



The 75th Colorado General Assembly

This memorandum provides a detailed overview of the 75th Colorado General Assembly. It outlines the leadership and committee structures in both the State House and State Senate, highlighting prominent figures from the two major political parties. The document also introduces new members of the General Assembly, including those selected to fill legislative vacancies, and explores potential priorities for Governor Jared Polis in 2025. Furthermore, it offers insight into the state's ongoing budget challenges and fiscal constraints, which are expected to influence legislative discussions and decisions during the upcoming session.

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Executive Summary

This memorandum provides a detailed overview of key information for Colorado’s 75th General Assembly. Key highlights of this memorandum include:

Leadership Structure & Key Political Figures

- The leadership within the General Assembly plays a pivotal role in advancing legislative goals, managing policy debates, and ensuring that state governance aligns with both immediate needs and long-term objectives. Each legislative chamber—comprising the State House of Representatives and the State Senate—has its own set of leadership positions, including party leaders, committee chairs, and influential members who are critical in shaping the direction of legislation.
- This memorandum identifies the key leaders for both parties in each chamber, detailing their responsibilities and influence in the upcoming session. Their roles will be central in addressing urgent issues, such as education funding, healthcare reform, infrastructure needs, and housing affordability.

New Legislators

- Approximately one-quarter (24) of Colorado's legislators will be entering the State Capitol for the first time in the upcoming session, while another, Dan Woog, is returning to the House after losing his seat in 2022. This

influx of new faces signals a significant shift in the state's legislative landscape. In addition, seven current State House members will move to the State Senate, including Democratic Senators-elect Marc Snyder, Cathy Kipp, Judy Amabile, Lindsey Daugherty, and Mike Weissman, as well as Republican Senators-elect Lisa Frizell and Marc Catlin.

- Several recent vacancies have been filled, bringing new faces to the Gold Dome. Matthew Ball was chosen by a Democratic vacancy committee to represent Senate District 31 in central Denver, defeating Rep. Steven Woodrow after five rounds of voting. With Ball's victory, only one vacancy remains in House District 41, following Rep. Iman Jodeh's appointment to succeed Janet Buckner in Senate District 29. On the Republican side, John Carson was selected to fill the vacancy left by Kevin Van Winkle in Senate District 30.
- This influx of new lawmakers in both chambers is anticipated to infuse the legislative process with fresh energy and perspectives. With a strong focus on key issues such as housing, education, and fiscal responsibility, these new legislators are poised to tackle the pressing challenges of the 2025 session while adjusting to the political dynamics and priorities that will shape the future of Colorado's governance.

Committee Assignments & Legislative Work

- In addition to leadership roles, this memorandum outlines the committee assignments within both chambers of the General Assembly. Committees serve as the backbone of the legislative process, where most of the detailed work on bills occurs. They review proposed legislation, conduct hearings, and make recommendations to the full chamber.
- Understanding the makeup and leadership of these committees is essential for anticipating the focus areas of the 75th General Assembly, as well as for predicting which bills are likely to gain traction in the upcoming session. Key committees are expected to address high-priority issues such as economic development, healthcare, transportation, and climate change.

Governor's Legislative Priorities for 2025

- Like prior sessions, Governor Jared Polis is expected to play a significant role in the legislative process, already offering his budget proposal for the 2025 session. This memorandum examines potential areas of focus for the Governor, which may include tackling the state's ongoing challenges related to education funding, healthcare accessibility, housing affordability, climate action, and workforce development. Additionally, the Governor's emphasis on innovation and economic growth, particularly in the tech and renewable energy sectors, will likely shape his policy agenda.
- The memorandum considers the Governor's priorities within the broader context of his administration's goals, as well as the political dynamics of a divided legislature. The Governor's ability to negotiate and build bipartisan support will be a key factor in determining the success of his proposed initiatives.

Colorado's Budget Realities & Fiscal Outlook

- A critical component of this memorandum is an analysis of Colorado's budget outlook, which is heavily influenced by the state's fiscal realities and constraints. The state faces several budgetary challenges as it enters the 2025 legislative session, including rising Medicaid costs, inflationary pressures, and the need to address deferred maintenance on public infrastructure.
- The recent December budget forecast, which provides updated revenue projections and expense estimates, is a central point of reference for lawmakers as they consider their fiscal priorities for the upcoming session. This forecast offers insights into the state's projected revenue and expenditure trends, as well as the projected growth in areas like education, healthcare, and transportation. However, the forecast also highlights potential fiscal shortfalls and the need for budgetary restraint.

- One of the most pressing concerns is the rising cost of Medicaid, which continues to strain the state budget. Lawmakers will need to explore options for managing these costs while ensuring that vulnerable populations retain access to essential healthcare services. Additionally, inflationary pressures on other key areas of the budget, such as public safety and social services, will require careful consideration.

Colorado General Assembly Overview

The Colorado General Assembly consists of 100 members in total:

- **State House of Representatives: 65 members**
 - **State Senate: 35 members**
- In the State House, members can serve up to four consecutive two-year terms (a total of 8 years). There are no staggered terms, so all 65 members of the House are up for election every two years. In the State Senate, members can serve up to two consecutive four-year terms (a total of 8 years). Elections for State Senators are staggered, meaning approximately half of the 35 Senate seats are up for election every two years.
 - In the Senate, the Senate President and the Majority Leader hold the most significant positions, followed by various party leadership roles designed to support legislative strategy, manage debate, and coordinate votes. In the House of Representatives, leadership is similarly crucial for setting legislative priorities, managing floor debate, and maintaining party unity. The Speaker of the House holds the highest-ranking position, while party leaders in both the majority and minority serve as key influencers in shaping legislative outcomes.
 - The leadership structures in both the House and Senate play a critical role in the legislative process, determining which issues will be prioritized, which bills will be debated, and ultimately, which laws will be enacted. Effective leadership requires not only political acumen but also the ability to build coalitions, manage party dynamics, and navigate the often-complex process of lawmaking.
 - In the 2024 elections, Colorado Democrats successfully retained their strong majorities in the state legislature, though they fell just short of achieving a supermajority in both chambers. In the State House, Democrats will hold a 43-22 majority, while in the State Senate, they will have a 23-12 majority. In the November elections, Republicans flipped three seats in the House and one in the Senate, while Democrats gained one Senate seat. These margins are similar to the partisan balance in the previous two years.
 - As the 75th General Assembly convenes, it will welcome a new cohort of lawmakers. About a quarter of Colorado’s legislators will be new when the next session begins, with most of them stepping into their first term in the Capitol. Seven current representatives will also move to the Senate, including Democratic Senators-elect Marc Snyder, Cathy Kipp, Judy Amabile, Lindsey Daugherty, and Mike Weissman, as well as Republican Senators-elect Lisa Frizell and Marc Catlin.
 - Although Democrats continue to hold a significant majority in both chambers, their capacity to reshape state government next year may be constrained. When lawmakers reconvene in January, they will face the urgent task of cutting more than \$700 million from the budget, with the most substantial reductions likely affecting Democratic priorities such as Medicaid and education.

As Colorado’s 75th General Assembly prepares to convene in January 2025, the leadership structure, committee assignments, outstanding vacancies, and fiscal outlook will play a crucial role in shaping the legislative session. With key issues such as Medicaid costs, inflation, and the state’s economic future at the forefront, the General Assembly faces significant challenges in crafting a budget that meets the needs of all Coloradans while addressing the state’s growing fiscal pressures. Due to ongoing budget constraints, there will likely be minimal opportunity for special projects or new state programs. The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) is anticipated to exercise significant influence, leveraging its authority to manage the state's financial priorities and address fiscal challenges during the session.

2025 New Legislators

About a quarter (25) of Colorado’s legislators will be new when the next session begins, with most of them stepping into their first term in the Capitol (although Dan Woog previously served one term in the House from 2020-2022). During the 2025 legislative session, Democrats will hold a slightly smaller, 43-22, majority in the House after Republicans managed to flip three seats. The Senate remains split between 23 Democrats to 12 Republicans, although two seats changed hands.

New members of the Colorado General Assembly in 2025 include:

Senate District 29: John Carson (R)

(Vacancy Appointment) Senator John Carson, a former CU regent, succeeds former Sen. Kevin Van Winkle, who resigned in December to accept an appointment to the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners. Carson worked to eliminate the Douglas County teachers' union when he was on the school board and advance taxpayer-funded vouchers for private schools, an issue that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The lawsuit was tossed out when Democrats took over the school board in 2015. Carson has called for eliminating the state income tax, supporting school choice and the Second Amendment, and requiring law enforcement to cooperate with federal officials on immigration.



