



COLORADO SENATE DEMOCRATS

Joining Together to Fight for Every Coloradan.

Senate Democrats deliver on policies to protect people's health, support economic recovery, & fight for justice in historic legislative session

The 2020 legislative session was the most unpredictable and unprecedented sessions in recent memory, but we are exceedingly proud of the way we were able to bring people together and make a real difference in the lives of our community members. In fact, of the 335 bills passed, 97% of them had bipartisan support, making this one of the most unifying sessions to date.

Senate Democrats went into the year focused on protecting Colorado's natural beauty, bringing down the cost of health care, and securing economic opportunity for all.

Then after passing 97 bills and introducing countless others over the first half of session, our nation was hit with a global pandemic – halting our work at the legislature and devastating our state's budget.

But Democrats rose to the occasion and began crafting legislation to address the ongoing health crisis and to provide economic support for those hit hardest by the shutdown.

In just three short weeks, Senate Democrats were able to deliver policies that help individuals, families, and small businesses get back on their feet – from renter's assistance to expanding health care access and paid sick leave, we prioritized solutions that ease financial burdens and protect people's health.

Senate Democrats also took the lead on passing historic police accountability reform measures after the tragic murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement. This legislation represents one of the most comprehensive policy changes in the country – banning the use of deadly force on a fleeing felon, outlawing the chokehold, mandating body cameras, and establishing a 'duty to intervene' by other officers. This bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and will increase integrity and transparency in police departments across the state.

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RESPONDING TO COVID-19

- **Coronavirus Relief Funds for Small Business Grants***

[SB20-222](#) – Sens. Faith Winter, Jeff Bridges

This bill will direct \$20 million to small businesses in Colorado who have suffered hardship as a result of COVID19 – prioritizing businesses that couldn’t access SBA PPP loans, as well as those owned by veterans, women, and minorities.

- **Coronavirus Relief Funds for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment***

[HB20-1411](#) – Sens. Brittany Pettersen, Rhonda Fields

The need for behavioral health services are compounded by the challenges associated with COVID-19 and the more than half a million individuals who have filed for unemployment in Colorado. Young people have been especially impacted--teachers are reporting an increased need for mental health support for students struggling with schooling at home. The bill allocates \$15 million to critical mental health programs and substance abuse treatment

- **Coronavirus Relief Funds for Food Pantry Assistance***

[HB20-1422](#) – Sens. Tammy Story, Rachel Zenzinger

Demand for food assistance is rising at an extraordinary rate, just as the nation’s food banks are being struck by shortages of food to meet the demand. The bill creates a food pantry assistance grant program and allocates \$500,000 to support Colorado’s most vulnerable across the state and to create new market opportunities for Colorado agricultural products.

- **Coronavirus Relief Funds for Housing Cash Assistance***

[HB20-1410](#) – Sens. Julie Gonzales, Rachel Zenzinger

Housing security for both renters and homeowners during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential to preserving the health and economic security of Colorado families. The bill provides \$20 million in direct rental and mortgage

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assistance to Coloradans experiencing a financial need during these turbulent times, including \$350,000 for legal aid for renters at risk of eviction.

- **Coronavirus Relief Funds for Utilities***

[HB20-1412](#) – Sens. Tammy Story, Rachel Zenzinger

While most utilities have implemented a moratorium on utility disconnections, the moratoriums do not address the difficulty that a household facing economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will have paying its utility bill once a utility's disconnection moratorium is lifted. The bill allocates close to \$5 million to the Energy Outreach Colorado Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund, which helps low-income Coloradans who are at risk of having their service shut off.

- **Protections Against Price Gouging***

[HB20-1414](#) – Sens. Mike Foote, Brittany Pettersen

Unfortunately, during times of emergency, unscrupulous individuals sometimes try to take advantage of scarcity to raise prices on necessary goods to exorbitant levels. This bill establishes that a person engages in an unfair or unconscionable act or practice if they increase the cost of certain necessary goods or services an excessive amount, and empowers the Attorney General or local District Attorneys to enforce these consumer protections.

- **Whistleblower Protection for Public Health Emergencies***

[HB20-1415](#) – Sens. Brittany Pettersen, Robert Rodriguez

The vast majority of businesses are being responsible to keep people safe during this pandemic, but there are workers who have been fired simply because they raised concerns about safety procedures in their workplace. This policy protects workers who raise health and safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic from retaliation and requires employers to allow their workers to wear personal protective equipment, such as masks.

