



# Colorado Catholic Conference

## **Report Received: March 13, 2026**

Our first *Catholic Lobby Day at the Capitol* was a success! Thank you all who attended! It was a blessing to have Archbishop Aquila pray over our legislators one more time before Archbishop-designate Golka is installed. We watched our lawmaking process, toured the building, climbed to the "Gold Dome," and engaged in fellowship! This will happen annually and we hope to grow our participation and lobbying experience for attendees.

We are now at **332 House Bills** and **139 Senate Bills** introduced so far in the 2026 Legislative Session.

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*A New CCC Bill Introduced this week is:*

### **SB26-135 State Public K-12 Education Funding**

**MONITOR.** SB26-135 requires the secretary of state to refer a ballot issue at the November 2026 general election to seek voter approval for the state to retain and spend an amount of state revenue equal to the amount of state public K-12 education funding in excess of the limitation on state fiscal year spending and to increase state public K-12 education funding by up to 2% for 10 years.

Colorado education is in a crisis of teacher retention, especially with increased cost-of-living. However, increasing the cap on general revenue spending will increase cost of living and it is not clear that the increase will go directly to teacher pay and retention. The Church supports policy that supports teachers' ability to provide to their community and educate the students in their care; the mechanism of earmarking funds to do this is unclear, especially if it increases the tax burden for Coloradans.

Proposed Ballot Question: "Shall state investment in K-12 public education increase two percent each year for the next ten years, with investments used to increase teacher pay, improve teacher retention, lower class sizes, and increase access to career and technical courses, without raising taxes but instead funded by raising the annual limit on state fiscal year spending only by the amount the state spends on public K-12 education as a voter-approved revenue change, and requiring an annual publicly released, independent audit to show how the new investments are spent?"

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## ***BUDGET***

The next Colorado economic and revenue forecast is scheduled to be presented on **March 19, 2026**.

The proposed budget for FY2026-27 is \$50.5 billion total funds, a 3.9% increase from last year's budget. This includes \$18.5 billion from our General Fund, a 1.6% increase from last year. Some areas of interest: spending for School Finance is \$167 million, spending for Public Safety \$7.1 million. The largest area of funding is Healthcare accounting for roughly 39% of the budget.

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### ***Our Bills in Committee Soon:***

**Wednesday, March 18:**

**SB26-111 Protections Against Child Rape. SUPPORT.**

*Hearing: Senate Judiciary at 1:30pm*

SB26-111 removes the possibility of probation for a person convicted of sexual assault of a minor and mandates incarceration. For class 4 felony sexual assault on a child, and class 3 and class 4 felony sexual assault on a child by someone in a position of trust, the offenders must serve an indeterminate sentence in the Department of Corrections. The Catholic Church supports stricter punishment for sexual crimes against children.

**Thursday March 26th**

**HB26-1292 Scholarship Granting Organizations**

*Hearing: House Education at 1:30pm*

**OPPOSE.** HB26-1292 requires all private schools that enroll students on the federal tax credit scholarship program to abide by the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA) requirements, including not "discriminating against" sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This includes: admissions, enrollment, academic performance, access and participation in services, and retention. Schools in violation are subject to injunction. Schools will be required to publish their non-discrimination compliance on their website. This bill restricts the religious integrity and autonomy of Catholic and other faith-based schools that do not adhere to the state definition of gender ideology. By doing so, it restricts education opportunity for thousands of Colorado children who would otherwise be able to choose a Catholic or faith-based school with their privately funded school choice scholarship.

HB26-1292 is a gross overreach of the state and violation of the First amendment protections of speech and expression. In *Espinoza v. Montana* (2020), the U.S. Supreme Court already ruled that a state cannot discriminate against a faith-based school in their tax credit scholarship program. Furthermore, in *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra* (2018), the U.S.

Supreme Court ruled that the state of California could not compel the speech of crisis pregnancy centers by forcing them to disclose abortion information on their websites. HB 1292 forces schools to publish non-discrimination code that violates their sincerely held belief. It therefore contradicts U.S. Supreme Court precedent, the constitution, and parental rights.

HB26-1292 is a direct response to the new federal tax credit created by Congress in HR1 last July. Gov. Polis supports the adoption of the tax credit, which could generate potentially hundreds of millions of dollars for Colorado students that will go directly to support the student.

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***Results from our bills this week:***

**HB26-1083 Protect Female Sports Act: SUPPORT.**

***Failed 3-8***

HB26-1083 states each interscholastic or intramural athletic team or sport that is sponsored by a school or athletic association (team or sport) to expressly designate the team's or sport's participants as either biological male, men, or boys; biological female, women, or girls; or coeducational or mixed. This is similar intent to the Protect Kids Colorado initiative for the 2026 ballot.

