



Citizens Project

2026

Colorado Legislative Report

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Thank you to our P&A committee members!

- Jan Tanner
- Chris Matteini
- Robin Lamoreaux
- Mike Falick

*Terms defined in the glossary are **bolded and underlined**.

Executive Summary

Citizens Project empowers the people of Colorado Springs to build an equitable, just, and inclusive city through civic engagement, voter education, and local advocacy. We support this work by creating educational materials, hosting community forums and conversations, and giving community members opportunities to engage with their civic systems. The Legislative Report is one of our **most enduring tools**, built on the belief that an informed voter is an empowered voter, and that **civic engagement doesn't begin and end on Election Day.**

To do this, we redesigned the Legislative Report's structure. We created the previous version of this resource over our 30+ year history, when the organization's core values and statewide leadership were not well aligned. Voters needed a clear, accessible way to identify which legislators aligned more closely with their values, regardless of party. Our foundational team identified that need and built a resource to fill the gap, and **for decades it served that purpose well.**

Since then, Colorado's political landscape has changed considerably. Voters have achieved significant success in the policy areas most important to Citizens Project, including legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community, steps toward racial equity, and codifying reproductive rights. We also have a very **different governing majority** in the 2020s than we did in the 1990s. It's now a partisan trifecta, which means that some of the most consequential dynamics in the legislature occur within the majority itself, rather than as a consequence of which party holds that majority. For that reason, a resource that flattens that complexity into a simple scorecard or ranking **no longer serves our community as well as it once did.**

Executive Summary

In response, we are reframing this resource and shifting the unit of analysis from the individual to the policy: its movement through the process, the forces that shaped it, and the power dynamics that determined its fate. In the legislative process, a floor vote isn't the whole story; outcomes can be determined long before, in stakeholder conversations, committee amendments, or a potential veto. **A bill that never makes it out of committee tells a story just as much as one that passes with unanimous support.** We believe both are worth your attention.

This resource makes those dynamics visible so you can better understand the 2026 regular legislative session landscape and how it fits into the broader civic system.

Use it to follow the bills we tracked and why they mattered. For each highlighted bill, we've noted how it performed, what forces shaped its outcome, and where Colorado Springs legislators had a hand in the process. We've also examined bills the Governor vetoed, because a veto in a trifecta environment is its own kind of signal, one that reveals the boundaries of consensus and the limits of party unity. This is your map for **connecting statewide policy decisions to our community and understanding which voices at the Capitol amplify or constrain Coloradans' priorities.**

Use it to ask **better questions and bring it.** Democracy is healthiest when voters move beyond party affiliation and engage with the substance of governance. This resource is not a scorecard of heroes and villains. It's an invitation to look at power dynamics, competing priorities, and the gap between stated values and legislative outcomes. We encourage you to sit with the complexity this report surfaces in conversations with your neighbors, your advocacy networks, and your elected officials.

CO 2026 Regular Legislative Cycle at a Glance

At Citizens Project, we strive to help all residents make informed **decisions at the ballot box**. To support this vision, one of our signature resources is our annual Legislative Report. Our State Policy and Advocacy volunteer committee tracks and reports on bills introduced by legislators at the State Capitol. The bills this committee chose to track fell under one of the following categories: Advancing Democracy, Public Education Equity, Housing Stability, Economic Justice, Public Health Equity, Criminal Justice and Victim Services, and **State Governance**. These categories are highly relevant to our mission of striving toward **equity and increased civic engagement in Colorado Springs**.

Legend



Yes vote



No vote



Excused

El Paso County Elected Officials

State

Governor

- Jared Polis (Democrat)

State Senate

- *D9* – Lynda Zamora Wilson (Republican)
- *D10* – Larry Liston (Republican)
- *D11* – Tony Exum, Sr. (Democrat)
- *D12* – Marc Snyder (Democrat)
- *D35* – Rod Pelton (Republican)

State House of Representatives

- *D14* – Ava Flanell (Republican)
- *D15* – Scott Bottoms (Republican)
- *D16* – Rebecca Keltie (Republican)
- *D17* – Regina English (Democrat)
- *D18* – Amy Paschal (Democrat)
- *D20* – Jarvis Caldwell (Republican)
- *D21* – Mary Bradfield (Republican)
- *D22* – Ken DeGraaf (Republican)
- *D56* – Chris Richardson (Republican)

Advancing Democracy

Colorado is a national leader in voting rights, expanding access and improving security, transparency, and administrative efficiency. Most bills we tracked in this category generally seek to strengthen our electoral system through incremental institutional change. Notably, though, a handful of bills could result in disenfranchisement.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
HB26-1084					
HB26-1113					
HB26-1080*	<i>*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.</i>				

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
HB26-1084									
HB26-1113									
HB26-1080*	<i>*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.</i>								

Advancing Democracy

HB26-1084: Voter Transparency in Ballot Measures

Background: Currently, ballot measures must indicate a tax increase under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights amendment (TABOR). This is only part of the information voters may need to make a fully informed decision on their ballot.

Bill Summary: The act requires the fiscal impact statement and ballot information booklet entry for the following types of initiated measures to include a description of the measure's likely effect on the three largest areas of program expenditure of the state:

- A measure that increases state expenditures, except for **de minimis** and administrative expenditures, and that does not identify and provide for a sufficient source of revenue or sufficient reductions in state spending to account for the increased expenditures; and
- A measure that requires existing revenue sources to be reallocated and spent in a particular way.

The act also modifies existing required language for ballot titles and the ballot information booklet for certain initiated measures to mirror the language used in the act.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This policy seeks to curtail the impact of ballot initiatives on the state's budget and inform voters of the downstream effects of the proposed policy. The party of origin is also the party that currently holds power in all three branches of state government, so it was extremely likely that this policy would pass.

Advancing Democracy

HB26-1113: Modifications to Elections

Background: Colorado's election statutes accumulate technical, administrative, and procedural gaps between sessions, such as outdated definitions, ambiguous timelines, inconsistent treatment of specific voter populations (e.g., people in DOC custody, students, overseas/military voters), and provisions that no longer match current election administration practice. This bill is the legislature's annual vehicle for making these revisions ahead of future election cycles.

Bill Summary: The act makes wide-ranging modifications to the Uniform Election Code of 1992 and the Colorado Open Records Act, including:

- Expanding acceptable forms of voter "identification" (e.g., DOC youth-corrections ID, sheriff correspondence for jailed electors) and clarifying that individuals under DOC's "transitional statutes" classification remain eligible to vote regardless of whether they reside in a state facility
- New notice requirements for colleges to inform students about voting deadlines and registration, plus GIS integration for the statewide voter registration system by July 1, 2029
- Handling presidential/vice-presidential elector votes if a candidate dies or withdraws after nomination, clarifying this isn't a "false slate" issue
- Congressional vacancy election procedures – timing, concurrent elections with primaries/generals, candidate nomination deadlines
- Voter service and polling center (VSPC) rules: can't close for supply shortages, new signage/wait-time reporting requirements, lower campus drop-box thresholds (2,000 → 1,000 enrolled students)
- Reenacting a more detailed hand-count procedure for paper ballots (four-judge teams, audible reading, dual reconciliation)
- Extending the Secretary of State's signature-validation windows for ballot initiatives from 30 to 60 days (30 days if close to a filing deadline)
- Repealing the ability of any elector to challenge another's registration for fraud
- Requiring gubernatorial appointees to fill a U.S. Senate vacancy to share the same party as the outgoing senator
- An appropriation of \$10,000 from the Department of State cash fund for FY 2026-27 implementation

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This is a broader, more technical bill than the others we followed, covering a dozen distinct areas of election law, several with real substantive stakes. Floor votes tracked closely along party lines, so like HB26-1084, this vote was largely party-line. One difference worth flagging: this bill went through a much rockier amendment process. For example, there were dozens of amendments across both the Senate and the House, a failed floor amendment in the Senate Committee of the Whole (11-23), and House **"not concur"** wrangling over Senate changes – suggesting more internal negotiation over specific provisions even though the final party alignment held.