- **Ensuring Paid Sick Leave***

[SB20-205](#) – Sens. Jeff Bridges, Steve Fenberg

Currently, 40% of Colorado's workforce are not afforded the opportunity to earn paid sick days—creating a “work while sick” culture in Colorado that increases the deadly transmission of viruses such as COVID-19. This bill will allow those who are feeling ill to protect their coworkers, customers, and loved ones by staying home, without the fear of losing their income.

- **Expand Access to Unemployment Insurance***

[SB20-207](#) – Sens. Faith Winter, Chris Hansen

During times of unprecedented unemployment, this bill works to expand those who qualify for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and increase the benefits workers can receive. Some of these increased benefits include the amount a worker can earn while remaining eligible for UI, as well as an expanded definition of “good cause” for a worker to quit and still receive the benefit. From a lack of childcare resulting in school closures to employers not

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protecting the health of their workers, Coloradans need additional protections if they are laid off or forced to leave their jobs.

- **Strengthening Debt Protections***

[SB20-211](#) – Sens. Faith Winter, Julie Gonzales

During a disaster emergency, such as COVID-19, where so many people are experiencing economic hardship, this bill expands the ability of the Attorney General to provide oversight of extraordinary debt collection actions, like garnishment. The Attorney General also has the ability to freeze new extraordinary debt collection actions, establish a minimum grace period for payments to resume, and require that monthly payment amounts consider a consumer's ability to repay.

- **Extend Restaurant Takeout & Delivery of Alcoholic Beverages***

[SB20-213](#) – Sen. Jeff Bridges

Selling alcohol to-go has been a crucial tool to help restaurants weather the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. This bill formalizes and extends their ability to generate additional revenue with alcohol to-go for one year beyond the Governor's Executive Order.

FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE

- **Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity***

[SB20-217](#) – Sen. President Leroy Garcia and Sen. Rhonda Fields

This bill focuses on bringing transparency and accountability to policing by codifying multiple groundbreaking measures, including removing qualified immunity, requiring the use of bodycams, outlawing chokeholds as a method of apprehension, banning fleeing felon, outlining a duty to intervene by other officers, and ensuring that bad actors are terminated and banned from the force permanently.

- **Death Penalty Repeal***

[SB20-100](#) – Sen. Julie Gonzales

The death penalty is a regressive form of retribution that is disproportionately used against people of color. This bill repeals this practice which has also been proven to be incredibly costly and ineffective in deterring violent crime.

- **Banning The Gay or Transgender Panic Defense***

[SB20-221](#) – Sen. Dominick Moreno

For too long perpetrators have been allowed to use their victim's sexual or gender identity to legally defend their violent actions against them. With this legislation, the court system may no longer recognize this reasoning as a valid explanation for assault or murder.

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- **Social Equity Licensees In Regulated Marijuana***
[HB20-1424](#) – *Sen. Julie Gonzales*
 Marijuana criminalization primarily punished communities of color, while legalization has primarily benefited caucasians. This bill addressed the inequality represented in the industry by establishing a ‘social equity license’ program where participants are given technical assistance by experienced retail marijuana professionals. It also expands the Governor’s ability to pardon those who were convicted of marijuana possession before it was legalized.
- **End Prison Gerrymandering***
[HB20-1010](#) – *Sens. Julie Gonzales, Kerry Donovan*
 This bill allows for a more accurate census count by ensuring that those in correctional facilities are counted at their last residence in Colorado versus where they are being incarcerated. Without such measure, communities that face a prison pipeline continue to receive inadequate federal assistance and unequal representation.
- **Prohibit Courthouse Civil Arrests***
[SB20-083](#) – *Sen. Julie Gonzales*
 In order for our justice system to be effective, everyone – no matter their immigration status – must be allowed to access it freely and safely. By outlawing ICE arrests outside of courthouses, we are protecting the integrity and independence of our judicial institutions and ensuring victims are protected.
- **Replace Columbus Day***
[HB20-1031](#) – *Sens. Angela Williams, Chris Hansen*
 Indigenous people suffered unspeakable horrors following the arrival of Columbus, and his actions have caused pain that has lasted centuries. For descendants of native populations, Columbus Day serves as a dark reminder of the violent past their ancestors endured. This bill replaces it with a new state holiday recognizing Italian-American humanitarian, Frances Xavier Cabrini.
- **Prison Population Reduction and Management***
[HB20-1019](#) – *Sen. Julie Gonzales*
 Private prisons are for-profit institutions and have a vested interest in keeping more people incarcerated. This presents a major problem in our justice system, where community members – primarily people of color – are sent and kept in prison at an alarming and harmful rate. This bill is the first step in establishing a more effective and humane criminal justice system.
- **The CROWN Act***
[HB20-1048](#) – *Sen. Rhonda Fields*

