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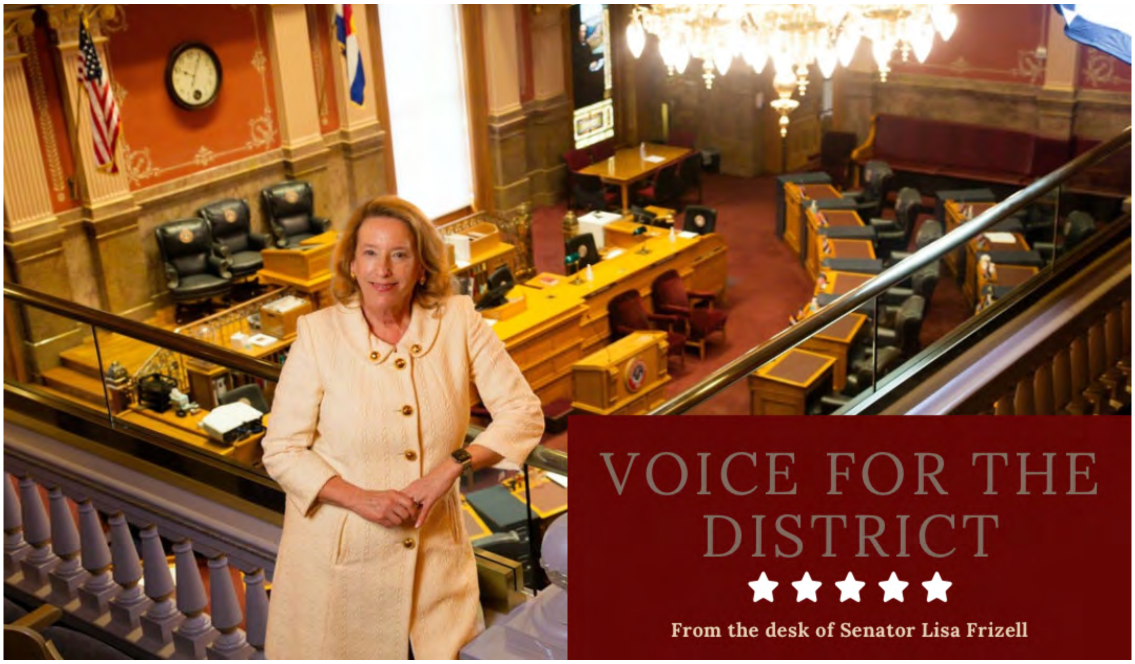

2026 Legislative Session

Week Seventeen - No Rules!

Greetings Lori,

We have completed the final full week of the 2026 Legislative Session, and as expected, the Majority Leader suspended the rules on Wednesday. This makes our schedule unpredictable for both committee and floor work, and it's now possible to pass a bill through both chambers in as little as three days. The total introduced bills as of Monday the 4th was 619 - with 90 bills still outstanding, and several others rumored to be introduced on Monday. Sine Die will be next Wednesday, May 13th. Please read on for more updates!

My Bill Updates

SB26-162 **was heard this week in the House Health and Human Services Committee, where the bill was laid over until May 14th, effectively killing**

the bill by letting it time-out. I'm very disappointed by this outcome, and will work to bring it back again next year.

HB26-1317 **'Unified Postsecondary Talent Development System' was discussed in last week's newsletter, and creates the Transition Advisory Committee to integrate the Department of Higher Education and the myriad of workforce development programs under one department umbrella. This bill will help Colorado's workforce development efforts by condensing redundant programs and improving the availability of programs that are working. This bill passed through the Senate chamber this week on a near unanimous vote.**

SB26-191 **'Gifts Grants & Donations for Nursing Facilities' is a bill borne out of a private sector donation pledged to the Healthcare Policy and Finance Dept (HCPF) –for the specific purpose of increasing bed capacity for individuals with behaviorally complex needs such as IDD, schizophrenia, dementia, and more. These patients require a higher level of supervision, specialized staffing, behavioral supports, and individualized care planning than traditional nursing facility residents. Nursing homes are willing to serve these residents, but current Medicaid reimbursement rates do not account for the complexity of this type of care. This is a short-term solution to a problem that the legislature will continue to grapple with next session. SB26-191 passed through the Senate and will soon be headed to the Governor.**

