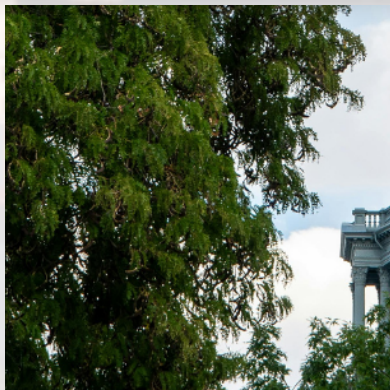
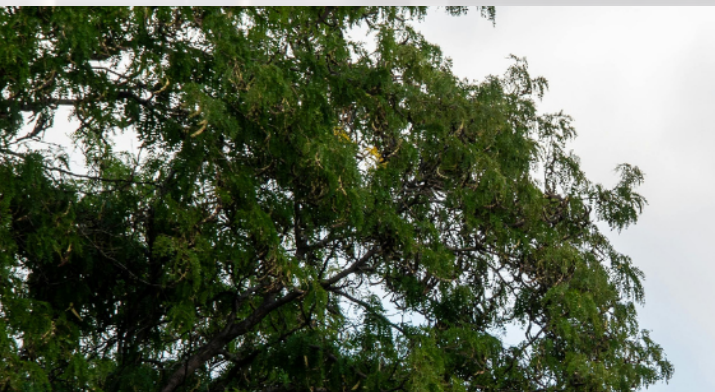
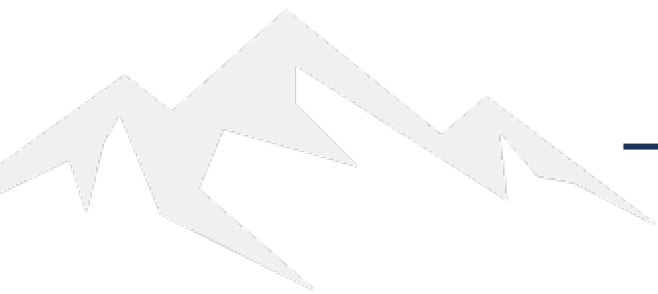




June 2025

Colorado Legislative Review: The 2025 Edition





Executive Summary

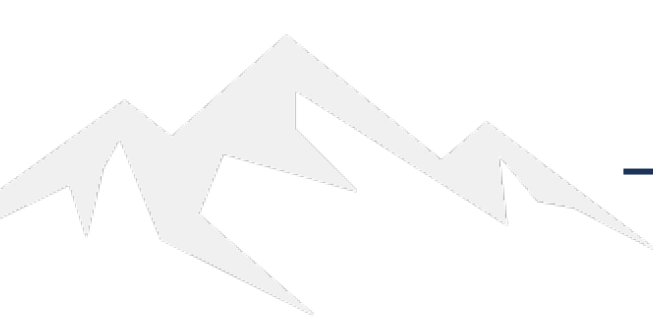
The 2025 Colorado legislative session, which convened on January 8 and adjourned on May 7, saw a seven percent decrease in bills introduced by the General Assembly, from 705 in 2024 to 657 in 2025. (1) Similarly, there was a seven percent decrease in the number of bills passed – from 525 to 485. One reason behind this decrease is the TABOR cap on legislative spending, which is forcing legislators to stop running as many bills with large fiscal notes as usual because the budget no longer has room for quite as much wayward spending.

The 2025 session still demonstrated a clear example of the consequences of one-party rule in state government, especially in the areas of public safety and affordability. According to the 2025 U.S. News & World Report rankings, Colorado is now the second most dangerous state in the country, up from third in 2024. (2)(3)

Progressive legislators continued to push through an array of extreme agenda items on crime, doubling down on lax laws on child sexual assault and Colorado's sanctuary state status. Attempts to reform state law on personal recognizance (PR) bonds and fentanyl were killed in committee, while attacks on TABOR and parental rights took center stage. One bright spot is that a bill to threaten charter schools' autonomy was not brought forward, after nearly 50% of the citizens supported Advance Colorado's school choice measure on the 2024 ballot.