Senate District 31: Matt Ball (D)

(Vacancy Appointment) Senator Matt Ball replaces outgoing Sen. Chris Hansen in the Colorado Senate. Ball won the SD311 vacancy committee in the fifth round of voting with 61 votes. A fifth-generation Coloradan, Matt Ball, spent years in the military as an Army Ranger. He did three combat deployments in Afghanistan and one in Turkey, where he was with a group of special operators combating ISIS in Syria. When he returned to the United States, like many veterans, he experienced mental health struggles — which he says has informed his priorities since. He attended law school at Stanford and practiced appellate and private criminal defense law for five years. Most recently he served as the policy director for Denver Mayor Mike Johnston.

Senate District 13: Scott Bright (R)

Senator Scott Bright is the only new member of the Colorado Senate. He won Senate District 13, replacing term-limited Democratic Sen. Kevin Priola. Bright secured approximately 56% of the vote in the general election. He runs his family’s childcare and preschool businesses in Weld County and serves as president of the Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado. Bright has stated that reducing the cost of living in Colorado is his primary focus. He ran on a platform of lowering taxes, promoting education, and ending job-killing regulations.



House District 4: Cecelia Espenoza (D)

Rep. Cecelia Espenoza will represent Denver's House District 4, succeeding Rep. Tim Hernández. Espenoza defeated the more progressive Hernández in the June Democratic primary with 53% of the vote and won the general election by a significant margin. A former appellate immigration judge and immigration lawyer, Espenoza lists gun safety as a key priority, with a potential focus on tax credits for gun safe purchases. She has been affiliated with the Round Table of Former Immigration Judges, Denver Cafecito, and University of Utah alumni board. She will serve on the House Judiciary Committee and the House State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

House District 6: Sean Camacho (D)

Attorney and Air Force veteran Rep. Sean Camacho will represent Denver’s House District 6, replacing Rep. Elisabeth Epps. Camacho won the Democratic primary with 61% of the vote and the general election with 85%. He is focused on increasing housing availability across all income levels. As of 2024, Camacho was affiliated with the Colorado Dream Foundation and Foster Source Camacho will serve on the House Energy and Environment and House Finance Committees. He also plans to compete for a vacancy in the state Senate, potentially leading to another vacancy in House District 6.



House District 8: Lindsay Gilchrist (D)

Rep. Lindsay Gilchrist replaces term-limited Rep. Leslie Herod in Denver’s House District 8. Gilchrist ran unopposed in the primary and won the general election with 87% of the vote. She has worked with the U.S. House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health and founded her own political strategy group. Gilchrist has spent time volunteering as a court appointed special advocate (CASA) and has been affiliated with Step Up. Some of her key issues include criminal justice reform, child welfare, and gun violence prevention. Gilchrist will serve on the House Health and Human Services Committee and the House Education Committee.

House District 16: Rebecca Keltie (R)

Rep. Rebecca Keltie will represent House District 16, replacing Democratic Rep. Steph Vigil. Keltie, a defense contract engineer and Navy veteran, won by three votes after a mandatory recount. Keltie has also worked in information technology, project management, atmospheric science, meteorology, oceanography, and as a small business owner. She says she will work to increase public safety, champion education and parental rights, and strengthen small business. She will serve on the House Judiciary Committee and House Business Affairs and Labor Committee.



House District 18: Amy Paschal (D)

Rep. Amy Paschal replaces Rep. Marc Snyder in House District 18 in western Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs. Paschal won by about 7 points in the general election. A former software engineer turned stay-at-home mother, Paschal has been politically active for over a decade. Some of Paschal’s top issues include the economy, affordable housing, homelessness, and infrastructure funding. She has been affiliated with the League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, El Paso County Democratic Party, and Sierra Club. She will serve on the House Energy and Environment Committee and the House Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committee.

House District 19: Dan Woog (R)

Rep. Dan Woog flipped House District 19 by defeating Democrat Jillaire McMillan by over 100 votes after an automatic recount. Woog previously served one term in the House from 2020 to 2022. Woog works as a real estate broker and a small business owner, living in Frederick, Colorado. Previously, he served on the Erie Economic Development Council and the Erie Planning and Zoning Commission, and he was elected and re-elected to the Erie Board of Trustees. He ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Erie in 2018. He will serve as the ranking member of the House Energy and Environment Committee.





House District 20: Jarvis Caldwell (R)

Rep. Jarvis Caldwell replaces Rep. Don Wilson in House District 20 in northern Colorado Springs. Caldwell, an Air Force veteran, won the general election with 70% of the vote. He previously worked as an aide and communications director for the House GOP. He said his number one priority for House District 20 is getting legislation passed that gets costs down. He's supportive of further addressing the current property tax crisis and positive legislation like senior property tax exemption portability. Caldwell will serve on the House Education and House Judiciary Committees.

House District 24: Lisa Feret (D)

Rep. Lisa Feret replaces Rep. Lindsey Daugherty in House District 24. A former military police officer and current Medicaid and housing policy expert, Feret defeated her Republican opponent by 15 points in the general election. Feret is an advocate for both crime reduction and law enforcement reform. She supports alternative approaches to police action such as early intervention, the mental health co-response model, and solving the root causes of crime. She will serve on the House State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and House Health and Human Services Committee.

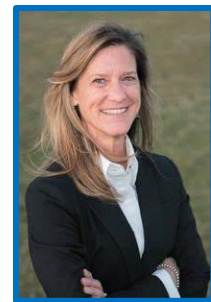


House District 30: Rebekah Stewart (D)

Rep. Rebekah Stewart, a former Lakewood City Council member, will represent House District 30, replacing term-limited Rep. Chris deGruy Kennedy. Stewart won the Democratic primary and the general election with about 63% of the vote. Her career experience includes working as a therapist and director of finance and operations for a nonprofit. Stewart, the first board-certified music therapist elected to office in Colorado, said she wants to bring her experience advocating for the disability and health care communities to the legislature. She will serve on the House Finance and House Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committees.

House District 31:(D) Jacque Phillips

Rep. Jacque Phillips, a civil rights attorney and former Thornton City Councilmember, replaces Rep. Julia Marvin in House District 31 in Thornton. Phillips defeated Marvin in the Democratic primary after losing to her in a 2024 vacancy committee process. She was a high school dropout who waited tables and paid her way through Aims Community College. Phillips then went on to obtain her doctorate at the University of Northern Colorado and a law degree at the University of Denver. Phillips will serve on the House Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committee and House Education Committee.



House District 36: Michael Carter (D)

Rep. Michael Carter, an Army veteran and public defender, replaces Rep. Mike Weissman in House District 36. Carter won the general election with 71% of the vote. His career experience includes working as an attorney and small business owner. He worked as a Colorado deputy public defender from May 2006 to August 2009. He has also served as a judge pro tem for the City of Westminster Municipal Court and a parking magistrate for the City of Aurora. Carter has served as a member of the Defenders Union of Colorado, the Sam Cary Bar Association, the Arapahoe County Bar Association, and the Colorado Criminal Defense Bar. He will serve on the House State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and as the vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

House District 38: Gretchen Rydin (D)

Rep. Gretchen Rydin, a social worker, therapist, and former member of Littleton City Council, replaces Rep. David Ortiz in House District 38. Rydin won the general election with 55% of the vote. Rydin says her top issues for this session are equitable housing, mental health and addiction, and small business support. She will serve on the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee and House Health and Human Services Committee.



District 45: Max Brooks (R)

Rep. Max Brooks will represent House District 45, replacing Rep. Lisa Frizell. Brooks, a Castle Rock Town Council member, won the general election with 62% of the vote. He has also served on town boards and commissions and on the boards of other organizations. He works in advertising and marketing for KOA, a radio station in Denver. His top issues this session include addressing affordability issues (including housing), public safety, and parental choice. He will serve on the House Finance Committee and House Business Affairs and Labor Committee.

House District 48: Carlos Barron (R)

Rep. Carlos Barron, a former city council member from Fort Lupton City, replaces Rep. Gabe Evans in House District 48. Barron, who ran unopposed in the general election, has a background in the oil and gas industry. Barron emigrated from Guanajuato, Mexico to the United States with his family when he was an infant. He lives in Fort Lupton, Colorado, with his wife and three children. Previously, he served on the city's planning commission. He works as the general manager of his father's company, which is part of the oil and gas industry, and has been with the firm for 23 years. Now that he's at the Capitol he wants to look into lowering the cost of living for Colorado residents. He will serve on the House Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committee and House Energy and Environment Committee.



House District 49: Lesley Smith (D)

Rep. Lesley Smith, a former at-large University of Colorado regent and Boulder Valley School District board member, will represent House District 49, replacing Rep. Judy Amabile. Smith, a scientist and educator, won the general election with 64% of the vote. Early in her career, she was the first woman aquanaut at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's underwater research habitat, Aquarius. Smith says she will prioritize education, affordability, the environment, and use a scientific approach to help solve Colorado's pressing challenges. She will serve on the House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee and House Education Committee.