HB26-1014 **'Extend Colorado Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit' preserves one of Colorado's most effective and targeted economic development tools through tax year 2034. The Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit was created in 2009, and provides a state income tax credit to businesses that create and retain well-paying jobs. This program has proven to deliver a significant return on investment – generating at least four dollars in new revenue for every dollar in credits – in some cases even more. This credit has helped attract major employers to our state, and I am proud to sponsor this bill which strengthens the workforce, tax base, and long-term economic stability of Colorado. This bill passed through the Senate with only two votes in opposition.**

HB26-1421 **'Fee Sharing with Nonlawyers in Legal Practice' reinforces long-standing ethical standards by prohibiting nonlawyer ownership and fee-sharing arrangements that could interfere with a lawyer's duty of loyalty and professional judgement. The independence of attorneys is essential to protecting clients and ensuring the fair administration of**

justice. Financial arrangements that allow non-lawyers to share in legal fees or influence legal services risk eroding public trust in our legal system. Right now, fee-sharing arrangements are not allowed under Rule 5.4 of the Rules of Professional Practice, which are essentially overseen by the Supreme Court. They have declined to weigh in on firms that have moved into Colorado who are fundamentally flouting Rule 5.4, and so this bill prohibits this practice. Further, the legislation sunsets in three years, giving the Supreme Court time to analyze the matter. I am carrying this policy on behalf of the very odd partnership between the Colorado Chamber of Commerce and the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association. HB26-1421 passed through the Senate Judiciary committee on Wednesday, as well as the Senate floor on Friday for Second Reading.

HB26-1075 **'Child Welfare Prevention Services Funding' increases funding for county child welfare prevention efforts which would be distributed across counties through a competitive grant system. The funding source of the Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund is modified to leverage federal Title IV-E reimbursements. This bill will promote child welfare by expanding prevention programs and helping to maximize existing resources without new state spending. HB26-1075 passed unanimously through the Senate Health & Human Services committee on Thursday, was heard next in Appropriations on Friday morning, and passed later in the day on Second Reading.**

HB26-1059 **'Cost Recovery Cash Fund Consolidation' consolidates four cash funds under the Department of Revenue into one. By reducing the number of separate funds, this bill is estimated to reduce workload needed to manage and perform accounting in the department. After passing unanimously though the Senate Finance committee, HB26-1059 was heard in Appropriations on Friday morning. Later in the day it passed on the Second Reading consent calendar.**

On Wednesday, Governor Polis signed HB26-1244 'DPHE Nursing Home Penalty Fund' into law. This legislation aligns Colorado with federal guidelines on the use of the Fund and allows the dollars to be used for training grants and tuition reimbursement for nursing students. I'm glad to see this bill signed into law as it will reduce nursing home staff turnover and improve care outcomes for our vulnerable patient population.

Good Bills:

SB26-182 **'Updated Clean Energy Plan Municipally Owned Utility' allows municipally owned utilities that face challenges meeting the 2030 emissions target to submit an updated clean energy plan extending compliance to no later than 2032 –while requiring detailed planning, annual reporting, coal phase-out by 2032, and state verification of the plan. As the Colorado energy industry shifts, the current guidelines for utility companies are not realistic. This bill rectifies the gaps found in the current system by allowing companies to address these goals based on their needs. This bill passed in the House on Thursday and will soon be signed by the Governor.**

HB26-1004 **'Continuation of Child Care Contribution Tax Credit' extends the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (originally enacted in 1998) for another 10 years, allowing citizens to save on taxes when they make charitable contributions. Qualifying contributions include those to child care facilities, schools, or programs, as well as to provider training**

programs and grant or loan programs that assist parents with child care costs. This bill passed in the Senate on Friday and heads to the Governor's office.