Advancing Democracy

HB26-1080: County Mail Ballot Signature Verification Requirements

Background: Under current law, a single election judge personally reviews each mail ballot signature for verification (unless the county clerk opts to allow a signature-verification device). Sponsors argue this creates a single point of failure or bias risk in a step of the process that determines whether a ballot gets counted, and that bipartisan review would build public confidence in signature-matching decisions.

Bill Summary: The bill would have required county clerks and recorders to use a team of bipartisan election judges, rather than a single judge, to verify mail ballot signatures. It would have also directed the Secretary of State to adopt rules governing the procedure for this bipartisan-team review.

Status: Lost – The bill died in the House without moving to a floor vote. After a layover on 2/26/2026, it was specially ordered and laid over again to 5/14/2026 – a day after the session's sine die adjournment on 5/13/2026 – which functionally killed it.

Analysis: This bill stands out because it had bipartisan sponsorship: Representative Chris Richardson (R) and Rep. Amy Paschal (D) as House prime sponsors, with Senator Mark Baisley (R) as the Senate sponsor. That cross-party pairing makes the bill more notable than a majority-party bill or a minority-party long shot.

The bill sailed through committee 10-1, suggesting little substantive opposition to the underlying idea of bipartisan signature-verification teams. But it died procedurally before reaching a floor vote. With no recorded vote beyond committee, the likely takeaway is that the bill was not a priority, or was seen as redundant, costly, or logistically difficult, rather than as a target of outright partisan opposition.

Public Education Equity

The education-related bills tracked this session revealed a pattern in how parties create education policy. Procedural fairness and disability measures draw bipartisan support, while measures concerning LGBTQ+ identity split down party lines. This section also shows how funding-related bills can cause individual legislator defection: SB26-135, a TABOR-related ballot referral to boost K-12 funding, passed largely on party lines but saw a single majority defector vote *No*, mirroring the minority-toward-majority crossovers seen on SB26-125.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
HB26-1083*	<i>*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.</i>				
SB26-125					
SB26-135					
HB26-1141					

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
HB26-1083*	<i>*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.</i>								
SB26-125									
SB26-135									
HB26-1141									

Public Education Equity

HB26-1083: Protect Female Sports Act

Background: Sponsors framed this as protecting the integrity and fairness of girls' and women's athletics by ensuring that teams designated for female participants remain exclusively for people assigned female at birth, citing concerns about competitive fairness and safety if athletes assigned male at birth compete in female categories.

Bill Summary: The bill would have required every interscholastic or intramural team or sport sponsored by a school or athletic association to be expressly designated as male/men/boys, female/women/girls, or coeducational/mixed. It would have prohibited male students from participating in female-designated teams, and female students from participating in male-designated teams, unless no female team/sport is offered. It would have barred state agencies, licensing bodies, or athletic associations from taking adverse action against a school for maintaining separate female teams. It would have also empowered the Commissioner of Education to pursue remedial action against a school found noncompliant after notice and an opportunity to correct.

Status: Lost — The bill died in its first committee assignment to the House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs Committee. The motion to refer it to the Committee of the Whole failed 3-8, after which the committee used a reverse roll call to postpone the bill indefinitely. Postponing a bill indefinitely is the official status of a bill that is colloquially referred to as 'lost' or 'killed'.

Analysis: Rep. Scott Bottoms (R) sponsored this bill alone. The committee vote followed a clean party-line pattern, not intra-party defection or bipartisan negotiation. This is a common fate for polarizing social policy bills introduced by the minority party in a trifecta state: they get a committee hearing, but the committee votes them down, and they don't reach a full floor vote. This bill fit a pattern of the majority party's committee membership screening out a slate of ideologically similar bills.

Advocacy commentary from some of this bill's supporters characterized the defeat of the bill in committee as being done "unceremoniously". It grouped it with other socially conservative bills (such as gender-affirming care litigation and abortion clinic regulation) killed by the same committee around the same time.

The most significant factor here is Colorado's GAVEL (Give a Vote to Every Legislator) Rule. Under this practice, every legislator may introduce five unique bill titles, each entitled to a committee hearing. This is ultimately the reason why there are so many of these kinds of hearings in our legislature. Not every state does this; in some legislatures, the committee chair decides what gets a hearing and what doesn't.

Public Education Equity

SB26-125: Disability Rights Protections in Public Schools

Background: With federal oversight of disability-rights complaints (Section 504, IDEA, ADA) significantly reduced, families and advocates argue Colorado students with disabilities have lost a meaningful enforcement pathway when schools deny them equal access, accommodations, or a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Sponsors framed this as filling that federal enforcement gap at the state level before more students fall through the cracks.

Bill Summary: The act **codifies** federal disability-rights protections (Section 504, IDEA, ADA, and Colorado's own Exceptional Children's Educational Act) in state law. It requires local education providers (school districts, charter schools, BOCES) to give students with disabilities equal access to programs and services, provide reasonable modifications and effective communication/auxiliary aids, and adopt a formal disability rights grievance process with a designated compliance contact. It creates a state-level complaint process at the Department of Education, including investigation, corrective action plans, and, as a last resort, the State Board of Education's authority to withhold state funding from a school that willfully refuses to comply. It also protects complainants and witnesses from retaliation.

Status: Became law – Signed by Governor Polis (D) on May 29, 2026, with a notable signing statement: Gov. Polis flagged that the bill's enforcement funding depends on the Colorado Department of Education securing \$650,000+ in gifts, grants or donations rather than a guaranteed appropriation, calling reliance on charitable funding for civil rights enforcement a "dangerous precedent," while committing to pursue supplemental budget requests instead.

Analysis: This bill stands apart from some of the other we've tracked, passing with bipartisan support in both chambers.

- **Senate (24-11):** All 23 sitting Democrats voted Yes. Of the 12 Senate Republicans, 11 voted No, while the Senate **Minority Whip** crossed over to vote Yes.
- **House (47-18):** All 43 Democrats voted Yes, joined by four House Republicans – Representatives Jarvis Caldwell, Matt Soper, Rick Taggart, and Ty Winter.

Taken together, this bill had both a Senate minority caucus leadership figure (the Minority Whip) and a small **bloc** of House Republicans breaking from their caucus—a meaningfully different pattern—and both were clean party-line outcomes. This is consistent with the bill's framing as backfilling a federal enforcement gap rather than advancing a partisan policy agenda. The sharper fight here wasn't between parties on the floor, but between the legislature and the governor over the funding mechanism, with Gov. Polis signing the bill while publicly objecting to its donation-dependent enforcement structure.

Public Education Equity

SB26-135: State Public K-12 Education Funding

Background: Sponsors argue Colorado's TABOR-imposed revenue cap has forced chronic underfunding of K-12 schools relative to two 2025 state-commissioned adequacy studies, contributing to overcrowded classrooms, understaffed special education and mental health support, as well as the nation's least competitive teacher pay, with the burden falling hardest on working-class, multilingual, and rural communities.

Bill Summary: The act refers a ballot measure to the November 2026 general election asking voters to let the state retain and spend revenue above the TABOR ("Referendum C") cap – an amount equal to the state's existing K-12 spending, roughly \$4.6 billion – and to increase K-12 funding by up to 2% annually for 10 years, compounding. This creates a "positive factor" distributed to districts proportional to their share of statewide total program funding, restricted to increasing teacher pay, improving retention, lowering class sizes, and expanding career/technical courses. It establishes a "children's account" to hold the retained revenue, requires the state auditor to report on how the money is spent, and requires districts to post their positive-factor expenditures online, starting in August 2027.

Status: Became law – Passed on mainly party lines

Analysis: This bill shows a distinctive crossover pattern, but in the opposite direction from SB26-125. In the House, all 22 Republicans voted No, while Rep. Lorena Garcia (D) broke with her party and also voted No, the only Democrat to do so.