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This bill protects against discrimination based on hair types and styles, which occurs due to longstanding racial biases and stereotypes associated with hair texture and culture. This results in people of African, Native, Jewish, and Latinx descent being denied educational and employment opportunities.

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

- **Reimbursement For Telehealth Services***

[SB20-212](#) – *Sen. Faith Winter*

This legislation protects patients' ability to receive care via telehealth that was granted during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Telehealth has kept consumers and providers safe while allowing patients to continue their care plan with their providers. This is especially critical for smaller, rural areas of the state that often don't have access to nearby health care facilities.

- **Health Care Coverage Easy Enrollment Program***

[HB20-1236](#) – *Sen. Jeff Bridges*

This measure will help those who may be eligible for reduced health care rates get connected with affordable coverage options. Many people forego health insurance because it is simply too expensive, unaware that there may be assistance that they're eligible for.

- **Expanding Health Insurance Affordability***

[SB20-215](#) – *Sens. Dominick Moreno, Kerry Donovan*

This bill works to establish a sustainable funding structure for Colorado's reinsurance program – an initiative that has proven to lower premiums for thousands of Coloradans on the individual market and expand coverage for those previously uninsured.

- **Allow Medicaid Buy-In After Age 65***

[SB20-033](#) – *Sen. Rhonda Fields*

Many older adults struggle to find affordable health insurance options and are often forced to leave their homes to keep from losing coverage. The bill authorizes working adults with disabilities who are over 65 years old to continue participating in the existing medicaid buy-in program when they have become ineligible for the program due to age.

- **Insurance Coverage for Infertility Diagnosis and Treatment***

[HB20-1158](#) – *Sens. Steve Fenberg, Faith Winter*

One in eight people struggle with infertility. This bill requires health insurance plans to cover infertility diagnosis and treatment, as well as fertility preservation services such as IVF.

- **Equity In Access To Clinical Trials In Medicaid***

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[HB20-1232](#) – *Sen. Nancy Todd*

Low-income Coloradans on Medicaid often do not have the same access to cutting-edge clinical trials as other patients do. This bill requires that Medicaid coverage apply to approved trials that address the prevention, detection, diagnosis, or treatment of life-threatening diseases.

- **Cost Savings for Small Community and Rural Pharmacies***

[HB20-1078](#) – *Sen. Faith Winter*

This bill seeks to lower prescription drug costs and support rural and small community pharmacies by establishing requirements for reasonable rates paid by pharmacies to pharmacy benefit management (PBM) firms.

- **Ensuring Access to Benefits for First Responders***

[SB20-057](#), [SB20-026](#) – *Sens. Pete Lee, Rhonda Fields*

These bills protect first responders by ensuring that they are provided with the physical and mental health resources to address ailments related to the demanding nature of their jobs. This includes access to workers compensation for 9-1-1 operators who experience PTSD as well as firefighters battling cancer or heart conditions as a result of their service.

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- **Enhancements to Safe2Tell***

[HB20-1113](#) – *Sen. Jeff Bridges*

The Safe2Tell program provides students a confidential way to report and talk with someone about behavioral health issues and is a national model for crisis intervention. This bill requires the program to develop educational materials about the use of Safe2Tell targeted to educators and students, as well as training materials for responders that outline appropriate responses to tips.

- **Excused Mental Health Absences in Public Schools***

[SB20-014](#) – *Sen. Rhonda Fields*

We can build stronger and safer learning communities by encouraging students to speak openly about their mental health needs. This bill requires school district attendance policies to include excused absences for behavioral health concerns.

- **Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment & Recovery***

[SB20-028](#), [SB20-007](#), [HB20-1017](#), [HB20-1065](#), [HB20-1085](#), – *Sens. Brittany Pettersen, Faith Winter, Kerry Donovan*

After the over prescription of opioid medications, an epidemic of addictions have resulted in countless lives lost. These bills work in tandem to provide much-needed support mechanisms for individuals who are suffering from

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continued and dangerous opioid use by providing treatment options, decreasing secondary harm from unsafe injection, and preventing the unnecessary use of such pharmaceutical drugs by physicians.