According to a survey by the Colorado Polling Institute, the number one state issue on voters' minds was housing affordability. The cost of living was also in the top five issues. (4) The session began with leaders from all four of Colorado's legislative caucuses calling for laws to address affordability and the cost of living. (5) However, progressive legislators stopped attempts to repeal extensive fees and instead, prioritized an extreme union bill that was ultimately vetoed by the Governor. (6)

While Coloradans wanted common-sense policies to keep their families safer and their cost of living more affordable, those priorities were largely ignored by the politicians in charge. Despite this, a few common-sense



measures still passed, such as the implementation of Proposition 130 – the Advance Colorado ballot measure passed by voters in 2024 to provide \$350 million in funding to law enforcement. An attempt to circumvent Advance’s Truth in Sentencing measure, also passed in 2024, was defeated in committee.

This report offers a brief examination of several hotly debated bills from the 2025 session.

Public Safety

Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Child Sexual Assault Dies in Committee: House Bill 25-1073

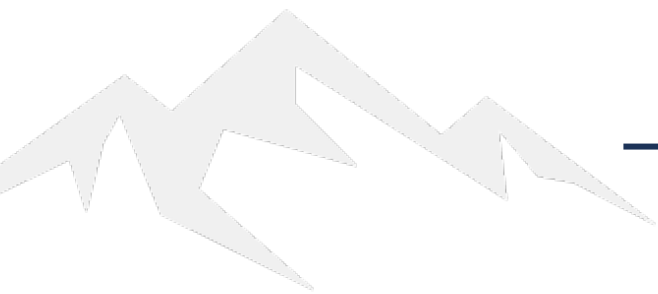
HB1073, titled “Protections Against Child Rape,” was a bipartisan bill that would have required mandatory minimum prison sentences for those convicted of sexually assaulting children and removed the possibility of probation for those offenders. Representatives Brandi Bradley and Regina English and Senators Janice Rich and Mark Snyder sponsored the bill. (7)

According to Rep. Bradley, 70% of child rapists in Colorado get probation, and 73% of convicted child rapists have been paroled, serving on average a sentence of only 8 years. (8)

According to District Attorney George Brauchler of the 23rd Judicial District, Colorado law permits a man who rapes multiple children, if he has only raped them each once, to still be eligible for probation:

“In Colorado, a man who rapes a child — as long as it is just once — can get probation. As in, walk right out of the courtroom after conviction. But it is much worse than that. If that same man goes on to rape nine other children, as long as he only rapes them each once, that child rapist is also eligible for probation. That statement remains true even if the child rapist is a teacher, member of clergy, sports coach or any other person in a position of trust in relation to those children.” (9)

Colorado legislators had the opportunity to fix this loophole and put child predators in jail. Unfortunately, HB1073 was killed in committee with a 6-5



vote. Advance Colorado is proposing a ballot measure to fix this loophole and prohibit probation for child predators.

Doubling Down on Colorado's Sanctuary State Status: Senate Bill 25-276

Since 2019, Governor Polis has now signed four different sanctuary state bills into law. They cover a wide range of sanctuary activities, including banning jails from having a detention contract with ICE and banning law enforcement from providing information to the federal Department of Homeland Security if they want access to Colorado data that helps them arrest criminals.

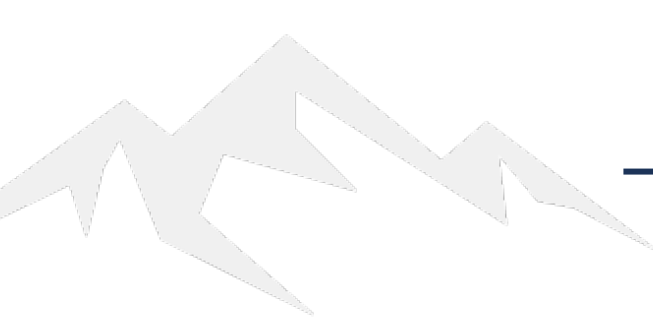
SB276, now signed into law, takes Colorado's sanctuary state status to the next level, banning multiple other agencies and levels of government from cooperating with Homeland Security in many situations. Most egregious is the personal fine of up to \$50,000 that the bill assigns to any local government official or law enforcement officer who chooses to cooperate with the federal government, even for the specific purpose of keeping their citizens safe. The fine, when charged, will be allocated to the Immigration Legal Defense Fund. (10)