Public Education Equity

HB26-1141: Discriminatory Practices in Public Schools

Background: Sponsors argue existing federal civil-rights complaint pathways (Title VI, Title IX, Section 504) are inadequate or under-enforced for K-12 and higher-ed students facing discrimination, and that Colorado needs a state-level, civil-rights enforcement mechanism specific to schools, covering categories like race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, and parental status.

Bill Summary: The act makes it unlawful for a public K-12 school, higher-ed institution, or school employee to deny access, benefits, or equal treatment based on a list of protected characteristics. It creates a formal complaint pathway through the Colorado Civil Rights Division: an aggrieved individual (or the Civil Rights Commission/Attorney General) can file a charge, with an option for early mediation; if unresolved, the school has 60 days to cure the violation before a formal investigation begins. It requires public higher-ed institutions to designate a Title VI compliance coordinator, share data with the Division and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and require CDE to employ a liaison to the Division.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This was a clean party-line outcome in both chambers. This bill drew notable outside opposition beyond the legislature—the Colorado Catholic Conference publicly urged opposition, warning it could be used against religious schools or staff on free speech or religious liberty grounds. That religious-liberty framing, combined with the bill's expansion of protected classes to include gender identity and expression, likely explains why it fell along a clean partisan line rather than picking up bipartisan support the way SB26-125 did. Despite both bills covering civil rights enforcement in schools, this one touches more contested cultural terrain (LGBTQ+ protections specifically) than SB26-125's disability-focused scope.

Housing Stability

The housing policies we tracked showed many instances of bipartisanship. In fact, every bill in this section had at least one party defector, and some had several. Additionally, this policy section revealed two distinct causes of defection: landlord regulations and land use. Some bills produced a sharper, more consequential split, drawing multiple majority-party defectors across both chambers along urban density vs. local control lines rather than the more familiar party or fiscal fault lines. Meeting Colorado's housing needs is complicated, and approaches to solving it vary widely.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
HB26-1196	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
HB26-1202	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
HB26-1001	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
HB26-1101	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HB26-1106*	*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.				
HB26-1045	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗

Housing Stability

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
HB26-1196	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
HB26-1202	✗	✗	✗	!	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
HB26-1001	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
HB26-1101	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
HB26-1106*	*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.								
HB26-1045	✗	!	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

Housing Stability

HB26-1196: Tenant Data Information

Background: Sponsors argue prospective tenants often don't know which background-check criteria will be used against them (e.g., credit history, eviction records, criminal records) until after they're denied. Additionally, renters – who typically lack the credit-building tools homeowners have, like mortgage payments reported to credit bureaus – are locked out of an easy way to build credit through the one large, recurring payment most of them already make: rent.

Bill Summary: The act requires landlords to disclose, in writing or by posted notice, what tenant-screening information they'll access and what specific criteria would lead to a denial before starting that screening. Separately, it requires "covered" landlords (those with more than five units, or receiving certain public financial assistance) to offer prospective and renewing tenants the option of "positive rent reporting." That means sending their on-time rent payments to a consumer reporting agency to help build credit. Landlords can't charge for this or pass the cost on via higher rent, and tenants can opt out any time. Failing to comply with the screening notice or rent reporting requirements is deemed an unfair/deceptive trade practice.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This bill shows a single Democratic defector (Rep. Bob Marshall) in the House, otherwise clean party lines. This process followed a pattern that presented itself in other policy categories: a majority-sponsored, majority-passed bill where the only crossover was a single, defecting majority member.

Housing Stability

HB26-1202: Strategy to Reduce & Prevent Homelessness

Background: Colorado's homelessness response is fragmented, with cities and counties largely acting alone, no shared statewide strategy, no easy mechanism for neighboring jurisdictions to pool resources, and no dedicated funding stream tied to the problem. A similar coordination effort failed in the prior legislative session.

Bill Summary: The act requires the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to present a statewide homelessness prevention and resolution strategy (with timeline, budget, and process) at its January 2027 **SMART Act hearing**. It creates a new type of special district – a "multijurisdictional homelessness response authority" – that any combination of local governments can form via intergovernmental agreement to coordinate homelessness services across jurisdictional lines. These authorities can accept grants and donations, issue bonds, and, if their member governments opt in and voters approve, levy taxes. It also allows counties to direct a portion of real estate documentary filing fee revenue toward affordable housing development after covering administrative costs.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This bill shows the identical crossover pattern to HB26-1196, with a single House majority member breaking ranks. All 22 Republicans voted *No*, and Rep. Bob Marshall (D) joined them. Two things stand out. First, the same majority caucus member defected on both HB26-1196 and this bill, suggesting a consistent skepticism toward bills that expand regulatory or taxing authority, distinct from the TABOR-specific defection on SB26-135. Second, Republicans explicitly framed their opposition around TABOR: Rep. Chris Richardson (R) argued that redirecting documentary filing fees to housing "essentially converts it into the use of a tax" without voter approval, the same TABOR-anxiety framing that appears across several bills in this policy area. Such results suggest TABOR concerns are a major factor in minority opposition to fiscal and housing bills this session, more so than the underlying policy goal itself.

Housing Stability

HB26-1001: Housing Developments on Qualifying Properties (the "HOME Act")

Background: Colorado faces a housing shortage – sponsors of this bill cite a need for roughly 100,000+ additional housing units – while land already owned by mission-driven entities (nonprofits, school districts, housing authorities, transit districts, colleges) sits underutilized because local zoning and discretionary review processes make building on it slow or uncertain.

Bill Summary: The bill requires many local governments to allow residential development on "qualifying properties"— parcels of five acres or less owned by nonprofits, school districts, housing authorities, transit districts, or public colleges and universities – via an administrative approval process. Local governments can't reject these developments based on unit count or height (up to three stories/38', or local zoning limits if more permissive). They can't apply site-design standards stricter than those used for comparable housing elsewhere in the jurisdiction. They retain authority over health, safety, and other building codes.

Status: Became law – Passed with intra-party defection

Analysis: This bill produced the most significant intra-party majority split we've seen in this policy area – with multiple defections in both chambers, not just a single crosser.

- **House (35-24-6**, original February 6th vote): All 21 available Republicans voted *No*, but three Democrats also voted *No*: Representatives Eliza Hamrick, Bob Marshall, and Brianna Titone. Notably, when the bill came back for House Repass after Senate amendments, Reps. Hamrick and Marshall flipped to *Yes*, while Rep. Titone remained *No* and Rep. Alex Valdez (D) joined her as a new *No* – suggesting the Senate's amendments addressed some (but not all) concerns.
- **Senate (22-13**, Third Reading, March 12th): All 12 Republicans voted *No*, joined by Senate Majority Leader Robert Rodriguez, the only Democratic defector in that chamber.

This is a meaningfully different pattern from every other bill in this thread: rather than one habitual crosser (like Marshall on housing/tenant bills) or one TABOR-specific defector (Garcia), this bill drew defections from *several different* majority members across both chambers – consistent with the bill's substance being a state preemption of local zoning authority, which tends to split the majority caucuses along urban density vs **local-control** lines rather than along the more familiar Republican/Democrat or fiscal-conservative fault lines seen elsewhere.

Housing Stability

HB26-1101: Criminal Offenses Related to Critical Infrastructure Metals

Background: Copper wire and other metal theft from cell towers, substations, and telecom infrastructure has grown across Colorado, threatening electricity, emergency communications, and other essential services—while existing commodity-metals theft law didn't specifically address materials stolen from critical infrastructure.

Bill Summary: The act creates a new legal category – "critical infrastructure material" – for metal components whose theft poses an imminent threat to life or safety by disrupting essential infrastructure (power, telecom, etc.) and folds it into existing commodity-metals regulation. It requires junk/salvage dealers buying such material to pay by a traceable method (photographing the seller) or document the transaction, unless it's under \$300. Possessing critical infrastructure material without a seller affidavit becomes a misdemeanor or felony, depending on value (\$2,000+ triggers a Class 6 felony), and dealers who unknowingly receive such material must report it to law enforcement or face the same penalties. It also raises the threshold for felony-level commodity metals theft generally to \$2,000+.