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

- **School Entry Immunization***

[SB20-163](#) – *Sen. Julie Gonzales*

Colorado has one of the worst child vaccination rates in the country – creating high contractible risk for otherwise preventable diseases. This bill aims to protect public health by requiring that parents who wish to not vaccinate their children get a signed waiver from an immunization provider or that they watch an educational video about vaccines before they send their children to school.

- **Nicotine Product Regulation***

[HB20-1001](#) – *Sen. Jeff Bridges*

With one of the worst teen-vaping rates in the country, this bill raises the legal age of purchase for tobacco and nicotine products to 21 statewide, closes online loopholes that allow underage children to participate in direct sales, and requires that nicotine product retailers obtain a license.

- **HIV Prevention Medications***

[HB20-1061](#) – *Sen. Dominick Moreno*

This bill allows pharmacists to dispense both PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) medications without a prescription to patients living with or at high-risk of contracting HIV. By ensuring people have access to life-saving preventative care, we will be protecting vulnerable community members from serious illness.

- **CDPHE Inspections Of Correctional Institutions***

[HB20-1409](#) – *Sens. Rhonda Fields, Julie Gonzales*

This bill expands CDPHE's authority to inspect the health and safety of private penal facilities like those operated by GEO. These facilities are often repeat violators of safety regulations – putting the detainees at risk and abusing noncitizens – including minors – awaiting civil immigration proceedings.

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- **Remove Corporate Tax Breaks & Permanently Fund the EITC***

[HB20-1420](#) – *Sens. Dominick Moreno, Chris Hansen*

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This bill removes Trump tax loopholes that only benefit the top 0.7% of filers, and in turn helps boost the income of lower and middle-income working families by permanently funding the Earned Income Tax Credit and funding K-12 education and housing relief.

- **Collective Bargaining for Public Sector Employees**

[HB20-1153](#) – Pres. Leroy Garcia, Sen. Brittany Pettersen

Our state workers keep Colorado moving every day, now more than ever. In order to combat high turnover rates and fill critical positions, state jobs must be able to compete with the private sector. This bill ensures state workers feel valued by having a collective voice and a seat at the table.

- **Colorado Secure Savings Program**

[SB20-200](#) – Sens. Brittany Pettersen, Kerry Donovan

Nearly half of Coloradans in the private sector ages 25-64 don't have retirement plans at work. This lack of savings puts millions of people and our economy at risk. The bill creates a secure savings program to help increase financial stability for Coloradans.

- **Cost Of Living Adjustment For Colorado Works Program***

[SB20-029](#) – Sens. Rhonda Fields, Dominick Moreno

When we remove barriers to financial security for families experiencing obstacles, we can ensure kids start off on a strong path. This bill provides an additional one-time \$500 basic cash assistance payment to those enrolled in Colorado Works.

- **Economic Incentives for New Rural Businesses***

[HB20-1003](#) – Sen. Kerry Donovan

This bill extends and expands the rural Jump-Start program, which provides assistance to new businesses in economically depressed parts of rural Colorado – allowing more people to take advantage of the program and participate in their community's recovery.

- **Rural Economic Development Grants***

[SB20-002](#) – Sen. Kerry Donovan

This bill strengthens the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Grant program. The REDI program provides grants that boost and diversify rural economies and create new jobs – a critical lifeline for communities that have been burdened by unique challenges resulting from COVID-19.

- **Rights for Mobile Home Park Residents***

[HB20-1196](#), [HB20-1201](#) – Sens. Pete Lee, Steve Fenberg, Dominick Moreno, Joann Ginal

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Those living in mobile home parks are particularly vulnerable to corrupt and harassing business practices meant to intimidate and drive people out of their homes. These bills bolster protections against unfair rent increases and badgering behavior from landlords by giving residents the opportunity to collectively purchase their property and protecting them from retaliation if they file a complaint about park owners.

- **Protecting Against Housing Discrimination***

[SB20-224, HB20-1332](#) – *Sens. Julie Gonzales, Rhonda Fields*

Many landlords prohibit tenants from using government assistance or child support as qualifying income – restricting countless Coloradans from affordable housing options. A dollar is a dollar, and this bill ensures that no tenant is denied housing for using the resources available to them to put a roof over their head.