**HB26-1243 CDPHE Regulation of Abortion Clinics: SUPPORT.**

***Failed 3-8***

HB26-1243 requires that abortion clinics be held to the same regulatory standard as other comparable surgical institutions, such as ambulatory surgical centers and hospitals, because emergency care may be needed. Currently, abortion clinics have no state oversight, which put women at risk. This bill will add in regulations and license standards within Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) for abortion clinics. Last year, a Planned Parenthood in Fort Collins fell under scrutiny because one young woman lost her life due to an abortion complication with delayed emergency response by Planned Parenthood. These situations could be mitigated with proper emergency response regulations. This is commonsense legislation to ensure the safety of women in Colorado.

**SB26-075 Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Activity Offenses: SUPPORT.**

***Passed as Amended 5-2***

This bill is similar to the Minor Sex Trafficking bill the CCC supported (SB26-015). It aims to increase penalties around human and sex trafficking in Colorado.

**HB26-1105 Discuss Adoption Info. with Pregnant Persons. SUPPORT.**

**Failed 5-8**

HB26-1105 allows for a willing medical provider to discuss adoption information with a pregnant mother 24 hours before an abortion is scheduled. This is not mandatory, but at least gives the option to have someone on site discuss adoption.

**SB26-097 Decriminalize Adult Commercial Sexual Activity: OPPOSE.**

**Postponed until 6/2** - *Sponsor Sen. Hinrichsen (a Catholic) did not have the votes to pass from committee and was asked by leadership to postpone the bill until after general session has concluded. He plans to bring it back in the future. We are trying to stakehold with him in a future bill.*

SB26-97 decriminalizes/legalizes prostitution in the state of Colorado. The data show that in states where legal prostitution occurs, *more* sex trafficking takes place. Legal prostitution of adults provides a facade for human traffickers to operate. Reports indicate that in places with legalized prostitution, individuals often do not receive proper protections. While the bill rightly criminalizes pimps, the decriminalization of prostitution puts female sex workers in highly dangerous positions (pimps would otherwise protect them from), increasing violence and abuse of women and the stact cost of law enforcement to protect these women. The legalization of prostitution is inherently harmful, dehumanizing, and a driver of modern-day slavery of sex trafficking. Prostitution is inextricably linked to human trafficking and exploitation. Furthermore, legalizing prostitution will likely increase cases of unplanned pregnancies and likely increase abortion and the destruction of human life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2355) states that prostitution injures the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing them to an instrument of sexual pleasure. Furthermore, The Church teaches that paying for sex is a grave sin that violates chastity promised in baptism.

**HB26-1254 Audit Enforcement: SUPPORT.**

**Failed 3-8**

This bill gives more power to the Legislative Audit Committee (LAC), to hold accountable state agencies identified by the State Auditor as out of compliance based on audits. The LAC can take a vote to whether the agency is being a good faith actor in fixing issues. If not, the state controller can restrict 3% of funds for the following fiscal year from the noncompliant state agency. The funds can only be released by the legislature passing a bill allowing it. This bill aligns with Church teaching by increasing government transparency, as well as ensuring our government is fixing issues that may leave them or citizens liable to risks. This could include data leaks, misuse of funds, or other areas of violations identified.

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***Bills to Watch:***

**HB26-1309 Abuse in Cases of Separation**

**AMEND/OPPOSE.** *Life and Parental Rights violations.*

HB26-1309 addressing domestic violence in family court proceedings, particularly in cases involving child custody and parental responsibilities. Under Sec. 2, c.2 (III) "Health-related abuse," HB-1309 states that "interference with or controlling or preventing access to reproductive healthcare, including contraceptive use or reproductive health care information, or controlling or attempting to control reproductive outcomes" is considered health related abuse. This could include a male partner attempting to save the life of his preborn child. If a man was accused of health related abuse for attempting to save his preborn child's life from abortion, he would be required to participate in individual therapeutic treatment with a mental health professional who holds a master's or doctoral degree and a certain mental health license type, has specialized training and expertise in treating survivors of domestic violence and its effects, and has completed a 52 week domestic violence abuser intervention program.

HB 1309 also considers it to be coercive control for a parent to monitor their child's "access to services," (Sec. II, a. II), and defines coercive control as "a pattern of behavior that takes away the individual's liberty or freedom and strips away the individual's sense of self, including the individual's bodily integrity and human rights." A parent who does not affirm their child's trans-identity, under this section, could have parental custody rights removed.

This bill is sponsored by Sen. Wallace, who sponsored SB26-18, making a parent's position on their child's gender identity a factor in custody decisions. She lamented removing that section from SB 18 but promised to bring the bill back. This bill is another attempt to remove parental rights if the parent disagrees with their minor child on gender ideology.

Removing these two sections in Sec. 2 of this bill would make it consistent with Catholic social teaching on the family.