Status: Became law – Passed with almost unanimous support

Analysis: This bill breaks decisively from every partisan pattern in this thread in that it has genuinely broad, bipartisan support in both chambers and was sponsored by a bipartisan team (Reps. Cecelia Espenosa (D) and Matt Soper (R); Sens. William Lindstedt (D) and Byron Pelton (R)) from the outset.

- **House (54-7-4):** All seven *No* votes were Republicans – Reps. Scott Bottoms, Brandi Bradley, Max Brooks, Ken DeGraaf, Stephanie Luck, Larry Don Suckla, Ron Weinberg – meaning 15 of 22 House Republicans joined all Democrats in voting *Yes*. This wasn't a party-line vote in either direction; a small Republican faction dissented.
- **Senate (33-2):** Only Senators Mark Baisley and Lynda Zamora Wilson (both R) voted *No*.

This is a useful data point precisely because it's the outlier: a public-safety and infrastructure security bill with obvious appeal across the spectrum (protecting utilities and telecom from theft) drew almost no partisan resistance, and what little opposition existed came entirely from a small bloc of minority party members rather than from any majority dissent or broader party-line split. It reinforces the overall pattern across this thread: partisan splits track with policy content – cultural/identity issues and TABOR-adjacent fiscal questions produce sharp lines. At the same time, practical public-safety and infrastructure-protection measures tend to sail through with minimal opposition from either side.

Housing Stability

HB26-1106: Eviction Protections for Tenants

Background: Bill sponsors argued that Colorado's eviction process moves too fast and too mechanically. Courts can hear large volumes of eviction cases per day, minors can be named as co-defendants alongside their parents, tenants can lose by default judgment even when trying to cure nonpayment, and writs of restitution can be executed within 48 hours of judgment, leaving little room for tenants facing hospitalization, disability, or other legitimate hardship to respond.

Bill Summary: The bill would have capped the number of eviction cases a county court could schedule per day (scaled to the prior year's filing volume), barred naming a minor as a co-defendant when their parent/guardian is also named, and required a hearing/trial (rather than default judgment) when a tenant's answer expresses intent to cure nonpayment. It listed specific excusable reasons for a late or missing answer (hospitalization, disability accommodation, improper service, transportation issues, e-filing problems, court error). It required courts to vacate judgments and extend deadlines in those cases. It also would have repealed the appeals bond requirement, extended the writ-of-restitution execution window from 48 hours to 30 days (except for substantial lease violations), and barred executing writs during inclement weather.

Status: Lost – House Judiciary voted 9-2 on March 24, 2026 to postpone the bill indefinitely.

Analysis: This bill breaks the partisan pattern more dramatically than anything else in this thread – it wasn't killed on a party-line vote at all. Both parties voted to kill the bill: majority members Jennifer Bacon, Chad Clifford, Cecelia Espenosa, Michael Carter, and Lorena Garcia (all D), joined by minority members Ava Flanell, Rebecca Keltie, Scott Slaugh, and Matt Soper (all R). The only two *No* votes (against killing it, i.e., wanting it to survive) appear to be the bill's own sponsors on the committee. That means a majority of the committee's own Democratic caucus voted to kill a bill sponsored by fellow members (Reps. Lindsay and Velasco, Sens. Michaelson, Jenet and Weissman (all D)).

This result contrasts sharply with HB26-1196 and HB26-1202. Here, five majority members joined the minority caucus to kill a tenant-protection bill entirely in committee, well before it could reach a floor vote where the full majority caucus might have been forced to take a public position. The Colorado Housing Coalition and various landlord/property-owner groups testified heavily against the bill (citing case backlogs, extended timelines, and financial strain on small landlords). That organized opposition seems to have found real purchase within the majority itself – not just amongst the minority – suggesting this bill pushed further into "cost/operational burden on housing providers" territory than the more successful tenant-facing bills (like HB26-1196's rent-reporting mandate) that drew only a single defector. It's a useful reminder that "landlord/tenant" isn't a single monolithic axis in this legislature – bills asking landlords to disclose information or offer options draw much less resistance than bills that slow down or complicate the eviction process itself, even among the majority.

Housing Stability

HB26-1045: Disabilities Housing Protections

Background: Definitions for "assistance animal," "emotional support animal," and "reasonable accommodation" in housing have largely existed only as federal guidance (HUD), which sponsors say has become less reliable. This bill codifies those definitions directly into Colorado's own Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA) so disability housing protections don't depend on federal guidance that could change or disappear.

Bill Summary: The act defines "assistance animal" (covering both service animals and emotional support animals) and "emotional support animal" (an animal providing solely emotional support to alleviate a disability symptom) under CADA. It defines "reasonable accommodation" for housing purposes and lists factors relevant to assessing whether an accommodation is necessary for a person with a disability to have equal use and enjoyment of housing. It also clarifies that the mere presence of an assistance animal does not, by itself, constitute a direct threat to health/safety or a presumption of property damage.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This bill shows a distinctive crossover pattern in the House only.

- **House (40-23-2):** All 21 available Republicans voted *No*, joined by two Democrats: Reps. Cecelia Espenosa and Bob Marshall.

The same member is a three-time defector in this thread – HB26-1196 (tenant data/rent reporting), HB26-1202 (homelessness authorities), and now HB26-1045 (disability housing protections) – all bills that impose new requirements on landlords or housing providers. That's a consistent, identifiable voting pattern rather than a one-off, suggesting a fairly firm skepticism of landlord-facing regulatory mandates, regardless of the bill's underlying policy goal (tenant credit-building, homelessness response, or disability accommodation). Rep. Espenosa's defection here is a new data point.

Economic Justice and Workers' Rights

This policy section further demonstrates splits between the parties, pro-worker vs. pro-business. One bill illustrates this most starkly: it passed the House with only a single familiar defector, but died on the Senate floor when several majority members – more than a quarter of that chamber's caucus – joined the minority caucus to defeat it. Additionally, this section shows how pro-business entities have strong levers in state government and can use them to shape policy at various stages of the policymaking process, not only through the legislature, but through gubernatorial veto as well.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
HB26-1054	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
HB26-1005	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
HB26-1054	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
HB26-1005	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

Economic Justice and Workers' Rights

HB26-1054: Protections for Worker Safety

Background: Sponsors argued that Colorado workers could lose federal workplace-safety protections if Congress weakened or repealed OSHA's general duty clause or federal mine safety standards, leaving a gap with no state-level backstop to ensure basic workplace safety.

Bill Summary: The bill would have required employers to keep workplaces free of recognized hazards (per OSHA's general duty clause as of September 1, 2025) and would have empowered the state Division of Labor Standards and Statistics to adopt rules replacing any OSH Act or federal Mine Safety Act protections that get repealed or weakened federally. It authorized the Attorney General, the division, labor organizations, or aggrieved individuals to bring civil actions for violations, with statutory damages to workers and penalties to a new state workplace health and safety fund.

Status: Died in the Senate – Passed the House 42-23 on May 5, 2026, but was defeated on the Senate floor 17-18 on May 13, 2026, the last day of the session.

Analysis: The majority-party crossover was large enough to kill a bill that had already cleared the other chamber.

- **House (42-23):** A familiar, narrower pattern – all 22 Republicans voted *No*, joined by Rep. Bob Marshall (D).
- **Senate (17-18, FAILED):** All 12 Republicans voted *No*, but they were joined by six Democrats – Sens. Judy Amabile, Matt Ball, Jeff Bridges, Lindsey Daugherty, Kyle Mullica, and Marc Snyder – enough to flip the outcome entirely. Coverage of the floor debate ties the defeat directly to concerns that the bill created a "confusing structure" for employers uncertain about whether to answer to state or federal regulators, with critics arguing it "goes halfway and does damage in the process," rather than committing to a full state takeover of workplace safety enforcement.