House District 50: Ryan Gonzalez (R)

Rep. Ryan Gonzalez won House District 50 by defeating Democratic Rep. Mary Young. He previously ran in the 2022 election and was defeated by Young. Gonzalez was born to Mexican immigrants who came to America for better opportunity. He describes himself as pro-liberty, pro-free market, pro-faith, and pro-family. He wants to address what he describes as the roadblocks put in place by the current administration in Colorado, which he says has led to rising inflation, increased crime, and a loss of values and civil liberties. Gonzalez, with a background in banking, will serve on the House Energy and Environment Committee and the House Finance Committee.



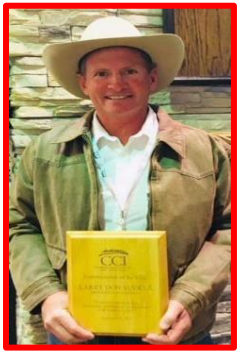


House District 52(D)

Rep. Yara Zokaie will represent House District 52, replacing Rep. Cathy Kipp. Zokaie, a tax law expert and chief deputy assessor for Larimer County, won the general election with 63% of the vote. She is a first-generation Iranian American, and has previously being involved with progressive politics, including advocating for paid family leave. Zokaie has represented people and small businesses across the country against the IRS and Departments of Revenue. Zokaie says her top issues this year include public education funding, progressive tax policy, health care for all, and protecting the environment. She will serve on the House Judiciary and House Finance Committees.

House District 50: Chris Richardson (R)

Rep. Chris Richardson, a second-term Elbert County Commissioner and Army veteran, replaces Rep. Rod Bockenfeld in House District 50. Richardson's career experience includes working as a military officer, professional logistician, and resource manager. As of 2024, Richardson was affiliated with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. As President of the Eastern Region of the statewide county organization (CCI) of County Commissioners, he worked closely with legislative stakeholders to strengthen local control and avoid unfunded mandates. He won the 2024 election with over 75% of the vote. Richardson will serve as the ranking member of the House Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committee and on the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee.



House District 58: Larry Suckla (R)

Rep. Larry Suckla, a retired firefighter, replaces Rep. Marc Catlin in House District 58. Suckla won the general election with 53% of the vote after winning the Republican primary by three votes. Suckla is a farmer and rancher from Cortez, in the southwestern corner of Colorado. He has experience in logging, construction, and landscaping. He served as a Montezuma County commissioner for eight years, from 2013–2021, and in 2017 he was named Colorado County Commissioner of the Year by his fellow commissioners across the state. He will serve on the House Transportation, Housing and Local Government Committee, the House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee, and the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee.

House District 59: Katie Stewart (D)

Rep. Katie Stewart, a former emergency medical technician and Durango School Board member with a background in political advocacy, replaces term-limited Rep. Barbara McLachlan in House District 59. She won the general election with just over 51% of the vote. Stewart said she believes access to health care in rural Colorado, including reproductive health care, resonated with voters in the district. Stewart's campaign focused on areas like affordable housing and protecting reproductive rights. Some of her key issues for 2025 include water, housing, and partnering with Native nations. Stewart will serve on the House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee and House Health and Human Services Committee.





House District 63: Dusty Johnson (R)

Rep. Dusty Johnson replaces Rep. Richard Holtorf in House District 63. Johnson, a former Morgan County GOP Chair, will focus on the district’s urban-rural divide. Dusty says her passion for agriculture and rural communities has been deeply rooted in her character from her upbringing in 4H and FFA. Her priorities include supporting agriculture, advocating for rural communities, common sense water planning, and accountable healthcare reform – including mental health. She will serve on the House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee, the House Education Committee, and the House Health and Human Services Committee.

House District 65: Lori Garcia Sander (R)

Rep. Lori Garcia Sander replaces Rep. Mike Lynch in House District 65. Garcia Sander won the general election with 61% of the vote. She is a retired public-school teacher and school administrator. She and her husband have an organic apple orchard on their property in Eaton, and they lease land for cattle grazing in Red Feather Lakes. Garcia Sander describes herself as a common-sense conservative. Her key issues include school choice and education, the economy, and public safety. She will serve on the House Appropriations Committee, the House Education Committee, and the House Health and Human Services Committee.



Colorado Senate Leadership

In Colorado, Democrats maintain the majority in the State Senate. Despite their efforts to secure a supermajority, they fell short in the 2024 election.

The Senate's Executive Leadership consists of key positions, including the Senate President, Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and other supporting roles. The Senate President is elected by a majority vote of the full Senate, while the Majority Leader and Minority Leader are selected by their respective caucuses. These leaders are responsible for guiding the legislative process, setting priorities, and managing the flow of business in the Senate.

The 35-member Colorado Senate is commonly known as the "upper body" of the legislature. Its leadership structure is primarily centered around the Senate President and the Majority Leader, who are the key figures in shaping legislative priorities. The Senate leadership team also includes several other roles that support legislative strategy, manage debate, and coordinate votes, all of which contribute to efficient governance and the advancement of policy.

Majority Party Leadership Roles

- **President of the Senate:** The President of the Senate in Colorado serves as the presiding officer, responsible for maintaining order and overseeing Senate proceedings. While the role is vital for its ceremonial and procedural functions, it is largely symbolic. The President’s primary responsibilities include managing the day-to-day operations of the Senate, such as opening and closing sessions, recognizing senators to speak, and ensuring that Senate rules are followed during debates and votes. Although the President of the Senate holds a leadership position within their caucus and serves on key committees that influence legislative operations, their focus is often more on the smooth functioning of the chamber than on shaping broader legislative strategy. This strategic responsibility generally falls to the Majority Leader, who takes the lead in directing the Senate’s legislative agenda and guiding policy decisions.
- **Majority Leader:** The Majority Leader of the Senate is the leader of the majority party and plays a central role in shaping the legislative agenda. This position is responsible for guiding the flow of bills through the chamber, facilitating debates, and ensuring that the majority party's priorities are advanced. In addition to managing legislative business within the Senate, the Majority Leader plays a key role in negotiations with the Governor

and the House of Representatives, working to align state policy across all branches of government. Through strategic collaboration and negotiation, the Majority Leader helps shape state policy by balancing the goals of their party with the need for bipartisan support on key issues. This requires a delicate approach, as the Majority Leader must navigate the complex political landscape, forge compromises, and build coalitions to move important legislation forward. The role demands strong leadership, political insight, and the ability to manage both internal party dynamics and external negotiations to drive meaningful policy change.

- **Assistant Majority Leader:** The Assistant Majority Leader serves as a secondary leader within the majority party, supporting the Majority Leader in their responsibilities and taking on additional duties to ensure smooth operations within the chamber. While the exact role can vary depending on the legislative session and leadership structure, the Assistant Majority Leader plays a vital role in helping to coordinate legislative activities and maintain party discipline.
- **Caucus Chair:** In the Colorado General Assembly, caucus chairs are key leaders responsible for organizing and guiding their respective legislative caucuses. A caucus is a group of legislators from the same political party or with common interests, and the caucus chair leads and coordinates the group's activities, ensuring effective communication and collaboration among its members.
- **Majority Whip:** The Majority Whip assists the Majority Leader by securing votes for the party's agenda, managing legislative strategy, and maintaining party discipline. The Whip also keeps track of senators' positions on various issues, which is essential for effective floor management.

Minority Party Leadership Roles

- **Minority Leader:** The Minority Leader in the Senate acts as the chief strategist for the minority party. Their role involves organizing opposition to the majority party's agenda, offering alternatives, and advocating for the minority party's positions. The Minority Leader also plays a pivotal role in negotiations over legislation, often seeking bipartisan solutions to policy challenges. The Minority Leader must also serve as a key voice in committee discussions and on the Senate floor, speaking on behalf of the minority party, framing debates, and advocating for policies that align with their party's values and objectives. In a chamber where the majority party typically holds the advantage, the Minority Leader's ability to influence the legislative process, broker compromises, and maintain party unity is essential in ensuring that the minority party remains an effective and vocal player in Colorado's policymaking.
- **Assistant Minority Leader:** The Assistant Minority Leader serves as a deputy to the Minority Leader and helps manage and coordinate the legislative activities of the minority party. The exact responsibilities and influence of the Assistant Minority Leader can vary depending on the specific legislative session, the issues at hand, and the leadership structure of the minority party. However, the position generally plays an important role in supporting the leadership and direction of the minority party in Colorado's legislature.
- **Caucus Chair:** In the Colorado General Assembly, caucus chairs play a vital role in leading and organizing their respective caucuses. A caucus consists of legislators from the same political party or those with shared interests, and the caucus chair is responsible for overseeing the group's activities, facilitating communication, and coordinating its efforts.
- **Minority Whip:** The Minority Whip's responsibility is to assist the Minority Leader in ensuring that senators from the minority party are aligned on votes, particularly for high-stakes or controversial legislation. The Whip also coordinates with other party members to maintain unity and discipline within the party.

