



General Assembly Reconvenes

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The Colorado General Assembly reconvened the 2021 legislative session on Tuesday February 16, following a month-long temporary adjournment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unclear exactly when policymakers will conclude business, though if the General Assembly meets for the full 120-day session, sine die will fall on June 12.

Since the January 15 adjournment, a lot of work has been underway with the Joint Budget Committee receiving budget briefings from the various state departments and engaging in figure-setting discussions, while the General Assembly as a whole has continued developing legislation and engaging in stakeholder meetings and discussions. Policymakers introduced well over 200 bills upon reconvening this week. The initial legislation addresses a wide range of topics, though many are focused on COVID-related relief.

Legislative leadership from both parties identified a number of priorities as policymakers gathered for opening remarks. COVID relief was mentioned as a key focus with legislators looking to craft solutions to help Colorado's families and communities recover from the pandemic and the related economic crisis. Transportation and infrastructure investment was mentioned as a priority by both Democratic and Republican leadership. Other key areas of focus include health care access and affordability, education funding, climate protection measures and energy policy. There was also discussion about the delay of the 2020 census into September of 2021 and the impact to Colorado's redistricting process, as well as the investigation into allegations of misconduct and sexual impropriety in the Colorado Judicial Branch.

Governor Jared Polis also identified several priorities in his 2021 State of the State Address including COVID relief, health care affordability, and infrastructure investments including transportation, rural broadband expansion, and protection of public land. Governor Polis cited the importance of a return to in-person school, equity considerations that ensure all Coloradans have the supports they need to care for themselves and their families, and some key tax reform measures, namely doubling the earned income tax credit and eliminating taxes seniors pay on social security benefits.



While there are some common areas of focus among the parties, Democratic priorities are likely to prevail as their party maintains a 41-24 seat advantage in the House, a 20-15 seat advantage in the Senate, and control of the Governor's office.

The LWVCO Legislative Action Committee began work on February 19 and will be meeting on a bi-weekly basis throughout the remainder of the 2021 session.