This result breaks new ground for the pattern we've been tracking: rather than a single, habitual defector or a handful of TABOR-anxious minority members, this bill lost a genuine bloc of six majority Senators— more than a quarter of the caucus – on a business regulation bill that evidently split the party between labor-aligned members and those more sensitive to employer/business concerns about regulatory uncertainty. Tellingly, the legislature simultaneously passed a narrower alternative, HB26-1272 (data collection on heat-related workplace incidents), suggesting the caucus was comfortable with incremental worker safety measures but not with the more sweeping "shadow OSHA" structure this bill proposed. That's a meaningfully different failure mode than anything else in this thread – not a party-line loss, but a genuine moderate-Democrat rebellion large enough to defeat the bill outright.

Economic Justice and Workers' Rights

HB26-1005: Worker Protection Collective Bargaining

Background: Sponsors argued Colorado's "Labor Peace Act" – a Depression-era compromise unique to Colorado – imposes an extra hurdle unions face nowhere else in the country: even after workers vote to unionize, a separate election requiring 75% approval is needed before the union can negotiate a union-security clause. Sponsors framed this second election as an artificial barrier to good-faith bargaining that dilutes what a simple organizing majority should be able to achieve.

Bill Summary: The bill amended the Labor Peace Act to specify that the right to bargain collectively extends to any mandatory subject of bargaining, eliminated the second-election requirement for negotiating a union-security agreement, clarified that refusing a proposal isn't itself an unfair labor practice as long as the refusing party bargained in good faith, and imposed a mutual good-faith bargaining duty on both employers and employee representatives.

Status: Vetoed by Governor – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This is a fundamentally different failure mode than the worker-safety bill – no legislative crossover at all.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

This section of bills shows how different policy types can experience varying degrees of success and failure. The direction and extent of party defection can indicate how partisan a bill is. Ranking the bills by the amount of crossover isn't random. It aligns closely with how far a bill is from partisan conflict: policy areas closer to shared values draw more crossover. In contrast, issues at the heart of partisan politics follow the currents of their national counterparts. This is also a clear example of how outside lobbying pressure can greatly affect a bill's path to success. A bill that never gets a recorded floor vote represents a meaningfully different kind of loss than either a lost floor vote or a veto – it shows that a sufficiently mobilized stakeholder group, combined with early gubernatorial signaling, can preempt the legislative process entirely; arguably the most consequential mechanism of the group, as it's invisible in vote tallies. Committee votes can often indicate a bill's coalition of support better than the eventual floor vote. Committee activity, like cross-party dissent, can foreshadow instability around a bill.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
SB26-012					
SB26-005					
SB26-070*	<i>*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.</i>				
HB26-1134					
HB26-1227					
HB26-1283					

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
SB26-012	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
SB26-005	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
SB26-070*	*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.								
HB26-1134	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
HB26-1227	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
HB26-1283	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

SB26-012: Compensable Losses for Tribal Members

Background: Sponsors argued the "Colorado Crime Victim Compensation Act" – which reimburses crime victims for things like counseling, funeral costs, and travel related to their recovery – wasn't built to recognize how Indigenous crime victims and families actually heal. Traditional Native American practices (ceremonial counseling from an elder or spiritual healer, ceremonial burials, honoraria for those performing services) fell outside the statute's list of compensable expenses, leaving enrolled tribal members without access to a benefit other victims could claim.

Bill Summary: The bill amended the Crime Victim Compensation Act so enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe can be reimbursed for traditional Native American healing ceremonies and practices, including counseling and healing from an elder or spiritual healer, ceremonial practices, ceremonial burials (clothing, meals, and related costs), child care during burial ceremonies, honoraria for ceremonial services, and reasonable travel expenses connected to these practices.

Status: Became law – Passed with almost unanimous support

Analysis: SB26-012 passed with almost no friction in either chamber.

- **Senate (31-1-3):** Only one Senator voted No – Sen. Lynda Zamora Wilson (R).
- **House (59-6):** All six No votes came from Republicans – Reps. Scott Bottoms, Brandi Bradley, Max Brooks, Ken DeGraaf, Rebecca Keltie, and Stephanie Luck

The lopsided margins in both chambers suggest this was a low-conflict, low-visibility fix: a narrowly targeted expansion of an existing victim-compensation program, with no organized business or ideological lobby positioned against it. The handful of minority No votes in the House read less like a coordinated bloc and more like scattered individual dissent, since no clear ideological or regional pattern links Reps. Bottoms, Bradley, Brooks, DeGraaf, Keltie, and Luck beyond general caucus conservatism. Bipartisan sponsorship (Minority Sen. John Carson (R) signed on as a co-sponsor) likely helped smooth the bill's path through both chambers, and the unanimous 35-0 Senate concurrence vote on the House amendments reinforces that this was treated as **consensus legislation** rather than a contested policy fight.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

SB26-005: Rights Violation in Immigration Enforcement Remedy

Background: Sponsors argued that Colorado residents whose constitutional rights are violated during federal civil immigration enforcement have no meaningful state-level recourse, since federal agents are largely shielded from private lawsuits. The bill was introduced in response to escalating ICE enforcement activity in Democrat-led cities, aiming to give Coloradans a state-court avenue to hold individual federal agents accountable for constitutional violations committed "under color of law" during immigration enforcement.

Bill Summary: The bill created a statutory cause of action allowing a person to sue anyone who, while participating in civil immigration enforcement under color of law, violated their federal constitutional rights and proximately caused that violation. Plaintiffs could seek legal, equitable, or other appropriate relief, with a two-year statute of limitations. The bill also appropriated \$125,604 to the Department of Law to provide legal services for the Department of Personnel.

Status: Vetoed by Governor – Passed by party lines

Analysis: The majority caucus held perfect unity in both chambers, yet the bill still failed, entirely because of a gubernatorial veto. That makes SB26-005 a close cousin of HB26-1005: a bill with unanimous majority legislative support that ran into a governor willing to break from his own party. But the reasoning behind the veto was different in kind – not a policy disagreement about business impact or regulatory structure, but a legal-risk objection layered on top of what was already a politically fraught subject given the national ICE-enforcement backdrop. It's also notable given the context: Governor Polis's (D) veto drew public friction with the state Democratic Party, which had already been at odds with him over other end-of-session decisions, suggesting this bill sits at the sharper edge of a broader pattern of the outgoing governor positioning himself independently of his own caucus in his final year.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

SB26-070: Ban Government Access Historical Location Information Database

Background: Sponsors argued that automated license plate reader (ALPR) networks — like those operated by companies such as Flock Safety — let government agencies assemble detailed, searchable logs of where any given person or vehicle has been over time, without a warrant. They framed this as a Fourth Amendment concern. A meaningful constitutional difference exists between an officer spotting someone on the street and the government reconstructing a person's movement history on demand, and Colorado law had no guardrails for that kind of retrospective surveillance.

Bill Summary: The bill would have prohibited government entities from accessing a database revealing an individual's or vehicle's historical location information (as amended, requiring a warrant to search data more than 72 hours after a reported crime, with exceptions for emergencies, consent, toll/parking/traffic enforcement, and information security). It barred sharing that data with third parties or out-of-jurisdiction agencies, exempted the data from the Colorado Open Records Act, required retention and compliance policies, made improperly obtained data inadmissible at trial, and gave the attorney general enforcement authority.

Status: Died without ever reaching a Senate floor vote — Introduced January 28, 2026, advanced out of Senate Judiciary 5-2 on February 23 (after eight amendments and roughly five hours of testimony from about 70 witnesses), advanced out of Senate Appropriations 4-3 on April 21, but stalled on Second Reading, getting laid over repeatedly (April 23, 24, 29) before sponsor Sen. Judy Amabile (D) pulled the bill in early May rather than force a floor vote without enough votes to pass.

Analysis: This bill never reached a floor vote to show where the lines were drawn, but the coalition that killed it wasn't partisan in the usual sense.

- **Senate Judiciary (5-2):** The two committee *No* votes came from opposite sides of the aisle — Republican Sen. John Carson, who argued the issue didn't rise to a Fourth Amendment concern, and Democratic Sen. Dylan Roberts, who cited law enforcement testimony that the technology solves and deters crime.
- **Floor:** The bill was bipartisan at the sponsor level from the start — Republican Sen. Lynda Zamora Wilson co-sponsored alongside Democrat Sen. Amabile — but that bipartisan sponsorship wasn't enough to survive organized opposition once the bill reached the floor.