Senate Democrats:

- President – James Coleman, D-Denver
- President Pro Tempore – Dafna Michaelson Jenet, D-Commerce City
- Majority Leader – Robert Rodriguez, D-Denver
- Assistant Majority Leader – Lisa Cutter, D-Jefferson County
- Majority Whip – Nick Hinrichsen, D-Pueblo

- Majority Caucus Chair – Dylan Roberts, D-Frisco
- JBC Member – Jeff Bridges, D-Arapahoe County
- JBC Member – Judy Amabile, D-Boulder

Senate Republicans:

- Minority Leader – Paul Lundeen, R-Monument
- Assistant Minority Leader – Cleave Simpson, R-Alamosa
- Minority Caucus Chair – Byron Pelton, R-Sterling
- Minority Whip – Janice Rich, R-Grand Junction
- JBC Member – Barbara Kirkmeyer, R-Weld

Senate Leadership Bios

Senate Democratic Leadership

President – James Coleman, D-Denver

James Coleman is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 33. He assumed office on January 13, 2021. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Coleman ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 33. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. James Coleman was born in Denver, Colorado. Coleman earned a B.A. in psychology from Oral Roberts University. His career experience includes working as the vice president of community engagement for ACE Scholarships and vice president of the board of directors at Highline Academy. Coleman has served as a member of the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, INROADS, and the Urban League of Metro Denver Young Professionals.



President Pro Tempore – Dafna Michaelson Jenet, D-Commerce City

Dafna Michaelson Jenet is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 21. She assumed office on September 19, 2023. Her current term ends on January 12, 2027. Jenet ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 21. She was on the ballot in the general election on November 5, 2024. Jenet was initially appointed to the Senate to replace former Sen. Dominick Moreno. Dafna Michaelson Jenet graduated from the School for the Creative and Performing Arts in 1991. Jenet earned a B.A. in music and drama from Yeshiva University in 1995 and an M.B.A. from the University of Denver in 2001. Her career experience includes co-founding the Journey Institute and working as its president, the curator of TEDxCherryCreek, and a social media and community engagement coordinator with the National Parent Leadership Institute. Jenet has served on the board of the Adams County Youth Initiative board and has been affiliated with The Commerce City Quality Community

Foundation, The Carson J. Spencer suicide prevention foundation, and Playworks Colorado.

Majority Leader – Robert Rodriguez, D-Denver

Robert Rodriguez is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 32. He assumed office on January 4, 2019. His current term ends on January 12, 2027. Rodriguez ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 32. He won in the general election on November 8, 2022. Rodriguez began serving as the Colorado Senate majority leader on September 8, 2023. Representative Rodriguez was born in New Mexico and moved to Colorado at the age of four. He started his career in a file room and eventually became a senior analyst in the insurance industry. Rodriguez was reelected to his Senate Majority Leader position. In that role, he will continue to have the power to make Democratic committee assignments in the Senate, which will determine the trajectory of legislation.



Assistant Majority Leader – Lisa Cutter, D-Jefferson County

Lisa Cutter is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 20. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 12, 2027. Cutter ran for election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 20. She won in the general election on November 8, 2022. Lisa Cutter graduated from Pomona High School in 1981. Cutter earned a B.S. in marketing from Metropolitan State College of Denver in 1992. Her career experience includes founding Cutter Communications and working as a public relations consultant. Cutter served as the chair of the Women's Bean Project Board of Directors.

Majority Whip – Nick Hinrichsen, D-Pueblo

Nick Hinrichsen is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 3. He assumed office on February 28, 2022. His current term ends on January 12, 2027. Hinrichsen ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 3. He won in the general election on November 8, 2022. A vacancy committee appointed Hinrichsen to the state Senate on February 19, 2022, to replace Leroy Garcia Jr. (D). He was sworn in on February 28, 2022. Hinrichsen earned a master's degree in public administration from Colorado University-Denver. He served in the U.S. Army as a logistics officer and as of March 2, 2022, was the operations supervisor for Pueblo Transit.



Majority Caucus Chair – Dylan Roberts, D-Frisco

Dylan Roberts is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 8. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 12, 2027. Roberts is running for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 8. He declared candidacy for the 2026 election. Dylan Roberts lives in Avon, Colorado. Roberts earned a B.A. in political science and environmental studies from Boston College in 2011 and a J.D. from the University of Colorado in 2016. His career experience includes working as a deputy district attorney with the Colorado Fifth Judicial District Attorney's Office, a summer associate with Welborn Sullivan Meck & Tooley, P.C., and the campaign director for an Ed Perlmutter congressional campaign.

JBC Member – Jeff Bridges, D-Arapahoe County

Jeff Bridges is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 26. He assumed office in 2019. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Bridges ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 26. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Jeff Bridges attended Arapahoe High School. He received his Master's of Divinity degree from Harvard University. His professional experience includes working for U.S. Senator Ken Salazar (D). He has been on the board of the Colorado Conservation Voters and served as associate vice president at Union Theological Seminary.



JBC Member – Judy Amabile, D-Boulder

Judy Amabile is a new member of the Colorado State Senate, Amabile ran for election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 18. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Formerly, Amabile was part of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 49. Judith Amabile earned a B.A. in mass communication/media studies and M.B.A. from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Amabile's career experience includes co-founding Product Architects Inc. and working as a senior consultant with Coopers and Lybrand. She co-founded and served on the board of Good Business Colorado and has been affiliated with The League of American Bicyclists and the Outdoor Industry Association

Senate Republican Leadership

Minority Leader – Paul Lundeen, R-Monument

Paul Lundeen is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 9. He assumed office in 2019. His current term ends on January 12, 2027. Lundeen ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 9. He won in the general election on November 8, 2022. Lundeen is a former Republican member of the Colorado House of Representatives representing District 19. Lundeen began serving as Colorado Senate minority leader on November 10, 2022. Lundeen's professional experience includes serving as a campaign manager for Kermit Brashear's campaign for Governor of Nebraska and serving on the Colorado State Board of Education from 2010 to 2014.



Assistant Minority Leader – Cleave Simpson, R-Alamosa

Cleave Simpson Jr. is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 6. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Simpson ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 6. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Simpson completed Ballotpedia's Candidate Connection survey in 2024. Click here to read the survey answers. Cleave Simpson Jr. was born in Alamosa, Colorado. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1979 to 1980. Simpson graduated from Alamosa High School in 1979. He earned a degree from the Colorado School of Mines in 1984. Simpson's career experience includes working as a rancher and farmer. He has served on the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and the Interbasin Compact Committee. He has been affiliated with

Colorado Open Lands, the Colorado Farm Bureau, and the Colorado Cattlemen's Association.



Minority Caucus Chair – Byron Pelton, R-Sterling

Byron Pelton is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 1. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 12, 2027. Pelton ran for election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 1. He won in the general election on November 8, 2022. Byron Pelton was born in Cheyenne County, Colorado. Pelton served in the U.S. Navy. He has served on the Logan County Commission.



Minority Whip – Janice Rich, R-Grand Junction

Janice Rich is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 7. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 12, 2027. Rich is running for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 7. She declared candidacy for the 2026 election. Janice Rich's career experience includes owning and operating a secretarial and business support service and working as a legal assistant and a court clerk in the U.S. Magistrate's office in western Colorado. Rich served as the Mesa County Treasurer and the Mesa County Clerk & Recorder.

JBC Member – Barbara Kirkmeyer, R-Weld

Barbara Kirkmeyer is a member of the Colorado State Senate, representing District 23. She assumed office on January 13, 2021. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Kirkmeyer ran for re-election to the Colorado State Senate to represent District 23. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Barbara Kirkmeyer lives in Weld County, Colorado. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado in 1980. Her career experience includes working as a business owner and dairy farmer.



Senate Committee Assignments

Senate Committees of Reference meet primarily during the legislative session to consider legislation, conduct confirmation hearings, and provide oversight of executive branch agencies. Democrats will hold majorities on all Senate Committees.

Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee (4-3): The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee generally considers matters concerning water, agriculture, wildlife, and recreation. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Dylan Roberts (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Jessie Danielson (D)
- Senator Nick Hinrichsen (D)
- Senator Janice Marchman (D)
- Senator Byron Pelton (R)
- Senator Rod Pelton, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Marc Catlin (R)

Senate Appropriations Committee (4-3): The Senate Appropriations Committee conducts hearings on bills that change expenditures or revenues and affect the budget. The Committee typically reserves discussion for the fiscal impact of the bills. Many of the bills considered by the Committee have had hearings in other committees before

being referred to Appropriations and for those bills that have previously had a hearing the Committee does not customarily take public testimony.