Before SB276 was passed in a final vote, an amendment was offered to add a section that reads:

“THIS ARTICLE 74 SHALL NOT INTERFERE WITH CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS OR PROCEEDINGS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED BY JUDICIAL PROCESS OR TO RESTRICT A STATE AGENCY EMPLOYEE OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION EMPLOYEE FROM FULLY INVESTIGATING, PARTICIPATING IN, COOPERATING WITH, OR ASSISTING FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS.” (10)

This amendment makes an exception to the new sanctuary state law when illegal immigrants commit crimes, and it came after a ballot measure filed by Advance Colorado to require law enforcement to cooperate with ICE when they deal with violent criminals and repeat felons.

However, SB276 would still preclude law enforcement and local government officials from taking proactive steps in reporting violent criminals to the



Department of Homeland Security or initiating investigations with the federal government to keep their citizens safe.

Addressing the Ongoing Fentanyl Crisis: Senate Bill 25-044

SB044, titled “Synthetic Opiates Criminal Penalties,” would have increased the penalties for crimes involving certain synthetic opiates, including fentanyl, carfentanil, benzimidazole opiate, or the analogs thereof. Under this bill, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing, or possessing with intent to distribute any amount of material related to those opiates would have become a level 1 drug felony, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 8 years in prison. (11)

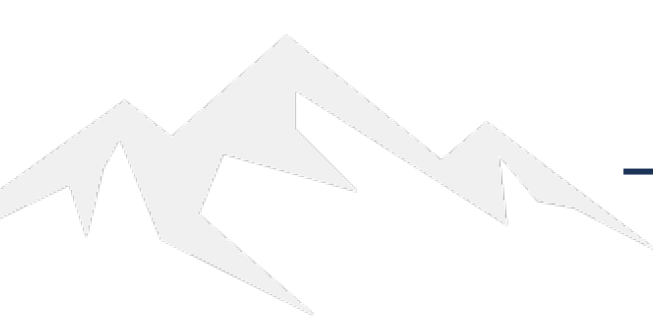
The bill also would have made possession of any amount of these opiates a level 4 drug felony, which carries potential prison time and fines. Under current law, criminal penalties for synthetic opiates like fentanyl are based on a graduated system, dependent on weight. (12) This bill would have removed the arbitrary weight-based distinctions and made possession of any amount a felony.

Law enforcement supporting SB044 contended this bill was a necessary change to aid them in dealing with drug cartel and gang activity, which is expanding in many areas of Colorado. SB044 would have given district attorneys a greater ability to prosecute fentanyl dealers, expose the cartel leaders and drug trafficking rings, and serve as a powerful deterrent against criminal drug activity in Colorado.

Unfortunately, addressing Colorado’s ongoing fentanyl crisis was not part of the progressive agenda. The bill was killed in the Senate Judiciary Committee on a vote of 4-3. Advance Colorado is now proposing a ballot measure to require jail time for fentanyl dealers and to create a treatment-mandated felony for fentanyl users.

Lowering Penalties on Attempted First Degree Murder: House Bill 25-1206

HB1206, titled “Extreme Indifference Offenses Not Causing Death,” was one of the most head-scratching pieces of legislation introduced in 2025. The bill would create lower felony classifications in Colorado for “criminal attempt to



first degree murder under circumstances evidencing an attitude of universal malice manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life generally.” The bill would also reclassify attempted first-degree murder as a class 3 felony if serious body injury results to any person, a class 4 felony if bodily injury results to any person, and a class 5 felony if no injury results to any person, in effect lowering the current sentencing options for this crime of violence. (13) Representative Jarvis Caldwell dubbed the bill the “bad shot bill” on the Mandy Connell show because of how leniently attempted first-degree murder would be treated under HB1206. (14)

