

2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT



Advocacy and influence

The Chamber & EDC acts as a catalyst in legislative and regulatory issues affecting Colorado Springs, advocating for business-friendly public policies and influencing economic development. We actively engaged with law-makers and partnered with business groups statewide to protect our competitive business climate and ensure our businesses continue to grow and thrive.

Bills of note to our region

TAXES

- **House Bill 1420:** Fair Tax Act (opposed, passed with significant amendments)
- **Senate Concurrent Resolution 1:** Repeal the Gallagher Amendment (supported, passed)

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

- **Senate Bill 205:** Sick Leave for Employees (opposed, passed with significant amendments)
- **Senate Bill 207:** Unemployment Insurance (opposed)
- **Senate Bill 215:** Health Insurance Affordability Enterprise (opposed, passed with amendments)
- **Senate Bill 216:** Workers' Compensation For COVID-19 (opposed, passed with amendments)

DEFENSE

- **House Bill 1326:** Occupational Credential Portability Program (supported, passed)

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

- **Senate Bill 213:** Alcohol Beverage Retail Takeout And Delivery (supported, passed)

“After three days of frenzied negotiations and two veto threats from Gov. Jared Polis, Colorado legislative Democrats stripped most provisions from a bill that sought to end nine tax breaks [...] **handing business its biggest win of the 2020 session.**”

House Bill 1420, which on Saturday morning had sought to curtail \$1.21 billion in tax deductions over the next four fiscal years, ended the day with a price tag of \$180 million instead.”

- Ed Sealover, *Denver Business Journal*



2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Economic Development

Support policies to encourage growth and advocate for key industries, capital investment, high-quality jobs, reliable infrastructure, and a skilled workforce.



Business Climate

Promote business-friendly fiscal, labor, and regulatory policies.

Mitigate effects of anti-business legislation & reduce number of laws creating new costs and regulations to businesses.

2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT

STAGE 1 POLICY PROPOSALS



Legislators propose policy by sponsoring written bills.

Bills can create new laws, amend existing laws, or repeal existing laws. Bills are numbered in the order they are introduced. Legislators are limited to five bills each, which must be submitted by certain deadlines.

Bills are assigned to one or more committees for review.

Committee legislators hear testimony from experts and interested parties. Bills may be amended, recommended for passage, referred to another committee, tabled for consideration later, or postponed indefinitely. Meetings are open to the public.

If a bill passes out of committee, it proceeds to the House or Senate floor for a second reading.



At this point, bills may be passed, amended and passed, defeated, postponed for another day, or returned to committee for more work. The bill then repeats the process in the other chamber.

STAGE 2 REVIEW PROCESS



Final vote occurs on third reading.

After a bill is passed by both the House and Senate, it is sent to the governor.

The governor may sign it into law, let it take effect without his or her signature, or veto the bill.

STAGE 3 BECOMING A LAW



Legislative landscape

2020's legislative session was divided into pre- and post- COVID-19. After shutting down in mid-March, the General Assembly returned in June for a three-week session, promising to focus on bills that were "fast, friendly, and free." But while legislators jettisoned more than 300 bills introduced before the pause, including a public healthcare option we opposed, they also introduced bills that created new business costs and administrative burdens.

We rallied you to mitigate anti-business legislation, particularly **House Bill 1420**, a massive tax bill introduced with less than a week to go that would have cost businesses across the state more than a billion dollars. We led a statewide press conference with 26 other business and industry groups across the state and sent urgent action alerts to our members. We placed an op-ed, cosigned by Dirk Draper and Kelly Brough, CEO, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, discussing the potential ramifications on businesses and asked Gov. Polis to veto it. Thanks to your outcry, **HB 1420** was amended to remove several tax provisions, including two that would have been particularly harmful to employers in our region.

We successfully modified two other bills that would have increased costs to businesses:

- **SB 205:** We crafted an exemption to protect federal contractors to the proposal requiring employers to provide sick leave to employees, including part-time and seasonal workers, and allowing them to use the time for non-health reasons. We also supported revisions suggested by the Colorado Chamber of Commerce that helped make the requirement more flexible for employers.
- **SB 215:** We opposed additional costs to health insurers and helped reduce the costs initially proposed in the bill.

And we supported three bills that will put people back to work and help recovery efforts:

- **HB 1326:** We worked to add significant allowances for military spouses who work in licensed or credentialed fields to help them get to work upon moving to Colorado.
- **SB 213:** We supported the extension of carryout alcoholic beverages, helping the restaurant industry recover from pandemic-related closures.
- **SCR 1:** We supported a proposal to change the Gallagher amendment to help relieve the unfair burden of property tax on businesses. The proposal will go to voters in November.

Though the statewide business community is credited with mitigating and defeating a number of anti-business bills, the session resulted in a number of additional administrative requirements and costs to businesses.

For more information about the Chamber & EDC's policy advocacy and legislative programs, contact Rachel Beck, vice president of government affairs, at rbeck@cscdec.com.



Chamber & EDC members discuss their policy needs with state legislators at our annual Legislative Roundtable.

2020 Government Affairs Council

Chair: Kyle Blakely, Blakely + Company

Vice-Chair: Justin Burns, Justin Burns Insurance Agency

- Clarissa Arellano Thomas, Pikes Peak Association of Realtors
- Sarah Brittain-Jack, Sarah B. Jack and Associates
- Ann Cesare, UC Health
- Rebecca Decker, BluStaq
- Susan Edmondson, Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs
- Phill Emmert, Colorado Springs Auto Dealers Association
- Jenn Furda, University of Colorado Colorado Springs
- Fletcher Howard, Colorado Springs Forward
- Chelsea Gaylord, City of Colorado Springs
- Dan Hodges, Colorado Springs Utilities
- Dave Jeffrey, JPM Prototype and the Colorado Advanced Manufacturers Association
- Nic Jimenez, Comcast
- Ryan Klein, Sherman and Howard
- Aikta Marcoulier, Small Business Development Center
- Marla Novak, Housing and Building Association
- Ray Nunn, Nunn Construction Inc.
- Doug Price, Visit COS
- Tim Seibert, Nor'wood
- Forrest Senti, National Cybersecurity Center
- Kevin Walker, Walker Schooler District Managers
- Brandon Wilson, El Paso County