Members:

- Chair, Senator-Elect Judy Amabile (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Jeff Bridges (D)
- Senator Chris Kolker (D)
- Senator Julie Gonzales (D)
- Senator Barb Kirkmeyer, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Byron Pelton (R)
- Senator Larry Liston (R)

Senate Business, Labor, & Technology Committee (4-3): The Senate Business, Labor, and Technology Committee considers matters concerning the regulation of professions and occupations, property and casualty insurance, unemployment insurance, health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, economic development, banks and financial institutions, real estate, labor, and technology. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Labor, the Department of Personnel and Administration, the Department of Regulatory Agencies, and the Office of Information Technology.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Jessie Danielson (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Nick Hinrichsen (D)
- Senator Faith Winter (D)
- Open Democratic Seat (D)
- Senator Larry Liston (R)
- Senator Mark Baisley, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Marc Catlin (R)

Senate Education Committee (4-3): The Senate Education Committee considers matters concerning: K-12 public schools, including public school accountability and school finance; and higher education, including administration and governance, tuition, and financial assistance. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of Education and Higher Education.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Chris Kolker (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Janice Marchman (D)
- Senator Cathy Kipp (D)
- Senator Dafna Michaelson Jenet (D)
- Senator Paul Lundeen, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Janice Rich (R)
- Senator Scott Bright (R)

Senate Finance Committee (6-3): The Senate Finance Committee generally considers matters related to a broad range of public finance proposals including legislation that affects the state's revenue and tax structure. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Public Employees' Retirement Association, Department of Revenue, State Treasury, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

Members:

- Chair, Senator-Elect Cathy Kipp (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Janice Marchman (D)
- Senator Chris Kolker (D)
- Senator Julie Gonzales (D)
- Senator Marc Snyder (D)
- Senator Kyle Mullica (D)

- Senator Cleave Simpson (R)
- Senator Scott Bright, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Lisa Frizell (R)

Senate Health & Human Services Committee (6-3): The Senate Health and Human Services Committee considers matters concerning state health and welfare programs, health insurance, social services, and environmental health. The committee also has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Public Health and Environment.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Kyle Mullica (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Dafna Michaelson Jenet (D)
- Senator Lisa Cutter (D)
- Senator Mike Weissman (D)
- Senator Lindsey Daugherty (D)
- Open Democratic seat (D)
- Senator Lisa Frizell, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Scott Bright (R)
- Senator John Carson (R)

Senate Judiciary Committee (5-2): The Senate Judiciary Committee considers matters concerning civil and criminal proceedings, courts, judges, civil liberties, Colorado's constitution and statutes, the state's correctional system and prison facilities, homeland security, and juvenile justice. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Law, and the Judicial Branch.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Julie Gonzales (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Mike Weissman (D)
- Senator Dylan Roberts (D)
- Senator Lindsey Daugherty (D)
- Open Democratic Seat (D)
- Senator Lisa Frizell (R)
- Senator John Carson, Ranking Member (R)

Senate Local Government & Housing Committee (4-3): The Senate Local Government Committee generally considers matters concerning local governments, special districts, housing, land use planning. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Local Affairs.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Tony Exum, Sr. (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Julie Gonzales (D)
- Senator Marc Snyder (D)
- Senator Faith Winter (D)
- Senator Janice Rich, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Mark Baisley (R)
- Senator Larry Liston (R)
-

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee (3-2): The Senate State Affairs Committee generally considers matters concerning elections, campaign finance, military and veterans affairs, and other subject areas related to state government. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of State and Military and Veterans Affairs.

Members:

- Chair, Senator-Elect Mike Weissman (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Tom Sullivan (D)
- Open Democratic Seat (D)
- Senator Byron Pelton, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Rod Pelton (R)

Senate Transportation & Energy Committee (6-3): The Senate Transportation & Energy Committee considers matters concerning motor vehicle law, traffic regulation, transportation funding, public infrastructure, other subject areas related to the state transportation system, and energy development and regulation. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Transportation, the Colorado Energy Office, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

Members:

- Chair, Senator Faith Winter (D)
- Vice Chair, Senator Lisa Cutter (D)
- Senator Nick Hinrichsen (D)
- Senator Tony Exum, Sr. (D)
- Senator Tom Sullivan (D)
- Senator Kyle Mullica (D)
- Senator Cleave Simpson, Ranking Member (R)
- Senator Byron Pelton (R)
- Senator Marc Catlin (R)

Colorado House Leadership

In Colorado, Democrats maintain a significant majority in the State House, though the outcome of the November 2024 election means that Democrats have lost their supermajority numbers in the House.

The Executive Leadership of the Colorado House of Representatives is made up of several key positions, including the Speaker of the House, Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and other leadership roles. The Speaker is chosen by a majority vote of the full House, while the Majority Leader and Minority Leader are elected by their respective caucuses. These leaders are instrumental in setting legislative priorities, overseeing floor debates, and steering the overall direction of the House.

In the Colorado House of Representatives, effective leadership is essential for setting legislative priorities, managing floor debates, and maintaining party unity. With 65 members and a diverse political landscape, the House can be a challenging body to navigate. The Speaker of the House holds the highest-ranking position, while leaders from both the majority and minority parties play key roles in shaping legislative outcomes and steering the direction of the chamber. These leaders work to ensure the House functions efficiently, advancing their respective party agendas while facilitating legislative progress.

Majority Party Leadership Roles

- **Speaker of the House:** The Speaker is the presiding officer of the House and is elected by the members of the majority party. The Speaker's duties include managing House proceedings, appointing committee members, and representing the body in official capacities. The Speaker plays a central role in determining which bills will come to the floor for debate and vote. In addition to managing the proceedings on the floor, the Speaker has a range of key duties. One of their primary responsibilities is appointing members to the various legislative committees, which are essential for reviewing and shaping bills before they reach the full House for debate. These appointments can significantly influence the legislative agenda, as committees often determine the fate of proposed laws. Furthermore, the Speaker represents the House in official functions and interacts with other branches of government, stakeholders, and the public.
- **Majority Leader:** The Majority Leader plays a crucial role in the Colorado House of Representatives, working closely with the Speaker to advance the legislative agenda of the majority party. This leadership

position is pivotal in coordinating and executing the party's priorities, ensuring that key pieces of legislation move through the legislative process effectively. One of the primary responsibilities of the Majority Leader is to strategize and oversee the passage of important bills. This involves working with other members of the majority party, committee chairs, and the Speaker to prioritize legislation, set timelines, and ensure that bills are on track for debate and a vote. The Majority Leader often plays a key role in negotiating and building consensus within the party to ensure that the necessary support is in place for the successful passage of legislation.

- **Assistant Majority Leader:** The Assistant Majority Leader serves as a secondary leader within the majority party, supporting the Majority Leader in their responsibilities and taking on additional duties to ensure smooth operations within the chamber. While the exact role can vary depending on the legislative session and leadership structure, the Assistant Majority Leader plays a vital role in helping to coordinate legislative activities and maintain party discipline.
- **Caucus Chair:** In the Colorado General Assembly, the caucus chair holds a critical leadership role in organizing and guiding the activities of their respective legislative caucus. A caucus is composed of legislators from the same political party or those who share similar policy interests. The caucus chair is responsible for facilitating meetings, setting agendas, and ensuring that members are aligned on key issues.
- **Majority Whip:** The Majority Whip in the Colorado General Assembly plays a vital role in ensuring party discipline and cohesion within the majority party. Their primary responsibility is to make sure that members of the majority party vote in line with the party leadership's priorities. The Whip keeps track of how members are planning to vote, works to ensure strong attendance at legislative sessions, and helps to secure the necessary votes to pass legislation.

Minority Party Leadership Roles

- **Minority Leader:** The House Minority Leader in Colorado serves as the chief spokesperson and strategist for the party that holds the minority in the Colorado House of Representatives. This role is essential in providing a counterbalance to the majority party's agenda, ensuring that the interests and perspectives of the minority party are represented in legislative discussions and decisions. One of the primary responsibilities of the Minority Leader is to oppose and challenge the legislative priorities put forward by the majority party. This includes articulating alternative policies, proposing bills, and presenting a vision that contrasts with the majority's agenda. The Minority Leader often works to highlight areas of disagreement, raise concerns about proposed legislation, and advocate for policies that better align with the minority party's values and priorities. In this capacity, the Minority Leader serves as a key voice in shaping the debate and ensuring that minority viewpoints are heard and considered.
- **Assistant Minority Leader:** The Assistant Minority Leader serves as a deputy to the Minority Leader and helps manage and coordinate the legislative activities of the minority party. The exact responsibilities and influence of the Assistant Minority Leader can vary depending on the specific legislative session, the issues at hand, and the leadership structure of the minority party. However, the position generally plays an important role in supporting the leadership and direction of the minority party in Colorado's legislature.
- **Caucus Chair:** In the Colorado General Assembly, the caucus chair plays a key leadership role in organizing and coordinating the activities of their respective legislative caucus. A caucus is a group of legislators from the same political party or those who share common interests or policy goals. The caucus chair is responsible for overseeing the caucus's internal structure, facilitating communication among members, and ensuring that the group is unified in advancing its legislative priorities.
- **Minority Whip:** The Minority Whip in the Colorado General Assembly plays an essential supporting role in the leadership of the minority party. Working closely with the Minority Leader, the Whip ensures that the party remains united and aligned on key votes, particularly in opposition to the majority party's legislative priorities. The Minority Whip monitors the voting behavior of members, ensuring that they

understand the stakes of upcoming votes and are prepared to cast their ballots in accordance with party strategy.