What sank SB26-070 wasn't a floor vote at all — it was a pincer of law enforcement lobbying and gubernatorial skepticism. Rep. Kenny Nguyen (D), a House sponsor, said the bill likely had the votes to pass the House but was pulled in the Senate after sustained pushback from police agencies, who argued it would hinder solving crimes. Governor Polis's (D) office signaled it would support "codifying best practices" on license plate readers but thought the bill's restrictions went too far and risked public safety, effectively signaling a veto threat before it even reached his desk. Facing both a law-enforcement lobbying campaign and an unreceptive governor, Sen. Amabile chose to withdraw rather than lose on the floor and return in a future session—one she said she hoped would have "a governor who thinks it's okay to put guardrails around mass surveillance." That makes this bill's failure mode distinct from the others in this set: not a lost legislative vote, and not a veto after passage, but a bill withdrawn preemptively after its sponsor read the writing on the wall from stakeholders outside the legislature.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

HB26-1134: Fairness & Transparency in Municipal Court

Background: Sponsors argued Colorado's municipal courts—which handle most low-level offenses and city-ordinance violations most residents will ever encounter—operate under a patchwork of local practices, without the same baseline protections guaranteed to defendants in state court. That gap showed up in three places: unclear rights to counsel and case access for municipal defendants, indigent defense counsel sometimes paid flat fees that could incentivize rushing cases, and inconsistent public/virtual access to proceedings, especially for people held in custody.

Bill Summary: The bill clarified that municipal court defendants have a right to counsel, and gave municipal defense counsel the same notice requirements, case-file access, and client-meeting opportunities as state-level defense counsel. It extended the existing ban on flat-fee payment structures for indigent defense counsel (previously limited to domestic-violence cases) to all municipalities, while still allowing a flat fee if it's equal to or greater than what hourly billing would produce. It also required virtual public observation of all in-custody municipal proceedings and prompt resolution of municipal cases.

Status: Became law — Passed the House 43-19-3 on March 3, 2026 and passed the Senate 24-11 on March 31, 2026.

Analysis: This bill drew a mostly party-line vote with a small but consistent trickle of Republican crossover in both chambers.

- **House (43-19-3):** All 19 No votes came from Republicans, but two Republicans — Reps. Ava Flanell and Matt Soper — broke ranks to vote Yes alongside the full Democratic caucus present.
- **Senate (24-11):** All 11 No votes came from Republicans, but Sen. Cleave Simpson crossed over to vote Yes with the unanimous Democratic caucus.

Unlike the straight party-line splits on the immigration-enforcement or Labor Peace Act bills, HB26-1134 peeled off a handful of Republicans in both chambers — likely reflecting that "due process baseline for municipal defendants" and "public observation of custody proceedings" read less as a partisan project and more as a good-governance, rule-of-law measure that a few members could support. The bill also cleared House Judiciary 9-2 and Senate Judiciary 4-2 in committee — lopsided enough that opposition never coalesced into anything resembling the unified resistance seen on bills like SB26-070.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

HB26-1227: Minors' Rights in Dependency & Neglect Proceedings

Background: Sponsors argued that a June 2025 Colorado Supreme Court decision (*In re People ex rel. R.M.P.*) had gutted children's practical ability to be heard in their own dependency and neglect cases. Under that ruling, only the government (via the county department) could effectively control whether a case proceeded, even when a child's guardian ad litem or counsel believed the child was still unsafe. Advocates described cases where county departments moved to dismiss over the objections of terrified children, with no judicial check on that decision once the department declined to pursue it.

Bill Summary: The bill affirmed that a child or youth named in a dependency and neglect petition is a full party to the case, with legal standing on all matters touching their interests and a right to have those interests fully represented by their guardian ad litem or counsel throughout the proceedings, including on appeal. It created a specific check on early dismissals: if a county department seeks to dismiss a petition before the adjudicatory hearing and the child's guardian ad litem or counsel objects with an articulated basis for the abuse or neglect claim, the court must hold a hearing to determine whether the county has a reasonable basis for dismissal – and may only dismiss if that basis is shown.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This was a genuinely bipartisan bill with crossover running in both directions.

- **House (45-18-2):** Five Republicans – Reps. Mary Bradfield (a prime House sponsor), Ryan Gonzalez, Matt Soper, Rick Taggart, and Ron Weinberg – crossed over to vote Yes, while the other 17 Republicans present voted No. On the Democratic side, Rep. Bob Marshall broke ranks and voted No, following the same pattern of habitual defection seen on other bills in this set.
- **Senate (28-7, PASS):** Five Republicans – Sens. Scott Bright, John Carson, Marc Catlin, Lisa Frizell, and Cleave Simpson – crossed to Yes, while the remaining seven Republicans (Sens. Mark Baisley, Barbara Kirkmeyer, Larry Liston, Byron and Rod Pelton, Janice Rich, and Lynda Zamora Wilson) voted No. Every Democrat present voted Yes.

The bipartisan prime sponsorship (Rep. Bradfield co-led the bill alongside Democrat Rep. Lindsay Gilchrist, and it carried a genuinely mixed co-sponsor list) shows up directly in the vote pattern: this wasn't a party-line bill with a few defectors, but one where roughly a quarter of each chamber's Republican caucus voted with the bill outright. That's consistent with the bill's framing – restoring a child's voice and judicial oversight in cases where a state agency might otherwise unilaterally end protective proceedings – landing as a child-welfare and judicial-fairness issue rather than a business-regulation or ideological fight.

Criminal Justice and Voting Rights

HB26-1283: Protections Regarding Seizures of Identification Documents

Background: Sponsors argued that employers—particularly those employing migrant and seasonal workers—sometimes confiscate workers' government-issued ID documents (passports, visas, driver's licenses) to coerce them, making it harder for those workers to leave a job, seek help, or protect themselves from exploitation. They also pointed to a related, newly salient risk: employers or others handing a worker's ID to federal immigration authorities as a tool of intimidation or retaliation.

Bill Summary: With certain exceptions, the bill prohibits an employer or an employer's agent from demanding, confiscating, retaining, or otherwise requiring an employee, job applicant, or worker (including migrant and seasonal workers) to surrender their government-issued ID. A knowing violation is criminal possession of an identification document, a Class 2 misdemeanor. If a person violates the prohibition – or provides or threatens to provide someone's ID to federal immigration authorities without legal basis – with intent to intimidate or harass based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or transgender identity, that elevates to a bias-motivated crime, a Class 1 misdemeanor, with additional civil remedies available to the victim.

Status: Became law – Passed on party lines

Analysis: This bill was close to a party-line vote, with one small Democratic defection rather than any Republican crossover.

- **House (41-23-1):** All 22 Republicans present voted *No*, joined by Democratic Rep. Cecelia Espenosa, who broke ranks to vote *No* alongside them.

Unlike the municipal-court bill's modest bipartisan crossover, this bill's subject matter – ID confiscation explicitly tied to immigration-enforcement threats – appears to have hardened along party lines rather than softened them, consistent with how the other immigration-adjacent bill in this set (SB26-005) also split cleanly by party. Rep. Espenosa's single *No* vote is the only majority party defection, and it's not part of any recognizable bloc. Overall, this bill fits the pattern seen elsewhere in the session on immigration-related measures: the minority caucus votes as a bloc against, the majority caucus votes as a bloc for, and simple partisan math, not internal negotiation, decides the bill's fate.

