



Advocacy Report

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It is likely an understatement to say the 2020 session of the state legislature was the most unusual in Colorado state history. A shut-down caused by COVID-19, a worldwide pandemic, changed the agendas of legislators and of procedures in general. Legislators were challenged by how to manage Colorado state's business and yet keep people safe. Due to a recess, the legislature scheduled to end early in May was still in session in June.

The final week of the 2020 legislative session was heavily focused on finalizing the state budget and a variety of measures aimed at generating needed revenue, as policymakers struggled to establish a path toward economic recovery. Budget cuts were necessary to compensate for a projected \$3 billion revenue shortfall stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$30.3 billion budget represents a 25% decrease from current spending levels. Some of the biggest cuts were made to K-12 education and higher education. Federal stimulus payments are helping with some of the budget shortfall and the June revenue forecast indicates that more revenue may become available than initially anticipated, largely because of the elimination of certain tax breaks approved through HB 1420. Given the deeply concerning fiscal reality in the state, the General Assembly passed several bills in the final days of the session aimed at generating revenue.

In 2020, the legislature held a short special session to address issues of particular concern related to the pandemic. The pandemic continues during the 2021 session of the Colorado legislature; the legislature convened for three days to address critical legislation and then recessed for a month in hopes that the pandemic might lessen. With the introduction of vaccines but still with a lot of restraint, the legislature came back into session a month later.

Close to 25 people serve as volunteer lobbyists for the League of Women Voters to Colorado. These people, who are experts in their selected lobbying areas, cover over 100 bills in a wide range of topics of interest to the League but also to the state.

We're branching out and working more with our Congressional delegation; we've held a number of webinars on COVID stimulus and the For The People Act featuring our federal Congresspeople.

We're activating a Redistricting Observer Corps to ensure Colorado's new independent commissions are implementing Amendments Y&Z according to voter intent, and we've appointed an observer to monitor the investigations into discrimination and harassment allegations at the Colorado Judiciary.

For a detailed description of League action in 2020 and 2021, see the updated *Positions for Action* (LWV Colorado 2021), planned to be available in summer of 2021, as well as the [Legislative Action Report](#).