House Democrats:

- Speaker of the House – Julie McCluskie, D-Dillon
- Speaker Pro Tem –
- Majority Leader – Monica Duran, D-Wheat Ridge
- Assistant Majority Leader – Jennifer Bacon, D-Denver
- Majority Co-Whips – Matthew Martinez, D-Monte Vista, and Iman Jodeh, D-Aurora (**Moving to Senate**)
- Caucus Co-Chairs – Mandy Lindsay, D-Aurora, and Junie Joseph, D-Boulder
- JBC Member – Shannon Bird, D-Westminster
- JBC Member – Emily Sirota, D-Denver

House Republicans:

- Minority Leader – Rose Pugliese, R-Colorado Springs
- Assistant Minority Leader – Ty Winter, R-Trinidad
- Minority Whip – Ryan Armagost, R-Berthoud
- Minority Caucus Chair – Anthony Hartsook, R-Parker
- JBC Member – Rick Taggart, R-Grand Junction

House Leadership Bios

House Democratic Leadership



Speaker of the House – Julie McCluskie, D-Dillon

Julie McCluskie is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 13. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. McCluskie ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 13. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. McCluskie became speaker of the state House on January 8, 2024. Julie McCluskie was born in Colorado. McCluskie earned a B.S. in chemistry/biochemistry from Colorado State University in 1986. Her career experience includes working as a communications coordinator with the Summit School District, a regional development officer with Colorado Mountain College, a director of communications with the State of Colorado, a corporate human resources director with Xanterra Parks & Resorts, and the director of human resources with the Antlers Doubletree Hotel.

Majority Leader – Monica Duran, D-Wheat Ridge

Monica Duran is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 23. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Duran (Democratic Party) ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 23. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Duran began serving as Colorado House of Representatives majority leader on November 11, 2022. Monica Duran's career experience includes working in the dental industry. Duran served on the Wheat Ridge City Council, on the board of the Jefferson Center for Mental Health, and as the director of the Wheat Ridge Fire Protection Board.





Assistant Majority Leader – Jennifer Bacon, D-Denver

Jennifer Bacon is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 7. She assumed office on January 13, 2021. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Bacon ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 7. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Jennifer Bacon was born in Miami, Florida. She earned a bachelor's degree from Tulane University in 2004. She earned a graduate degree from Florida International University in 2006. She earned a J.D. from College of William & Mary Marshall Wythe School of Law in 2009. Bacon's career experience includes working as an educator.

Majority Co-Whip – Matthew Martinez, D-Monte Vista

Matthew Martinez is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 62. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Martinez ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 62. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Matthew Martinez was born in Monte Vista, Colorado. Martinez served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2005 to 2009. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Adams State University in 2013 and a master's degree in political science from Southern New Hampshire University in 2020. Martinez's career experience includes working as the director of the correspondence education program with Adams State University, an educator, and a higher education instructor for veterans and inmates.



Majority Co-Whip – Iman Jodeh, D-Aurora (Moving to Senate)

Iman Jodeh is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 41. She assumed office on January 13, 2021. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Jodeh ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 41. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Iman Jodeh earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public policy. Jodeh's career experience includes working as the deputy political director, and the community advocate and liaison, of the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado.

Caucus Co-Chair – Mandy Lindsay, D-Aurora

Mandy Lindsay is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 42. She assumed office on January 18, 2022. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Lindsay ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 42. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Lindsay was appointed to the state House on January 10, 2022, to replace Dominique Jackson (D). Mandy Lindsay was born in Denver, Colorado. Lindsay attended Tulane University. Her career experience includes working in government and running a small business as a professional organizer. Lindsay has been affiliated with Arapahoe County Democrats.





Caucus Co-Chair – Junie Joseph, D-Boulder

Junie Joseph is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 10. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Joseph ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 10. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Junie Joseph was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Joseph earned an associate degree from Valencia College in 2009, a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Florida, a master's degree in applied human rights from the University of York, and a law degree from the University of Colorado. Her career experience includes working as a lawyer and human rights officer.

JBC Member – Shannon Bird, D-Westminster

Shannon Bird is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 29. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Bird ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 29. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Shannon Bird earned a B.A. in economics from the University of Colorado at Boulder, an M.S. in finance and M.B.A. from the University of Colorado at Denver, and a J.D. from the University of Denver. Bird's career experience includes working as an attorney and Westminster City Council from 2015 to 2018. She served as the board chair of the Five Star Education Foundation, on the Adams 12 Five Star School District Strong Schools Strong Communities Advisory Committee, and as the vice chair of the Adams County Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.



JBC Member – Emily Sirota, D-Denver

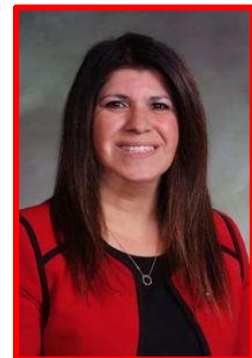
Emily Sirota is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 9. She assumed office on January 4, 2019. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Sirota ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 9. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Representative Sirota graduated with B.A. in political science at Indiana University and later received her Master of Social Work from the University of Denver. Early in her career, she worked for the Colorado Progressive Coalition and ran for the Denver school board. Later, she served as a policy aide to a U.S. Senator, a congressman, and a governor.



House Republican Leadership

Minority Leader – Rose Pugliese, R-Colorado Springs

Rose Pugliese is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 14. She assumed office on January 9, 2023. Her current term ends on January 8, 2025. Pugliese ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 14. She won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Pugliese also ran for election to the U.S. House to represent Colorado's 5th Congressional District. She did not appear on the ballot for the Republican primary on June 25, 2024. Pugliese was chosen as the Colorado House of Representatives Minority Leader on January 25, 2024. Rose Pugliese earned a B.A. in sociology from Villanova University in 2000 and a J.D. from St. John's University in 2003. Pugliese's career experience includes owning the Law Office of Rose F. Pugliese, LLC and working as counsel with Wegener Scarborough & Lane, PC. She served on the Mesa County Commission.





Assistant Minority Leader – Ty Winter, R-Trinidad

Ty Winter is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 47. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Winter ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 47. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Ty Winter's career experience includes co-operating a business. Winter served as the president of the Chicosa Water Users Association, on the Holy Trinity Academy School Board, and on the board of the Las Animas County Fair.

Minority Whip – Ryan Armagost, R-Berthoud

Ryan Armagost is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 64. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Armagost ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 64. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Ryan Armagost was born in Greeley, Colorado. Armagost served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1995 to 2017. His career experience includes working as an instructor with Team America Tactical, a close protection specialist with 5D Shield, and an officer with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office. Armagost has been affiliated with the NRA, the VFW, the American Legion, the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and Disabled American Veterans.



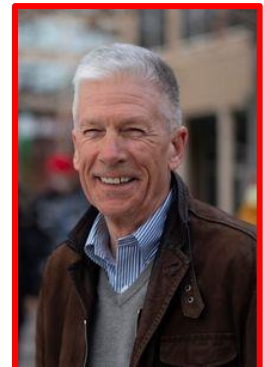
Minority Caucus Chair – Anthony Hartsook, R-Parker

Anthony Hartsook is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 44. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Hartsook ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 44. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Anthony Hartsook served in the U.S. Army from 1988 to 2015. Hartsook earned a B.S. in biology from Northern Arizona University in 2001 and an M.S. in public administration from Central Michigan University in 2007. His career experience includes working as the director of the Future Freedom Foundation and the director of business development of Aspen Communications LLC.



JBC Member – Rick Taggart, R-Grand Junction

Rick Taggart is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing District 55. He assumed office on January 9, 2023. His current term ends on January 8, 2025. Taggart ran for re-election to the Colorado House of Representatives to represent District 55. He won in the general election on November 5, 2024. Rick Taggart earned a B.S. in business and environmental science from Syracuse University in 1972 and an M.B.A. from the University of Phoenix. Taggart's career experience includes working as an adjunct professor and the executive director of marketing and recruitment with Colorado Mesa University and as the president/CEO of Victorinox Swiss Army. He has been affiliated with the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, the Saint Mary's Hospital Foundation, and the Suicide Coalition of Western Colorado.