HB26-1147 **'Host Homes for People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities' requires HCPF to establish a statewide database to provide accurate information about certain individual residential services. This bill strengthens the host home model, which is an essential option for Coloradans with IDD, by improving transparency, quality, and sustainability. The Individual Residential Services and Supports (IRSS) database will help families make informed placement decisions and support provider agencies to identify high-quality host home providers. This bill was also heard in the Appropriations Committee on Friday and passed.**

Tax Bill Package

The Majority Party has brought forward four bills aimed to generate additional state revenue by increasing tax burdens on Colorado taxpayers and businesses. After the passage of the 'One Big Beautiful Bill', Colorado Democrats have characterized the federal tax changes as only benefitting the ultra-wealthy and big corporations. This slate of tax increase bills is a partial decoupling of Colorado tax code from the federal provisions to 'rebalance' the system. The legislation is being presented as a way to close loopholes and ensure that corporations 'pay their fair share'. Colorado is already having issues retaining businesses due to our regulatory and taxation environment, and these policies will only exacerbate the problem. From the Common Sense Institute and Colorado Chamber of Commerce (click here **for the full report):**

In 2024 Colorado lost a net total of 3,934 business establishments. This amounts to two-thirds of an establishment per 1,000 people, which ranks 48th among U.S. states. Colorado's net loss of 3,934 establishments caused a net employment loss of 13,287. This amounts to 2.25 lost jobs per 1,000 people, which is the worst in the country.

Colorado was one of only six states, along with Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington, with declines in both net establishments and employment. Most states, as well as the U.S. overall, registered net gains of both establishments and employment.

To learn more about each of these bills, see the links below:

HB26-1221 **'Tax Expenditure Adjustments'**

HB26-1222 **'Modify Tax Expenditures'**

HB26-1223 **'Modifying Certain Tax Expenditures'**

HB26-1289 **'Modification of Certain Tax Expenditures'**

Bad Bills:

HB26-1335 **'Abortion Medication Access on College Campuses' mandates that government funded higher education facilities provide students with abortion medication upon request. Because Colorado has enshrined abortion in our constitution, there are ample medical facilities that offer these services and I am concerned that campus medical clinics may not have the capacity to deal with the complications that all too frequently arise. Unfortunately, this bill passed in the Health and Human Services Committee despite a large amount of opposing testimony, and is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Chamber on Monday.**

HB26-1419 **'Over-Refund of Excess State Revenues' seeks to balance the budget by clawing back the TABOR refunds taxpayers received in 2025, by retaining $150 million in both 2026 and 2027 that would ordinarily go to taxpayers in the form of income tax refunds. This directs the State Controller to recalculate the over-refund in response to H.R.1 or the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" that was signed into law by President Trump in July 2025. The estimated $300 million will then be subtracted from refunds in FY 2025-26 and 2026-27. The legality of this proposal is disputed by the Office of Legislative Legal Services, Legislative Council Staff, the State Auditor, and the Joint Budget Committee. Their concern is that it conflicts with Section 20 Article X of the Colorado Constitution which limits state spending and requires excess revenues to be refunded to taxpayers. This bill passed the Appropriations Committee earlier this week and was heard on Second Reading in the Senate on Friday. HB26-1419 passed despite several amendments presented by my colleagues and me.**

HB26-1236 **'Arbitration Reform' discourages arbitration in the state by creating provisions that lead to agreements being counted void and unenforceable. Even as the Colorado Civil Justice League (CCJL) asserts the importance of arbitration, and that it can be better for consumers over litigation, the Majority party is pushing this bill that unfairly places burdens on businesses, the judicial system, and consumers. The Colorado Constitution demonstrates a clear preference for arbitration,**

stating, 'It is the policy of this state to foster and encourage the use of arbitration as a method of dispute resolution'. This is an agenda pushed by the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association and profits attorneys over everyday Coloradans. This bill passed Second Reading in the Senate Chamber on Friday.