State Governance

These bills show how procedural (adjacent) legislation moves through the Colorado legislature, and what happens when a bill lands outside that zone. Unanimity and near-unanimity are the default outcome for anything without an organized interest on one side. Bipartisan prime sponsorship is a strong predictor of a clean, low-conflict outcome – and its absence is a strong predictor of the opposite. Some bills paired a Republican and a Democrat as lead sponsors from day one. Others had exactly one sponsor, from the minority party, with no co-sponsors in either chamber. That's not incidental – a bill introduced without cross-party buy-in going into a majority-controlled committee is, in a unified-government legislature like this one, functionally a messaging bill rather than a serious legislative vehicle. Committee assignment often matters more than the substance of testimony. One bill drew genuine public engagement – organized advocates on one side, opposing advocacy groups on the other – but none of that testimony moved a single vote, because the committee's partisan composition made the outcome fixed before the hearing started. That's a sharper version of a pattern visible elsewhere. In a legislature with durable one-party control of committee assignments, a bill's fate is often locked in when it's referred to committee, not when testimony is heard.

Bill	Lynda Zamora Wilson (Senate D9)	Larry Liston (Senate D10)	Tony Exum, Sr. (Senate D11)	Marc Snyder (Senate D12)	Rod Pelton (Senate D35)
HB26-1072*	*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.				
HB26-1095	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HB26-1293	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Bill	Ava Flanell (House D14)	Scott Bottoms (House D15)	Rebecca Keltie (House D16)	Regina English (House D17)	Amy Paschal (House D18)	Jarvis Caldwell (House D20)	Mary Bradfield (House D21)	Ken DeGraaf (House D22)	Chris Richardson (House D56)
HB26-1072*	*Bill was lost prior to a floor vote taking place.								
HB26-1095	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HB26-1293	✓	✓	✓	!	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

State Governance

HB26-1072: Right to Firearm Possession & Elimination of Extreme Risk Protection Orders

Background: The sponsor argued Colorado's Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) "red flag" law – which allows courts to temporarily remove firearms from someone found to pose a danger to themselves or others – circumvents full due process by seizing property based on a civil finding of risk rather than a criminal conviction. Supporters framed this as an unconstitutional infringement on the individual right to keep and bear arms recognized in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. They argued ERPOs have been misused in some cases on what they considered shaky evidentiary grounds.

Bill Summary: The bill would have codified an individual's right to own, possess, and use a firearm to the maximum extent permissible under the state and federal constitutions, and would have repealed Colorado's extreme risk protection order and temporary extreme risk protection order statutes entirely.

Status: Lost

Analysis: HB26-1072 never had a realistic path forward. It was a single-sponsor bill – Rep. Scott Slauch (R), with no co-sponsors in either chamber – introduced into a committee where Democrats hold an 8-3 majority, addressing a policy (ERPO repeal) that Colorado Democrats have consistently and unanimously opposed rolling back. The testimony record shows real mobilization on both sides: gun-rights advocates framed ERPOs as unconstitutional prior restraint that seizes property before due process runs its course. At the same time, groups like the Colorado PTA and individual physicians cited suicide-prevention evidence and personal patient histories in strong opposition to repeal. But that public engagement never translated into legislative traction, since the committee's partisan composition made the outcome essentially predetermined before the hearing even began. The straight 8-3 party-line vote – with every Democrat voting to kill the bill and every Republican voting to keep it alive – reflects a bill whose fate turned entirely on committee assignment and caucus math rather than on the substance of the testimony or any cross-party persuasion.

State Governance

HB26-1095: Digital Publication for Legal Notice

Background: Sponsors argued that requiring legal notices (foreclosure notices, government meeting notices, public hearings, etc.) to be published only in print newspapers no longer reflects how most Coloradans get information, and that some newspapers were publishing these legally mandated notices online but locking them behind paywalls – meaning the public couldn't actually access notices they're legally entitled to see without paying a subscription fee.

Bill Summary: The bill requires a newspaper that publishes legal notices to also publish them online – either on its own website or via a link to a location like the statewide public notice website – and requires that online access be completely free, with no paywall or subscription requirement. It also requires the statewide public notice website to maintain a list of newspapers that meet the requirements to publish legal notices.

Status: Became law – Passed with almost unanimous support

Analysis: The legislature passed this bill with near-unanimous support.

- **House (64-1):** Every single member voted Yes except Rep. Bob Marshall (D).
- **Senate (35-0):** Unanimous.

The bill's bipartisan sponsorship (Republican Rep. Larry Don Suckla co-led with Democrat Rep. Kenny Nguyen, and Republican Sen. Rod Pelton co-led with Democrat Sen. William Lindstedt) reflects why it moved so cleanly: this was a government-transparency and consumer-access fix – making information the public is already legally entitled to actually free and reachable – that carried no clear ideological valence and no organized opposition. Rep. Marshall's lone dissent doesn't fit any obvious substantive objection visible in the bill's history and is best read as a continuation of the pattern seen elsewhere in this set: he has now shown up as the sole or near-sole defector on multiple otherwise near-unanimous or lopsided bills this session, a personal voting tendency rather than a signal of any broader legislative fault line.

State Governance

HB26-1293: Modernization of Requirements for Ballot Information Booklet

Background: Colorado's Statutory Revision Committee, a nonpartisan legislative body tasked with cleaning up outdated or redundant language in state law, originated this bill. Sponsors noted that the statutory requirements governing the "Blue Book" – the ballot information booklet mailed to voters explaining ballot measures – still contained antiquated drafting language and obsolete fiscal provisions tied to a revolving fund transfer schedule that expired after fiscal year 2010-11, cluttering the statute with dead text that no longer served any purpose.

Bill Summary: The bill amends the statutory requirements for the ballot information booklet to align with modern drafting practices and remove antiquated, redundant language from the booklet's required text. It also repeals obsolete provisions governing transfers to and from the ballot information publication and distribution revolving fund for state fiscal years 2007-08 through 2010-11.

Status: Signed into law – Passed the House 62-0-3 on March 9, 2026, passed the Senate 34-0-1 on April 7, 2026, and Governor Polis (D) signed it May 4, 2026.

Analysis: This bill passed unanimously—no No votes in either chamber.

- **House (62-0-3):** Every member present voted Yes. Reps. Regina English, Naguetta Ricks, and Elizabeth Velasco (all D) were excused.
- **Senate (34-0-1):** Every member present voted Yes, with one excused.

As a Statutory Revision Committee bill with bipartisan prime sponsorship (Republican Rep. Stephanie Luck co-led alongside Democrat Rep. Cecelia Espenosa, with Republican Rep. Brandi Bradley among the co-sponsors), this was purely technical housekeeping legislation – cleanup drafting and repeal of dead fiscal provisions, with no policy stakes, no ideological content, and nothing for any member or interest group to organize against. Committee votes were similarly lopsided (11-0 in House State, Civic, Military & Veterans Affairs; 5-0 in Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs), and even Rep. Bob Marshall (D) – the session's most frequent lone dissenter on otherwise-unanimous bills – voted Yes here. This is about as close to pure, uncontested procedural legislation as the 2026 session produced: a bill that exists to make the statute books cleaner, not to change what anyone can or must do.

What We Noticed

This 2026 session was a strong example of a trend we've noticed emerging. Unlike what probably comes to mind when you think of groups engaged in political conflict, the **most telling conflictual relationship at the Capitol this session was intra-party conflict** within the majority caucus. Taken together, these six policy areas show that partisanship in Colorado's legislature is not uniform; it depends on subject matter, and the closer a bill sits to identity, cultural, or ideological terrain, the more predictably it will split along party lines. Bills addressing procedural fairness, public safety, or gaps left by federal retrenchment consistently draw bipartisan support or pass with minimal friction.

Within this broad pattern, several other recognizable mechanisms can determine whether a bill will pass or fail. A recorded floor vote is the most visible and accountable path – it puts every member's vote on the record, and party-line floor votes are the clearest evidence of straightforward majority-rule policymaking. But several **less visible mechanisms** carry just **as much weight**, and often more:

- **Committee assignment.** In a legislature with durable one-party control of committee composition, a bill's fate can be effectively fixed the moment it's referred – before a single witness testifies.
- **Outside lobbying.** Organized interests (business associations, law enforcement, advocacy coalitions) can kill or reshape a bill well before it reaches a recorded vote, sometimes preventing a floor vote altogether.
- **Gubernatorial veto.** Even a bill that clears both chambers with unified or near-unified Democratic support can be stopped at the governor's desk – meaning legislative agreement doesn't guarantee enactment.
- **Sponsorship structure.** Whether a bill has bipartisan lead sponsors or a single-party sponsor with no cross-aisle buy-in strongly predicts how contested the process will be, independent of the bill's substance.