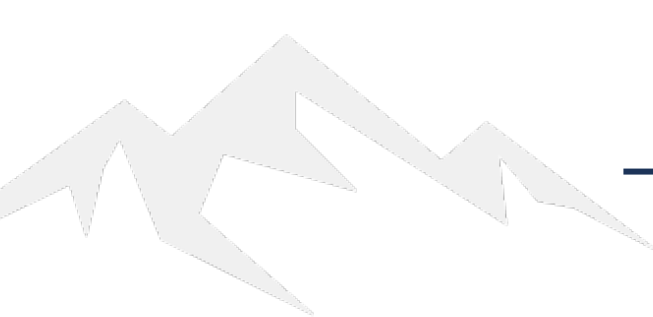
In November 2024, Colorado voters overwhelmingly passed Advance Colorado’s Proposition 128, a ballot measure that increased the minimum time served (to at least 85% of a sentence) before parole eligibility for certain violent crimes – including attempted first degree murder. (15) Proposition 128 received the highest “yes” votes of any citizen-initiated measure on the ballot in 2024.

Despite the clarity of voters’ will, progressive lawmakers chose to circumvent truth in sentencing by redefining and reclassifying attempted first degree murder. HB1206 would have lowered sentencing for multiple types of attempted murder and lowered the “bad shot” attempt that results in no injuries to the same felony classification as failure to pay child support. (16)

After testimony during the committee hearing, all 11 lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee voted to kill this ill-advised bill, sponsored by Representatives Michael Carter and Jennifer Bacon and Senators Mike Weissman and Julie Gonzales.

Tackling Judicial Abuse with PR Bond Reform: House Bill 25-1072

No-cost personal recognizance bonds, known as PR bonds, allow judges to release accused criminals solely on the basis that they have promised to show up for their court date. Too often, PR bonds in Colorado allow the release of defendants who are violent and repeat criminals. Alex Cabriaes testified in 2024 that his sister’s killer was released on a PR bond for six gun-related crimes before he shot her to death over a minor traffic accident. (17)



House Bill 25-1072, titled “Pretrial Release for Repeat Violent Offenses,” was a bipartisan measure that aimed to reduce judicial abuse and create a safer Colorado by reforming how PR bonds are set. Representatives Jarvis Caldwell and Shannon Bird and Senator Byron Pelton sponsored the bill. (18)

The bill would prohibit courts from releasing defendants on unsecured PR bonds without the district attorney’s consent if three conditions are met:

- 1) “the person is accused of committing a crime of violence;
- 2) the courts find probable cause to believe that the person has committed the offense; and
- 3) either the person has a record of conviction for a crime of violence within the prior 2 years or there are at least 2 pending criminal charges against the person that allege that the person committed a crime of violence and the court finds probable cause to believe that the person has committed the prior alleged offenses.” (18)

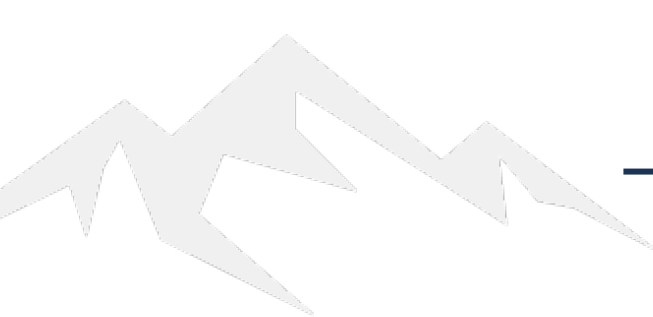
Unfortunately for Colorado, soft-on-crime lawmakers voted to kill the bill in committee on a party-line vote of 7-4.

