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Possible 2011 State Legislation

Note: All Items Subject to Change

Budget

-Budget cuts are likely as revenues stagnate and federal stimulus money phases out. An estimated \$1.1 billion will need to be cut out of the \$7 billion general fund for the 2011-2012 budget. The legislature could also look at user fees in some areas. Elimination of sales tax exclusions and income tax deductions could help on the revenue side, but any tax increase would take a vote of the people. Reversal of last year's elimination of tax credits or sales tax exclusion would lower already short revenues.

-Expect legislation similar to last year's HB 1429, requiring the evaluation of the effectiveness of our tax credits and sales tax exclusions, and analyzing the tax burden by income level.

-Transparency in State Contracts – requiring certain vendor information-- maybe proposed.

-A bill to require other bills proposing revenue cuts (e.g. restoring tax exemptions or tax credits) to identify what would be cut may be introduced.

Domestic Violence

-Some adjustments to the Address Confidentiality Program may be considered, including the renewal process and real property information.

-There may be an attempt to further loosen the laws around concealed carry of guns, or to dissolve the database of permits.

-Automatic loss of parental rights in cases of homicide of other parent may be proposed.

-Possible legislation regarding the accountability of CFIs – Court Family Investigators. These court appointed individuals – usually a lawyer or mental health professional have the power to make recommendations regarding custody. Familiarity with the dynamics of domestic violence varies. Some judges defer to their recommendations regarding custody.

Sexual Assault

-Legislation is needed to keep the Sexual Offender Management Board from sunseting. This board oversees programs that work with sex offenders. Last year's legislation was vetoed after a last minute amendment gave offenders the right to choose their own counselor.

Health Care

-Expected is a slew of legislation to align health coverage laws with the new Federal Legislation. These laws may cover public program eligibility, regulation of insurers, business tax credits, etc. The new governor may also want to formalize an advisory group to help guide health care reform implementation. The federal requirement for insurers to cover children with pre-existing conditions has led many individual insurers to stop offering such policies. This might be addressed through legislation.

-Eliminate Copays at school health clinics

-Laws regulating mental health professionals and midwives will be up for review.

-Simplify income eligibility for family Medicaid. Eliminate "stair steps", depending of child's age.

-A bill regarding a state Public Option is likely.

-Include Health Facilities in Community Comprehensive Planning

-Requiring Paid Sick Days may be back- in the legislature or on the Nov 2011 ballot. About half of private sector employees have no paid sick days. For the lowest paid quarter of the workforce 79% have no paid sick days

Poverty

-Add homeless to protected classes covered by Colorado's Anti Hate Crimes Legislation.

-Counties will try to roll back limits to the amount of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) reserves they can keep. Previously there was no limit. The limit for the coming year is 35% of budget.

Child Care

-Advocates may attempt to remove the "6% trigger" from the Child Care Contribution Credit, so that the credit would be available for the 2011 Tax Year, despite slow economic growth.

Workplace Fairness

-A bill similar to last years HB 1269 will be introduced. It puts teeth into the State Civil Rights laws by including employers of fewer than 15, who were previously exempt. It increases the consequences for proven discrimination from back pay or reinstatement only to also include attorney's fees and punitive damages on a sliding scale

-Barriers to employment for those with criminal records may be addressed.

Teens

-Form Task Force on Teen Suicide and Bullying

-ASSET Bill- Instate Tuition for Colorado Residents, regardless of immigration status.

-Standardization of school policies of Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault.

Others

- Ballot Initiative requirements
- Big Banks, Foreclosure processes, and blight building maintenance requirements
- Civil Unions
- Decriminalization of sex workers

Immigration

-Some legislators have promised to introduce legislation similar to Arizona's HB 1070 which requires police officers to check on the immigration status of those they make contact with. This could have a chilling effect on victims of domestic violence and make undocumented women and men likely targets of crime, and inhibit relations between police and the immigrant communities.

Pay Day Lending

-Pay Day Lenders may seek a modification on the fee and interest caps instituted this year.