Together, these mechanisms show that the floor vote—the most visible marker of a bill's success or failure—is often just the final, most publicly legible step in a process where the heft of policymaking happens earlier and less visibly.

Major Themes

1. Party unity is not the default condition of a trifecta government – it's earned or lost bill by bill, based on what the bill actually asks members to trade off.

Across every category, the Democratic trifecta is genuinely fractured, but **never randomly**. Housing splits Democrats along landlord-regulation and local-control/density lines. Labor splits them along pro-worker/pro-business lines. Education splits mostly along identity/gender lines rather than funding, except when funding itself creates individual defection. The lesson isn't "Democrats are divided" – it's that each policy domain has its own specific fault line, and knowing which fault line a bill sits on is **more predictive of its vote** than knowing its party sponsorship.

2. Minority caucus opposition frequently isn't ideological opposition to the policy goal – it's opposition to a specific mechanism, most often fiscal.

The housing section makes this explicit: Republican "no" votes are largely framed through TABOR anxiety rather than disagreement with the underlying goal of housing stability. That reframes much of what looks like partisan gridlock as a fight over fiscal mechanisms and state spending authority, not over whether the problem is real.

3. Crossover intensity is a legible, almost measurable signal of how "hot-button" a bill is – and it scales continuously, not categorically.

The criminal justice section makes this most rigorous: ranking bills by crossover produces a near-perfect ordering by ideological proximity to national political fault lines (Native American healing compensation → child welfare due process → municipal courts → immigration enforcement). This isn't unique to that category – it shows up in state governance (unanimity absent organized opposition) and education (bipartisan support on disability/procedural fairness, hard partisan split on LGBTQ+ issues) too. Colorado's legislature behaves almost like a spectrum instrument: the more **a bill touches nationally coded identity** or immigration politics, the **more predictably it polarizes**; the more it's technical, service-oriented, or victim-focused, the more it consolidates support regardless of party.

Major Themes

4. The floor vote is frequently not where a bill's fate is actually decided – committee assignment, outside lobbying, and gubernatorial signaling often matter more.

This is maybe the most important structural finding across categories. Committee partisan composition can predict the outcome before testimony is heard. Labor and criminal justice both show outside lobbying (business interests, law enforcement) killing or reshaping bills well before any recorded floor vote – SB26-070 never got one at all. And across multiple categories (labor's HB26-1005, criminal justice's SB26-005), Governor Polis (D) has shown he will veto bills that passed with unified or near-unified Democratic legislative support, meaning the "final say" in this trifecta **doesn't always rest with the legislature even when Democrats agree internally.**

5. Governor Polis operates as an independent check that is measurable to the right of his own caucus on specific issues – not a rubber stamp for legislative Democrats.

The labor summary states this most directly: two consecutive vetoes of the same union-security policy show Gov. Polis **positioned to the right of his caucus** on that specific question. This matters because it means the "Democratic trifecta" **doesn't function as a unified government**, as the phrase implies—the executive is a real veto point with its own policy preferences, not just a formality.

6. Some legislative behavior isn't ideological at all – it's just about the type of bill.

Bipartisan prime sponsorship strongly **predicts smooth, low-conflict passage**; single-party, single-sponsor bills are often **more message than mechanism. Unanimity is the default** when no organized interest opposes it. Some individual voting patterns are personal idiosyncrasies rather than policy signals—a reminder that not every anomalous vote encodes information about the underlying issue.

Put together: Colorado's legislature under unified control **doesn't behave like a monolith.** It behaves like **several distinct coalition systems** layered on top of one another – one for identity/immigration politics (hard party lines), one for fiscal/TABOR-adjacent policy (Republican opposition, intra-Democratic caution), one for labor/business splits (a genuine moderate-Democrat bloc), and one for procedural/victim-services/technical bills (near-universal consensus) – with the **Governor functioning as a semi-independent additional veto point** whose preferences don't always track the legislative majority, and committee assignment/outside lobbying often mattering more than the eventual floor tally in determining whether a bill even gets tested.

Bills Vetoed by Governor

Data and Technology

- **HB26-1255** – *Social Media Duty to Report & Search Warrants* – would have required social media platforms to notify law enforcement of flagged content and respond to warrants within 24 hours. Governor Polis (D) cited First Amendment concerns.
- **HB26-1210** – *Prohibit Surveillance Price & Wage Setting* – would have barred companies from using personal/surveillance data to set individualized prices and wages.
- **HB26-1286** – *Automated Driving System, Commercial Vehicles* – would have required a licensed driver present in self-driving semi-trucks.

Labor and Workers' Rights

- **HB26-1005** – *Worker Protection Collective Bargaining* – would have eliminated Colorado's unique second-election requirement for union security agreements.
- **HB26-1236** – *Arbitration Reform* – aimed to make consumer/employment arbitration fairer.
- **SB26-184** – *Firefighter Cancer Benefits & Workers' Comp* – would have expanded occupational-disease coverage for firefighters.

Bills Vetoed by Governor

Consumer and Financial Protection

- **SB26-134** – *Payment Card Networks' Fees* – would have barred credit card swipe fees on the sales-tax portion of transactions.
- **SB26-146** – *Restrict Single-Use Food Serviceware Distribution* – would have banned automatically handing out plastic utensils/condiments with takeout.

Youth and Social Services

- **HB26-1355** – *Reduce Appropriation, Out-of-School Time Grant Program* – would have cut funding for after-school programs like the Boys & Girls Club.
- **HB26-1418** – *Online Add-on Transaction Fee for Youth Services* – a 5% fee on in-game purchases to fund youth mental health programs. Gov. Polis worried it conflicted with TABOR.

Immigration

- **SB26-005** – *Rights Violation in Immigration Enforcement Remedy* – would have let people sue federal immigration agents for constitutional violations.

Government Process

- **SB26-147** – *Lobbyist Regulation*

How to Support Our Work

This organization has always been **rooted in this community**. While monetary donations are very important, this work is also driven by **community engagement**. We depend on volunteers who show up, neighbors who spread the word, and residents who take the time to stay informed and help others **do the same**. If you would like to support the creation of more educational resources for navigating local elections, you can support Citizens Project by:

- **Attending an Event**
- **Volunteering with Us**
 - Monitor Local Decisionmakers
 - Get out the Vote with Us
- **Make a Donation**



<https://ggr.sh/Nfgz>

Glossary

Bloc: A group of legislators who vote together. (pg 13)

Codifies: Refers to the process of arranging laws or regulations into a systematic code. (pg 13)

Consensus legislation: Legislation crafted collaboratively to develop solutions that achieve broad acceptance, relying on the absence of formal objection rather than simple majority voting. (pg 29)

Defection: Voting against your party's interests. (pg 11)

De minimis: Matters not considered legally substantial or important. (pg 8)

Local control: The legal doctrine that grants broad authority to local governments (counties, municipalities, and school boards) to make their own localized decisions on land use, education, and community regulations. (pg 20)

Minority Whip: A high-ranking political official in a legislative body who enforces party discipline, tracks how party members intend to vote on upcoming legislation, ensures high attendance for important votes, and rallies support for the party's official agenda. (pg 13)

Not concur: A 'not concur' vote refers to the act of dissenting or refusing to agree with a proposal or motion. (pg 9)

Sine die: When a legislature adjourns sine die, it signifies the legislative body has completed its meeting without setting a day or time to reconvene. In other words, it concludes the legislative session. (pg 10)

SMART Act hearing: The State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent Government (SMART) Act was revised in 2013 to formalize a performance management system in Colorado by providing broad parameters for the key elements of performance management: planning, management, data collection and reporting, and evaluation. (pg 19)



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