Undermining Local Control on Public Safety: House Bill 25-1147

HB1147, titled “Fairness and Transparency in Municipal Court,” would have prevented municipal courts from handing down harsher sentences for low-level offenses than those allowed by state law, banning local governments from being tougher on crime than the state is. (19)

While touted as a “simple question of equity” by Jack Johnson with Disability Law Colorado, the mayors of Denver, Colorado Springs, and Aurora sent Governor Polis a letter saying, “HB25-1147 is a significant overstep of home rule authority and negatively impacts our ability to address crime in a manner that is relevant to our communities as outlined in the Colorado Constitution Article XX Section 6(h).” (20)

This bill would have undermined local control, limiting the ability of local governments to address local crime as they see fit for their communities. When communities suffer from different trends in criminal activity, the answer is not a statewide law that softens penalties on crime for the sake of “equity.” Auto theft and domestic violence may be considered “low-level”



offenses, but they are serious and have a serious impact on local communities who should be empowered to deal with these crimes as they see fit.

While HB1147 bill passed the House and the Senate, Governor Polis vetoed this destructive bill shortly after the session ended, allowing local governments to retain their autonomy. (21)

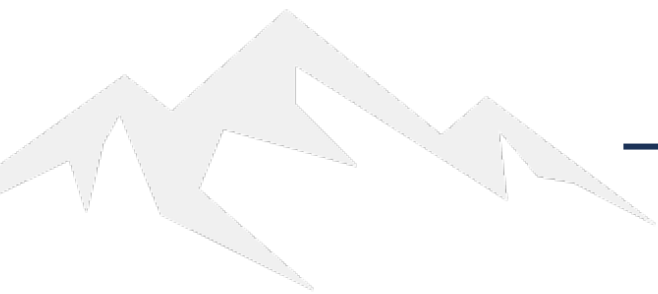
Implementing Proposition 130: Senate Bill 25-310

Colorado voters passed Advance Colorado's Proposition 130 in November 2024. Without raising taxes, Proposition 130 requires the legislature to allocate \$350 million to a new law enforcement fund that will pay for the hiring, training, and equipping of law enforcement officers across the state. The ballot measure also requires the state to provide a \$1 million death benefit to the families of law enforcement officers who are killed in the line of duty. (22)

After the passage of Proposition 130, the legislature needed to pass implementing legislation that adheres to the measure's requirements. SB310, titled "Proposition 130 Implementation," was introduced late in the 2025 session. (23)

The bill created two dedicated funds, the Peace Officer Training and Support Fund and the Death Benefit Fund, and directs a one-time transfer of \$500 million from the General Fund reserve to the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) for investment. A minimum of \$15 million and up to \$35 million of these investment earnings will be moved from PERA to the two funds annually until the \$350 million requirement from Proposition 130 is met. (23) The full \$35 million must be provided each year if earnings rise to that level. Market predictions show that the \$350 million funding requirement should be met in ten to twelve years. This steady stream of extra funding for law enforcement will likely become relied on over the next decade, leading to a likelihood of its continuation for the indefinite future, well beyond the ten guaranteed years.

On November 6, 2024, the day after Proposition 130 passed, Officer Evan Dunn from the Golden Police Department was struck and killed while responding to a highway crash. (24) SB310 ensures Annalise Dunn, the widow



of Officer Dunn, will receive the \$1 million death benefit from Proposition 130 even though her husband was killed days before the vote was certified.

TABOR, Taxes, & Affordability

Ignoring Affordability as Citizens' Top Priority: Bills on Fees (House Bill 25-1051, House Bill 25-1144, Senate Bill 25-139, & Senate Bill 25-131)

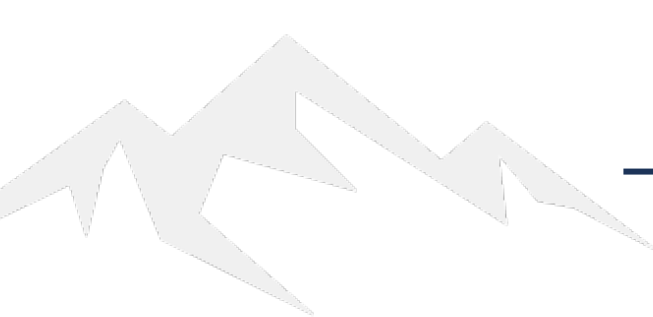
Excessive taxes and fees are draining Colorado families of financial security. A few legislators set out to tackle fees in a variety of ways, but met with no success.

