

Sue Schafer
State Representative
House District 24



*What's Your Opinion?
Contact Sue!*

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Town Meeting—Legislative Update
April 25, 2009

House Legislation That Has Passed — At A Glance

- ✓ **HB 1319: Concurrent Enrollment of High School Students in College by Rep. Merrifield:** Allows school districts to partner with public institutions of higher education to offer and pay for college courses to qualified high school students while they are still in high school. (*Passed House 4/15/2009, in Senate Education 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 and bicyclists must stay to the far right and in the right turn lanes. (*In second conference committee*)
- ✓ **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. (*Sent to Governor 4/16/2009*)
- ✓ **SB 276: Suspend Senior Homestead Property Tax Exemptions by Sen. White:** Eliminates the homestead property tax exemption for qualifying senior citizens (over 65) for two years but leaves the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans intact. (*Passed Senate 4/13/2009, passed House 4/21/2009*)
- ✓ **HB 1260: Designated Beneficiary Agreements by Rep. Ferrandino:** This bill enables two unmarried adults to enter into a designated beneficiary agreement for the purposes of providing each other with certain rights such as: hospital visitation, inheritance, life insurance benefits, and decisions regarding last remains. It allows for individuals to choose some or the entire list of rights. The bill provides a standard agreement form that will be available at each county clerk's office. (*Signed by the Governor on 4/9/09*)

Public Debate: Should the Governor Sign HB1274 if It Passes the Senate?

- ✓ **HB 1274: Abolishing the Death Penalty and Redirecting Funds to Cold Case Homicide Investigations in the CBI by Rep. Weissmann**

This bill would take money saved in the judicial system by abolishing the death penalty and divert it to increase resources and manpower in the cold case unit.

Some Pros:

- 1) Will cut costs since death penalty cases are far more costly than life imprisonment cases.
- 2) Would direct around \$830,000 per year to cold case investigations in the CBI
- 3) Gives hope to over 1,400 CO families of unsolved homicides

Some Cons:

- 1) Death penalty may help deter potential crimes.
- 2) Death penalty is used as a tool by prosecutors in the plea bargaining process.
- 3) Death penalty would no longer be an option for the most heinous and violent crimes.

✓ **HB 1346: American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 by Speaker Carroll**
Bond Allocation Estimates for Colorado ARRA for Infrastructure Projects In Progress

This bill clarifies the process for cities, counties and public entities to take advantage of financing under the ARRA Bond Allocation program. Entities that issue stimulus bonds or borrow money under a capped program must report how much of their allocation is used. The allocation is based on a formula by population of the public entity. The bill allows two or more public entities to act jointly to issue stimulus bonds. The bill does not authorize new borrowing by public entities in Colorado. Go to: www.colorado.gov/recovery

ARRA Financing	CO Allocation (2 yr estimate)	Allocation Process
Build America Bond	No cap	Any public entity
Qualified Energy Conservation Volume Cap	\$102 million	Governor's Energy Office to large counties & municipalities
Qualified School Construction Volume Cap	\$174 million (State)	Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) Board / School Districts
Recovery Zone Economic Development	\$146 million	Colorado Commission on Higher Education to large counties & municipalities
Recovery Zone Facility Bonds	\$219 million	Colorado Commission on Higher Education to large counties & municipalities
Clean Renewable Energy Bonds	Federal grants	Federal grants
Qualified Zone Academy Bonds	\$ 20 million	Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) Board / School Districts

* *Figures supplied by State Treasurer Cary Kennedy*

Sue's Bills Update:

✓ **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. *(Signed by Governor at signing ceremony with Sen. Keller and Rep. Schafer 4/16/2009)*

✓ **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. *(Signed by Governor 4/20/2009)*

✓ **SB 245: Children's Placement And Guardianship by Kinship (Adult Relatives, Grand-Parents 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 financial assistance program, pending funding approval), that helps grandparents who have become the primary caretakers of their grandchildren. *(Passed Senate 4/16/2009, Passed House Judiciary Committee 4/23/09)*

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.