HB26-1272 **'Extreme Temperatures Worker Protections' creates a new state-run reporting and planning framework around temperature-related injuries and illnesses that will inevitably grow beyond simple data collection. Under this policy the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment is required to build a new reporting platform, gather elaborate information, develop a model prevention plan, and adopt rules as necessary to implement this program. This bill is an example of the state using broad climate-related justifications to expand labor regulation and impose new administrative burdens on employers. Responsible employers already take practical steps to protect workers from heat and cold based on their industry, location, and daily conditions – they do not need a state-designed standard to dictate how they protect their employees. Growth of state bureaucracy is not what Coloradans want or need. HB26-1272 was heard in the Appropriations Committee on Friday and unfortunately passed.**

HB26-1281 **'Homicide Criminal Offenses' represents a concerning step backward for accountability in Colorado's criminal justice system by narrowing the definition of first-degree murder. The actions that would constitute first-degree murder under this bill are when a person knowingly causes the death of more than one person, causes the death of one person and seriously injures two or more with a deadly weapon, causes the death of a child who is under 12-years-old, or causes the death of a medical provider/firefighter while on duty. This unjust legislation is fundamentally inconsistent with the Victim Rights Act, showing a lack of consideration for victims and their families. The loss of one life is as serious as the loss of many, and our laws should continue to reflect that. Even with strong opposition from prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocacy groups this bill passed through the House by only one vote. After passing the Senate Judiciary Committee, the policy will be heard in the Senate Chamber for Second Reading on Monday next week.**

HB26-1276 **'Protect Safety of Individuals who are Immigrants' directly attacks ICE and its operations by increasing the frequency of inspections**

and forcing detention facilities to pay additional fees for "environmental impacts." The extreme regulations placed on ICE facilities this bill creates would lead to several facilities having to close (which is the true intent of this bill) which would halt immigration enforcement efforts. In addition, subpoenas enforced by ICE would need to be approved by the State General Assembly before an individual's information could be sent to ICE. This would cause delays in immigration enforcement and severely impact agents' ability to perform their jobs effectively. HB26-1276 passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday as well as Second Reading in the Senate.

HB26-1256 **'Procedures and Data Individual's Release from Department of Corrections' seems like a great idea that would help recently released convicts acclimate back into society. However, the realistic financial impacts of this bill are burdensome to the state and the program this bill creates is redundant. This bill would provide every released individual with a $100 allowance and a state identification card. Both of these services and many more are already available to released inmates under Administrative Regulation 200-01. This bill would force the State to spend money on the Department of Corrections that it simply doesn't have given the budget restraints Colorado faces going into the next fiscal year. This bill was heard in the Senate Chamber on Friday for Second Reading and passed.**

HB26-1206 **'Improved Funding to Support Development' lets city and county housing authorities levy a sales tax, sales and use tax, or both. With this, the tax must go on the ballot and be approved by voters. This is another example of policy that purports to lower the cost of living for Coloradans, yet does so by literally increasing costs on citizens. This policy was supposed to be heard in the Senate Chamber on Friday but was laid over to Monday.**

SB26-177 **'Access Adjoining Property to Repair or Maintain' creates an avenue for a single family home owner to ask the district court for limited access to an adjoining property to complete maintenance on the single family home if the owner of the adjoining property refuses access. This bill completely overrides individuals' property rights and I strongly oppose this bill due to the broad access a petition would give a home owner to their neighbors property. While it's important for legal remedies to exist in the instance of neighbor disputes and maintenance completion is also important, this policy is not the proper remedy for these problems.**

This bill was heard in the Senate to consider amendments made in the House and was repassed on Friday.

Stay Informed

As the session continues, I would like to provide you with some resources to stay informed on what is happening at the Capitol. To watch current or previous debates on the floor of the House or Senate, you can visit the Colorado Channel on YouTube. Click here **to watch.**

The Colorado General Assembly website **is also a great resource. Some of the information on this site includes tracking bills, listening to committees, and finding contact information for legislators. Committee proceedings the session will now be recorded and available for the public to view live, or archived meetings!**

Thank you for allowing me to serve you,

Lisa Frizell

Assistant Minority Leader

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