HB1051, titled “Repeal Recycled Paper Carryout Bag Fee,” would have repealed the 10-cent bag fee that Coloradans started paying in 2023. (25)

HB1144 was crafted to eliminate all delivery fees imposed by the state as well as fees associated with the community access enterprise, clean fleet enterprise, statewide bridge and tunnel enterprise, clean transit enterprise, and the nonattainment area air pollution mitigation enterprise. (26) According to CBS, the delivery fee alone is expected to cost Coloradans around \$200 million between July of 2024 and June 2025. (27)

SB139, titled “Grocery & Utility Bill Reduction Measures,” and SB131, titled “Reducing the Cost of Housing,” were both part of a suite of bills led by Senate Republicans that tackled regulations, housing costs, and fees to lower costs and provide economic relief for Coloradans. (28)(29) According to Senate Republicans, these two bills would have given the average Colorado family a savings of \$3,900 annually. (30)

These four bills tackled a topic voters have expressed deep concern about: affordable living in Colorado. Unfortunately, progressives at the Capitol did not have the same priorities. All four bills were killed in committee, with no debate on the floor. Advance Colorado is now proposing a ballot measure to put fees under TABOR in the state constitution and require the government to ask the people before it imposes heavy fees.



44 Lawmakers Attack TABOR's Constitutionality: House Joint Resolution 25-1023

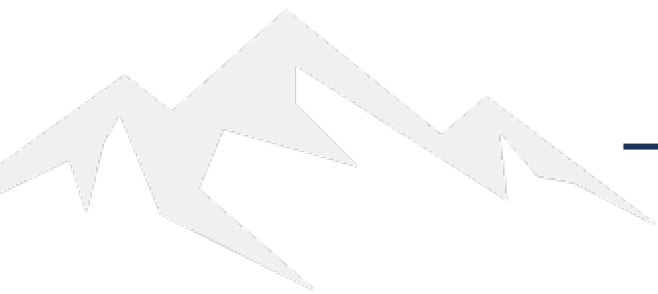
Despite the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights' popularity among Coloradans across the political spectrum, progressives have not stopped attacking TABOR.

HRJ1023 would have authorized a lawsuit, funded by taxpayer dollars, to challenge TABOR's constitutionality by arguing that it deprives Colorado of rights under the Guarantee Clause, specifically, the guarantee of a republican form of government. (31) Supporters of this lawsuit, such as the Colorado Fiscal Institute, claim that Colorado's tax code is broken "because of constitutional handcuffs that limit progress," alleging that TABOR is fundamentally unfair. (32)

In 2021, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals found that this same Guarantee Clause argument was without merit. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled since 1912 that any Guarantee Clause questions are political rather than judicial. In *Rogers v. Lodge* (1982), the Court said that the Clause "cannot be challenged in the courts" and is "ultimately" left to "the vigilance of the people in exercising political rights." Furthermore, in *Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Redistricting Commission* (2015), the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that the word "legislature" in the Constitution's Election Clause includes ballot measures as well as legislative bodies.

In reality, TABOR – passed by the people of Colorado over 30 years ago – is the final bulwark against reckless spending by one party rule in Colorado. TABOR prevents the state government from retaining excess taxes – that could otherwise be used on liberal agenda items and pet projects – and requires the excess to be returned to taxpayers.

TABOR is a powerful check on government spending, as it forces the government to ask the people for permission to raise taxes. In the years where taxpayers are sent a refund, TABOR can serve as a financial boost, especially for low-income families living paycheck to paycheck. HRJ1023 was not supported by House or Senate leadership or the Governor, and it did not advance beyond committee.



