



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

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Feb. 27, 2024

2024 Highlights – Seeking Solutions

- The Colorado General Assembly officially convened on Wednesday, January 10, to begin a 120-day session that adjourns on May 9.
- Democrats are the controlling party in both Chambers.
- Given their extreme advantage, Democratic lawmakers will set the agenda for this year's session—just as they've done for the past five years.
- Though Colorado's legislative leaders remained traditionally vague on their strategic priorities during opening-day speeches this year, Democrats emphasized themes of housing affordability, workforce development, environmental protection – and decorum.
- Republican leaders used their orations on the first day of the 120-day session to plead with Democrats for restraint, particularly on regulatory issues.
- But Republicans joined their colleagues across the aisle in vowing efforts to seek relief from high costs of living, setting the parties on a course to see whether they can travel similar roads to try to get to the same goal.



2024 Highlights – Fireworks!

- Session has not been without drama.
- House Republicans chose Assistant Minority Leader Rose Pugliese of Colorado Springs as the caucus' minority leader after Rep. Mike Lynch stepped down after news broke that he had been arrested in late September 2022 for DUI.
- Session also started with a bang: The rare censure of a lawmaker and resignation of two others citing the mood in the building and lingering partisan ill will from a year ago.
- The Democratic disunity and Republican delay tactics will provide plenty of drama that will disrupt lawmaking on major policy issues from criminal justice to affordability – especially in the latter half of session.



2024 Highlights – Bills, Bills, Bills

- Still, things are proceeding “relatively normally” under the Gold Dome.
- With 72 days reminding in session things are picking up steam.
- A LOT of bills have been introduced: Over 530 items (bills, resolutions, etc.) introduced thus far.
- That’s about 100 more bills this session compared to this time last year.
- Democrats enjoy large majorities in both chambers – so if bills are a priority for them (some more than others) we can expect some movement.
- That DOES NOT mean they will necessarily pass.



An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely San Francisco, with a blue overlay at the bottom. The image shows various skyscrapers and buildings, with a prominent tall, thin tower on the left. The sky is hazy, and the overall tone is muted. The blue overlay at the bottom contains the main title in yellow text.

01

Housing & Land Use

02

Sustainability & The Environment

03

Worker Rights & Labor Relations

TOP ISSUES OF 2024 (SO FAR)

A wooden signpost with a sign that reads "WELCOME TO COLORFUL COLORADO". The sign is made of three horizontal wooden planks with a decorative, jagged edge. The text is painted in white, bold, capital letters. The signpost is made of two vertical wooden posts and a horizontal crossbar. The background is a blurred landscape with a blue sky and a blue foreground.

WELCOME TO
COLORFUL
COLORADO

- Many of the measures focused on housing/land use this year are part of a package of bills pursued by the majority Democrats and Governor Jared Polis.
- It is a redo of a similar effort that collapsed at the end of last year's legislative session (SB23-213).
- Beyond transit-oriented communities (TOC), the other bills in the Polis-backed land-use package include measures to eliminate parking minimums and occupancy limits, a measure to allow accessory-dwelling units in Front Range communities, and a bill studying local governments' housing needs.
- Bills impacting the cost of housing and renters, such as construction defect litigation reform and "for cause" eviction are also making their way through the legislature.

2024 HOUSING & LAND USE



- Democrats and environmental justice advocates unveiled an ambitious package of ozone-fighting bills this year.
- The bills would “pause” oil and gas drilling in summer months, set caps on miles driven in gasoline-powered cars, and increase pollution fines for “repeat offenders” like the Suncor refinery.
- The bills will focus on curbing toxic emissions from oil and gas drilling sites by changing how Colorado issues permits, lengthening the state’s summer ozone season to five months instead of three, and increasing the amount of money companies could be fined if they violate the terms of their air permits.
- There is an additional bill that would essentially ban oil and gas.
- “We will fight each of these bills, and we intend to explore every available path forward to protect Coloradans from these efforts, which if successful will raise energy costs on those who can least afford it,” said Dan Haley with Colorado Oil & Gas Association said.

2024 SUSTAINABILITY & THE ENVIRONMENT



- Wage theft is being discussed this session.
- A bill in the Colorado legislature aims to protect construction workers from pervasive wage theft in the industry. It has similar aims as an ordinance passed by the Denver City Council last year, sponsors have said.
- Gig workers are also back under the Gold Dome.
- A bill that would require companies like Uber and Lyft to disclose how rideshare fares are distributed and clarity on where drivers are headed cleared its first committee hurdle recently. Another bill requires delivery network companies to develop driver deactivation policies and make various disclosures to drivers and customers.

2024 WORKER RIGHTS & LABOR RELATIONS



- DEN Accessibility: The bill requires that the airport authority of the City and County of Denver ensure accessibility for travelers with disabilities at DEN and authorizes CDOT to issue fines for enforcement.
- Revamping RTD: We don't yet have a bill on this, but we know it's coming. Legislators and the Governor want to completely restructure RTD - including shrinking and restructuring the board.
- Substance Abuse: Colorado lawmakers are tackling two proposals that offer convergent - and divergent - approaches to combatting drug abuse that starkly illuminates ideological disagreements at the Capitol. The first bill focuses on several measures, including the distribution of antagonists, such as Narcan, and exempts individuals who receive paraphernalia from a syringe exchange program from being charged with drug possession. The second bill deals with substance treatment.
- DHS Issues: From creating a comprehensive statewide system of care for children with behavioral health need, to measures that support kinship foster care homes, to overhauling the Colorado childcare assistance program (CCCAP), there is no shortage of human services legislation.

MORE BILLS

2024 Session Summary

- **The timeline is strict:** Lawmakers convened on January 10th, 2024, for a day 120 legislative session. The clock is ticking.
- **Education is a big priority for Polis – but we await the School Finance Act:** Colorado is poised to fully fund its education system next year for the first time since 2010 if Governor Polis gets his wish.
- **The budget may bring some caution:** Already, some lawmakers have warned that Colorado's economy is entering a more restrained fiscal period that would "cautious, responsible budgeting." Still, some of the economic indicators remain bright for Colorado, notably its low unemployment rate.
- **We (generally) know some of the major issues this year:** Land use changes, construction litigation reform, right of first refusal for local governments, RTD changes, for cause eviction requirements, property tax changes, mental health system capacity, and juvenile justice reform are all on the table.
- **What will Republican's do?:** Stall and filibuster.



QUESTIONS?

