Senate and follow the link to the bills by bill number.