House Committee Assignments

House Committees of Reference meet primarily during the legislative session to consider legislation and provide oversight of executive branch agencies. Democrats will hold sizeable majorities in all House Committees.

House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee (9-4): The House Agriculture, Livestock, & Water Committee generally considers matters concerning water, agriculture, wildlife, and recreation. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Karen McCormick (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Tisha Mauro (D)
- Representative Elizabeth Velasco (D)
- Representative Katie Stewart (D)
- Representative Lesley Smith (D)
- Representative Mandy Lindsay (D)
- Representative Matthew Martinez (D)
- Representative Meghan Lukens (D)
- Representative Tammy Story (D)
- Representative Ty Winter, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Matt Soper (R)
- Representative Dusty Johnson (R)
- Representative Larry Don Suckla (R)

House Appropriations Committee (7-4): The House Appropriations Committee conducts hearings on bills that change expenditures or revenues and affect the budget. The Committee typically reserves discussion for the fiscal impact of the bills. Many of the bills considered by the Committee have had hearings in other committees before being referred to Appropriations and for those bills that have previously had a hearing the Committee does not customarily take public testimony.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Emily Sirota (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Shannon Bird (D)
- Representative Andrew Boesenecker (D)
- Representative Brianna Titone (D)
- Representative Elizabeth Velasco (D)
- Representative Junie Joseph (D)
- Representative Karen McCormick (D)
- Representative Rick Taggart, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Scott Bottoms (R)
- Representative Stephanie Luck (R)
- Representative Lori Garcia Sander (R)

House Business Affairs & Labor Committee (8-5): The House Committee on Business Affairs & Labor considers matters concerning the regulation of professions and occupations, property and casualty insurance, unemployment insurance, health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, economic development, banks and financial institutions, real estate, labor, and technology. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Personnel and Administration, the Department of Regulatory Agencies, and the Office of Economic Development and International Trade.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Naquetta Ricks (D)

- Vice Chair, Representative Steven Woodrow (D)
- Representative Bob Marshall (D)
- Representative Gretchen Rydin (D)
- Representative Regina English (D)
- Representative Sheila Lieder (D)
- Representative Tisha Mauro (D)
- Representative William Lindstedt (D)
- Representative Ryan Armagost, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Max Brooks (R)
- Representative Rebecca Keltie (R)
- Representative Larry Don Suckla (R)
- Representative Chris Richardson (R)

House Education Committee (8-5): The House Education Committee considers matters concerning K-12 public schools, including public school accountability and school finance; and higher education, including administration and governance, tuition, and financial assistance. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of Education and Higher Education.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Meghan Lukens (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Matthew Martinez (D)
- Representative Eliza Hamrick (D)
- Representative Jacque Phillips (D)
- Representative Jennifer Bacon (D)
- Representative Lesley Smith (D)
- Representative Lindsay Gilchrist (D)
- Representative Tammy Story (D)
- Representative Mary Bradfield, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Anthony Hartsook (R)
- Representative Jarvis Caldwell (R)
- Representative Lori Garcia Sander (R)
- Representative Dusty Johnson (R)

House Energy & Environment Committee (9-4): The House Energy & Environment Committee generally considers matters concerning energy and environment. In addition, the committee also has legislative oversight responsibility for divisions of the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Public Health and Environment, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Colorado Energy Office.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Alex Valdez (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Elizabeth Velasco (D)
- Representative Amy Paschal (D)
- Representative Iman Jodeh (D) (Moving to Senate)
- Representative Jenny Willford (D)
- Representative Junie Joseph (D)
- Representative Kyle Brown (D)
- Representative Manny Rutinel (D)
- Representative Sean Camacho (D)
- Representative Dan Woog, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Ken DeGraaf (R)
- Representative Ryan Gonzalez (R)
- Representative Carlos Barron (R)

House Finance Committee (8-5): The House Finance Committee generally considers matters related to a broad range of public finance proposals including legislation that affects the state's revenue and tax structure. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Public Employees' Retirement Association, Department of Revenue, State Treasury, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

Members:

- Chair, Representative William Lindstedt (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Brianna Titone (D)
- Representative Bob Marshall (D)
- Representative Junie Joseph (D)
- Representative Lorena Garcia (D)
- Representative Rebekah Stewart (D)
- Representative Sean Camacho (D)
- Representative Yara Zokaie (D)
- Representative Anthony Hartsook, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Ron Weinberg (R)
- Representative Ken DeGraaf (R)
- Representative Max Brooks (R)
- Representative Ryan Gonzalez (R)

House Health & Human Services Committee (9-4): The House Health and Human Services Committee considers matters concerning state health and welfare programs, health insurance, social services, and environmental health. The committee also has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Public Health and Environment.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Kyle Brown (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Sheila Lieder (D)
- Representative Eliza Hamrick (D)
- Representative Gretchen Rydin (D)
- Representative Karen McCormick (D)
- Representative Katie Stewart (D)
- Representative Lindsay Gilchrist (D)
- Representative Lisa Feret (D)
- Representative Regina English (D)
- Representative Brandi Bradley, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Mary Bradfield (R)
- Representative Dusty Johnson (R)
- Representative Lori Garcia Sander (R)

House Judiciary Committee (7-4): The House Judiciary Committee considers matters concerning courts and judges, civil liberties, Colorado's constitution, revision of the Colorado Revised Statutes, the correctional system and prison facilities, juvenile justice, and homeland security. The committee also has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Corrections, the Department of Law, the Department of Public Safety, and the Judicial Branch.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Javier Mabrey (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Michael Carter (D)
- Representative Cecelia Espenosa (D)
- Representative Chad Clifford (D)
- Representative Jennifer Bacon (D)
- Representative Lorena Garcia (D)
- Representative Yara Zokaie (D)

- Representative Matt Soper, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Ryan Armagost (R)
- Representative Jarvis Caldwell (R)
- Representative Rebecca Keltie (R)

House State, Civic, Military & Veterans Affairs Committee (8-3): The House State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee generally considers matters concerning elections, campaign finance, military and veterans affairs, and other subject areas related to state government. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of State and Military and Veterans Affairs.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Jenny Willford (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Chad Clifford (D)
- Representative Cecelia Espenosa (D)
- Representative Javier Mabrey (D)
- Representative Lisa Feret (D)
- Representative Meg Froelich (D)
- Representative Michael Carter (D)
- Representative Naquetta Ricks (D)
- Representative Stephanie Luck, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Scott Bottoms (R)
- Representative Brandi Bradley (R)

House Transportation, Housing & Local Government Committee (9-4): The House Transportation & Local Government Committee considers matters concerning motor vehicle law, traffic regulation, transportation funding, public infrastructure, other subject areas related to the state transportation system, local governments, special districts, housing, and land use planning. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Transportation and the Department of Local Affairs.

Members:

- Chair, Representative Meg Froelich (D)
- Vice Chair, Representative Rebekah Stewart (D)
- Representative Amy Paschal (D)
- Representative Andy Boesenecker (D)
- Representative Iman Jodeh (D) (Moving to Senate)
- Representative-Elect Jacque Phillips (D)
- Representative Mandy Lindsay (D)
- Representative Alex Valdez (D)
- Representative Steven Woodrow, D
- Representative Chris Richardson, Ranking Member (R)
- Representative Dan Woog (R)
- Representative Larry Don Suckla (R)
- Representative Carlos Barron (R)

Joint Budget Committee

The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) of Colorado is a legislative committee that plays a crucial role in the state's budgeting process. The JBC is responsible for creating the state's annual budget and overseeing the allocation of state funds. Its primary duties include:

- **Preparing the State Budget:** The committee develops the state's budget by reviewing the Governor's budget proposal and adjusting as needed to align with the legislature's priorities and available revenues. The Colorado state budget, also known as the "Long Bill," is one of the few pieces of legislation that lawmakers are required by law to pass during the legislative session.

- **Allocating Resources:** The JBC recommends how state resources should be distributed across various departments and programs, ensuring that funds are allocated in accordance with legislative priorities.
- **Reviewing State Expenditures:** The committee monitors the state's financial condition, evaluates the performance of state programs, and makes decisions regarding state spending.
- **Appropriations Bills:** The JBC prepares the annual appropriation bill that determines how much money each state agency or program will receive. This bill must be approved by both chambers of the Colorado General Assembly.

The JBC wields considerable influence over the state's fiscal policy, as it determines how taxpayer dollars are spent across the state government. Given that Colorado's budget is constitutionally required to be balanced, the JBC plays an essential role in ensuring that the budget meets constitutional requirements and addresses the state's priorities. For instance, during times of economic difficulty or budget shortfalls like 2025, the JBC may be tasked with making difficult decisions on which programs to cut or reduce, often leading to significant political debate.