NOTE: For further information on how lawmakers are rewriting the rules on TABOR and are using fees to circumvent TABOR, check out this [report](#) by the Common Sense Institute and this [report](#) by the Advance Colorado Institute. (33)(34)

Reforming Construction Defects Litigation: House Bill 25-1272

According to the Common Sense Institute, condominium development has effectively “grinded to a near halt in Colorado,” and in 2022, Colorado’s “housing affordability dropped at the 2nd fastest rate since 2009.” Right now, Colorado remains a risky and costly place for developers to build in, despite strong consumer demand. This multifaceted problem is in large part due to the high frequency and cost of construction defects liability litigation and the associated insurance costs. (35)

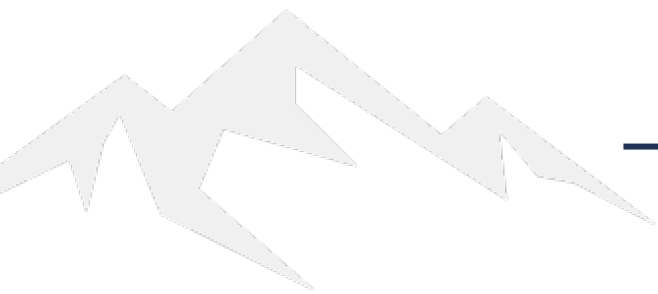
On May 12th, Governor Polis signed HB1272, which creates a voluntary incentive program, called the Multifamily Construction Incentive Program, for condo developers who agree to higher quality standards and third-party inspectors. In turn, developers will receive reduced legal liabilities for construction defects. (36) The program will be implemented in 2026.

There is concern that this new law still fails to solve the underlying issues facing builders, which include frivolous lawsuits, high insurance premiums, and attorneys’ fees. Ted Leighty, CEO of the Colorado Association of Home Builders, said, “This bill doesn’t go far enough to solve the issues it seeks to address... I’m not sure that it will achieve its goal... though I’ve never hoped to be more wrong in my life.” (37) Representative Ryan Gonzalez remarked that the bill puts Colorado on the right track. “It is not the answer to the affordable housing crisis. But it is a step in the right direction.” (38)

Continued action to reform construction defects is necessary to create a more affordable Colorado, especially for first-time homeowners.

Union’s Failure to Negotiate Well Ends in a Veto: Senate Bill 25-005

Governor Polis vetoed SB005, the union’s “Worker Protection Act,” shortly after the end of session. This bill passed the House and Senate and would have repealed a longstanding deal between business and labor that was



memorialized in the Colorado Labor Peace Act. The union sought to eliminate the requirement that 75% of the employees at a company must sign off in a second election before all employees are required to financially contribute to the union. (39) The bill would have lowered the voting threshold considerably, forcing many more employees to fund unions whether or not they ever voted to establish the union in the first place.

Jesse Mallory, State Director of Americans for Prosperity - Colorado, said that the bill, if signed, would lead to inflation. “That’s what it’ll absolutely do, make things cost more.” (40)

Governor Polis, for his part, confessed, “I am pro-union, pro-worker, and have worked throughout my career in public service to protect the right of workers to organize,” but that, “It would be political suicide if I were to sign the bill.” (6) His veto on May 16 is a win for economic competitiveness, individual worker autonomy, and affordability.

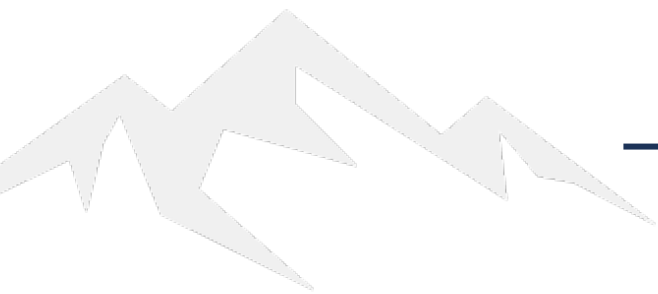
Government Accountability

Undermining Parental Rights and Speech Mandates: House Bill 25-1312

Nearly 700 grassroots activists showed up to testify on HB1312 when it reached its Senate Committee hearing, with three-quarters of the people present opposing the bill.

While multiple portions of HB1312, which was signed into law by Governor Polis, still threaten the First Amendment rights of Coloradans, the most egregious section of the bill was entirely removed. (41) Many organizations joined together to educate the public on the dangers of HB1312 and, specifically, the assault on parental rights presented by this bill.