- **Fairness in Eviction Court Records***

[HB20-1009](#) – *Sen. Faith Winter*

This policy protects renters from being discriminated against for ongoing eviction proceedings or vacated charges, which previously has prevented people from finding new housing, even when complaints against them were dismissed. This is critical for Coloradans as we are currently facing an eviction crisis due to COVID-19.

- **Raise Pay for National Guard***

[SB20-091](#) – *Sen. Rachel Zenzinger*

Before this legislation, when our state's military forces were called to serve during emergencies, the minimum pay was just \$20 a day. This bill more than triples the minimum pay to \$88 a day- a much deserved bump that reflects the deep appreciation Colorado has for these brave men and women, especially after their selfless service during COVID-19.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

- **College Credit for Work Experience***

[HB20-1002](#) – *Sens. Rachel Zenzinger, Tammy Story*

Students from all types of experiences and backgrounds gain valuable knowledge and skills on the job. This legislation allows them to earn academic credit for that experience that's accepted and transferable across all state institutions to improve higher education access and affordability.

- **Professional Training for Educators***

[SB20-158](#) – *Sen. Nancy Todd*

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This bill helps attract talented teachers to rural parts of our state by expanding the Educator Loan Forgiveness Program, adjusting stipend eligibility criteria and allocating funding to teacher candidate programs.

- **Connecting Students with Apprenticeships***

[SB20-081](#) – *Sens. Jeff Bridges, Jessie Danielson*

This bill creates a directory to help connect students to employers and other opportunities. It promotes Colorado’s apprenticeship programs by creating a directory to connect employers with local school officials & Colorado students.

- **Strengthening Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative***

[SB20-006](#) – *Sen. Rachel Zenzinger*

This bill broadens COSI assistance to a more holistic & inclusive model— tying scholarships to the rising costs of attendance rather than to tuition alone. COSI has served over 75,000 students in 61 Colorado counties since 2014. Program participants are largely Black and brown students who graduate at a rate 15% higher than their peers.

- **In-State Tuition at Community Colleges for Veterans***

[HB20-1275](#) – *Sen. Pete Lee*

Through this legislation, active duty or honorably discharged members of the armed forces, or their dependents, will now be eligible for in-state tuition at community colleges, regardless of Colorado residency.

- **Fair Compensation for College Athletes***

[SB20-123](#) – *Rhonda Fields, Jeff Bridges*

For decades, college athletes have been barred from earning compensation despite bringing in significant revenue to their universities. Beginning in 2023, this bill protects a student athlete’s ability to be compensated for the use of their name, image or likeness, without affecting their scholarship eligibility. It also solidifies their right to professional and legal representation.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Additional Resources To Protect Air Quality***

[SB20-204](#) – *Maj. Leader Steve Fenberg*

This bill protects public health from dangerous air emissions by ensuring that environmental regulations are enforced, including measures to eliminate the statutory fee cap and direct the commission to increase fees by a 25% minimum.

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- **Increasing Air and Water Protections Enforcement***
[HB20-1143](#) – *Sen. Faith Winter*
 This bill holds polluters accountable by raising the daily state fines for air and water violations, and gives the Attorney General and local District Attorneys more authority to enforce violations.
- **Expand Colorado State Parks***
[SB20-003](#) – *Pres. Leroy Garcia*
 This bill creates the second-largest park in Colorado. Establishing a new state park in Southern Colorado allows more access to an iconic natural wonder that will increase tourism dollars and preserve Colorado's beauty.
- **Increase Public Protection from Toxic Chemical Emissions***
[HB20-1265](#) – *Sens. Julie Gonzales, Dominick Moreno*
 Families who live near refineries are exposed to hazardous air toxics, often without being made aware by polluters. This bill requires facilities to use an emergency notification service to inform the local communities when emission incidents occur.
- **Protecting Groundwater from Harmful PFAS Chemicals***
[HB20-1119](#) – *Sen. Pete Lee*
 Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl, or PFAS, are chemical substances in firefighting foam that are harmful to public health. This bipartisan bill creates clear guidelines for the usage, testing and disposal of PFAS foam to limit exposure to firefighters and contamination of our groundwater.
- **Expansion for Wildfire Grants***
[HB20-1057](#) – *Maj. Leader Steve Fenberg*
 Colorado's rural communities are at greater risk from wildfire. This bill changes the wildfire grant program to ensure that households in greater need of wildfire mitigation assistance can take advantage of these grants.

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