JBC Members:

- Sen. Jeff Bridges, **D**-Arapahoe County (Chair)
- Sen. Judy Amabile, **D**-Boulder
- Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer, **R**-Weld
- Rep. Shannon Bird, **D**-Westminster (Vice Chair)
- Rep. Emily Sirota, **D**-Denver
- Rep. Rick Taggart, **R**-Grand Junction

5 Key Issues For The 2025 Colorado Legislative Session

As the legislative session draws near, several major issues are dominating the conversation:

- **Vacancy Reform**
- **Governor Polis's Priorities in His Final Term**
- **Party Priorities**
- **Labor Disputes and Their Growing Significance**
- **Sustainable Funding for Transportation**
- **The State's Budget Constraints**

These key issues are expected to dominate discussions in the upcoming session and will shape the legislative agenda as lawmakers prepare to tackle Colorado's most pressing challenges.

Vacancy Reform: Reform may emerge as a result of pushback against the vacancy process.

- Several vacancies have recently been filled, with some new faces coming into the Gold Dome.
- Matthew Ball was selected by a Democratic vacancy committee to represent Senate District 31 in central Denver, defeating Rep. Steven Woodrow in five rounds of voting.
- Ball's victory leaves only one vacancy to be filled in House District 41, following Rep. Iman Jodeh's appointment to succeed Janet Buckner in Senate District 29.
- Republicans also selected Republican John Carson to fill the vacancy of Kevin Van Winkle in Senate District 30 rewrite
- The process of filling these vacancies has been under scrutiny, with concerns about the influence of vacancy committees in selecting replacements.
- Democratic Party Chair Shad Murib expressed concern over the growing number of lawmakers chosen by vacancy committees rather than traditional elections, calling it a "concern for every Coloradan."

- An analysis earlier this year by Colorado Politics revealed that with a vacancy committee just four individuals often decide who will represent a House or Senate seat, with the average being around 40. This is the case for House districts, which represent roughly 89,000 constituents, while Senate districts cover about 165,000 people.
- The 2025-26 legislative session is expected to begin with at least 20 lawmakers who entered the General Assembly through the vacancy process.

Governor Polis's Priorities in His Final Term: Polis is operating on a short clock and tight budget.

- Governor Jared Polis, who is in the final years of his second term, has just two legislative sessions left to achieve any remaining goals.
- In recent sessions, Polis has played an active role and made significant strides on issues such as universal preschool, infrastructure, and housing.
- The Governor has also wielded his veto pen with authority (and scrutiny). Last session, Polis vetoed six bills that were passed by the legislature, ensuring that they did not become law. The sponsors of the vetoed measures were mostly Democrats, like Polis.
- The 2025 legislative session will offer a clearer view of the Polis administration's priorities as Governor Polis enters the final stretch of his second and final term.
- While he is expected to focus on advancing key initiatives, budget constraints and fiscal limitations could pose challenges to achieving some of his more ambitious goals. With ongoing financial pressures, the Governor may need to navigate difficult trade-offs, balancing his policy aspirations with the realities of the state's budget.
- With nearly \$700 million in cuts needed for next year's state budget, Colorado lawmakers face tough decisions in the upcoming legislative session starting in January.
- Governor Polis outlined his proposed cuts earlier in November, but they were met with skepticism from both Republicans and Democrats on the influential Joint Budget Committee, who said they still have numerous questions.
- One of the most controversial proposals is Polis' plan to privatize Pinnacol Assurance, the quasi-governmental agency that serves as Colorado's insurer of last resort for workers' compensation.
- Other cost-cutting measures in the governor's proposed November budget include:
 - Revising the method for calculating school enrollment, which would result in reduced funding for districts with declining student populations.
 - Slowing the pace of changes to the overall school funding formula, allowing new expenses to be phased in more gradually.
 - Implementing a 1% reduction in personnel and operating expenses across all state departments.
 - Using interest from cash funds—dedicated accounts for specific state programs—to help cover general expenses.

Party Priorities: Democrats and Republicans outline 2025 priorities.

- Over the past decade, Colorado Democrats have focused on key issues such as investing in public schools, reducing gun violence, cutting taxes, and lowering the costs of housing, behavioral health care, higher education, and childcare.
- As the 2025 legislative session approaches, Democratic lawmakers are preparing to build on these efforts, aiming to make Colorado more affordable and safer, while addressing the challenges posed by the Trump administration to protect shared freedoms, values, and the Colorado way of life.
- The 2025 session is expected to see major fights over labor, climate, and energy policies, both internally within the Democratic Party and between the two parties.
- One of the biggest conflicts may arise within the Democratic Party, as progressive lawmakers clash with Gov. Polis over labor policy.
- Republicans will once again find themselves on the defensive, as Democrats maintain strong majorities in both chambers.
- However, Republicans argue that their success in the 2024 statehouse elections marks a breakthrough, partly driven by voter frustration with Colorado's rising cost of living, which they contend has worsened under Democratic control.
- Republicans also expect national issues, like immigration, to be discussed at the Capitol.

- Nevertheless, national political concerns, especially in the aftermath of Trump, may need to take a backseat this session. Lawmakers are arriving in Denver with one major challenge: reducing the state budget.
- Republicans blame Democrats for spending too much of the one-time federal funds received during COVID in ways that have created ongoing financial obligations.

Labor Disputes and Their Growing Significance: Labor will be a key issue yet again.

- Ahead of the legislative session Governor Polis is once again clashing with fellow Democrats and the Colorado labor movement over a key piece of legislation (surrounding the 81-year-old Labor Peace Act) set to be introduced when the state legislature reconvenes in January.
- The bill, which unions have declared their top priority, has the support of prominent Democratic lawmakers, including the chair of the Colorado Democratic Party.
- This emerging divide is likely to reignite tensions that flared earlier this year when Polis vetoed three labor-backed bills passed during the 2024 legislative session.
- During a May protest at the Capitol, hundreds of union supporters, joined by some of the state's leading Democrats, chanted "Shame on Polis!" and wore "Polis failed workers" T-shirts, expressing their frustration.
- As the new legislative session draws near, unions are intensifying their pressure campaign against Governor Polis, rallying their most influential allies to bolster support for their proposed legislation.
- At the same time, the Colorado business community is expected to mount a strong opposition campaign, leveraging its resources and influence to push back against the bill.
- This clash between labor and business interests is likely to shape key debates during the session, with both sides seeking to sway lawmakers and influence the outcome of critical policy decisions.

Sustainable Funding for Transportation: Transportation funding could be on the cutting block.

- Colorado's ability to maintain and repair crucial highways could face a \$110 million reduction in the next fiscal year under budget-balancing proposals from Governor Jared Polis.
- The proposed cuts include a permanent reduction of \$65 million annually and a one-time \$49 million decrease in other funds.
- These cuts are part of a broader \$638 million in expenditure reductions and revenue increases aimed at addressing rising Medicaid costs and slowing inflation.
- While officials recognize the need for budget cuts, both legislators and members of the Colorado Transportation Commission (CTC) have raised concerns that these reductions could severely impact transportation safety.
- CDOT Executive Director Shoshana Lew told the CTC in November that the department could explore converting more of its programs into enterprises funded by fees instead of general-fund transfers.
- This approach would eliminate the reliance on general taxpayer funding, making these programs exempt from the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) revenue limits.
- However, it would also mean that these programs wouldn't count against the state budget cap and would be shielded from future budget cuts.

The State's Budget Constraints: The December revenue forecast presents a bleak outlook.

- As we head into session, Colorado's budget outlook has slightly improved, with a nearly \$250 million revenue increase projected in the December revenue forecast.
- However, this increase won't directly impact the state's general fund due to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), which requires revenue exceeding inflation plus population growth to be refunded to taxpayers.
- Despite the positive revenue revisions, the state still faces a nearly \$700 million deficit, primarily driven by higher Medicaid costs and the loss of federal COVID relief funding.
- As noted, Governor Jared Polis' budget proposal, presented in November, received a lukewarm response from lawmakers, with both Democrats and Republicans expressing concerns.
- The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) is seeking significant revisions, particularly around proposed Medicaid provider rate cuts, K-12 funding reductions for districts with declining enrollment, and cuts to higher education.

- Polis' Budget Director, Mark Ferrandino, emphasized the need for fiscal prudence, acknowledging the challenges of the budget despite the improved revenue picture. He also noted uncertainty around potential federal changes, including a possible government shutdown and the impact of a new Trump administration.
- The legislature will reconvene on January 8, 2025, with the task of passing a balanced budget— a constitutional requirement that will likely dominate the upcoming session, especially for proposals involving new spending.