The section that was eventually stripped out would have targeted parents who do not agree with the state’s gender ideology. In a custody determination, courts would have been allowed to consider a parent’s refusal to change the gender of their child on the same level as physical abuse. Then, the courts could have stripped custody rights from a parent on this basis.



Due to the lack of clarity in the final version of HB1312, it is likely that a similar bill comes back in a future legislative session and citizens will have to be equally vigilant.

Penalizing Citizens Who Run Ballot Measures: House Bill 25-1327

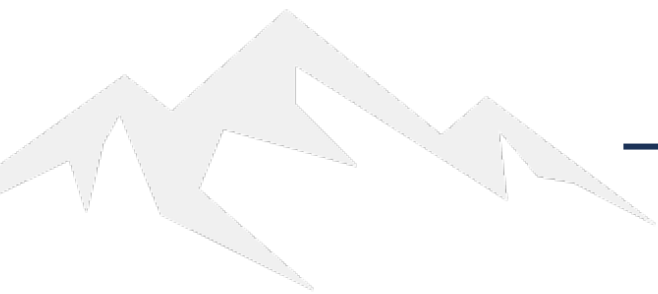
Liberal legislators at the Capitol prefer to enact policy without pushback from the people. Many of them speak out against citizens' constitutional right to run ballot measures here in Colorado – or, at least, heavily oppose what the people pass on the ballot and try to undermine or repeal it through the legislative process.

Since citizen ballot measures are constitutional, legislators cannot remove the right. Instead, they run bills like HB1327 to make it more difficult for citizens to run a successful campaign to change Colorado law.

HB1327 attempted to insert procedural and regulatory roadblocks into the initiative process. While the law will require additional reporting from citizens' sponsoring initiatives, two of the most egregious provisions were removed before HB1327 was signed into law. (42)

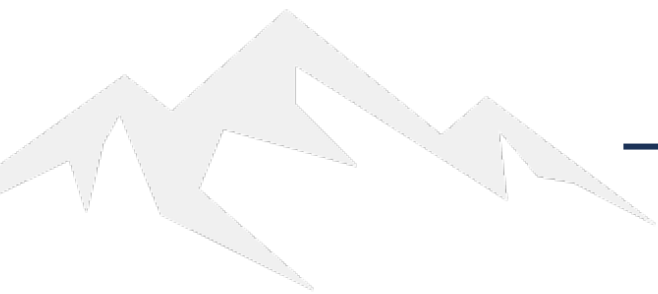
Ballot initiative sponsors would have been forced to report to the Secretary of State when they had collected 25%, 50%, and 75% of the required signatures, tipping off opponents to how successful an effort appeared to be. Now, the only report that will be required is one at the 75% mark.

HB1327 was originally designed to shorten the time to collect signatures, but that provision was successfully removed, and citizens will now have the full time period to place a measure on the ballot.

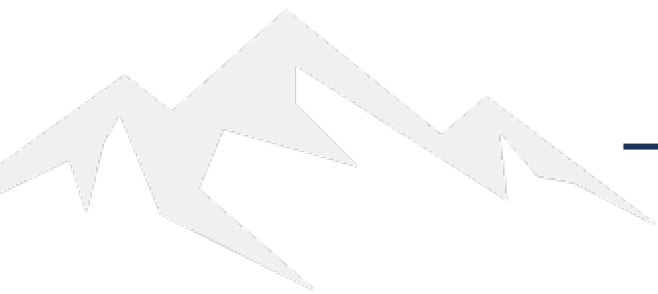


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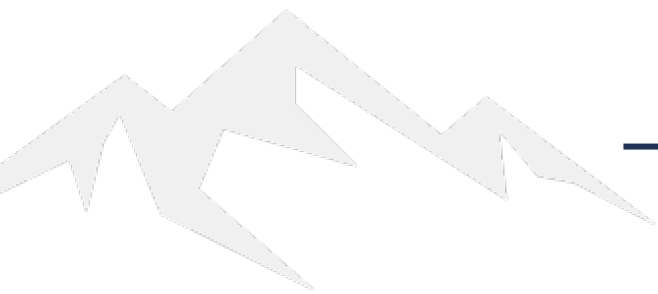
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