



Interested Coloradans:

As we approach the last few weeks of our legislative session, I want to thank all of the aides and interns who work and volunteer at the capitol to keep our system running smoothly.

I was particularly impressed earlier this month when I read an article in the *Colorado Springs Business Journal* about an aide who works with Colorado Springs Rep. Kent Lambert. Carrie Riffie, who apparently at one time was a homeless, single mother of three children, is serving this year as an aide at the capitol while attending Colorado College on full scholarship.

Another aide at the capitol, Erica Castelo, is involved with the University of Denver Young Republicans and helped to organize a rally and fund-raiser at DU this week to support our troops. An intern in my own office, Philip Waggoner, was also accepted just this week to the Colorado State University President's Leadership Program.

Thanks to all who help keep our Democracy working!

SECURING OUR SCHOOLS

Since the events eight years ago at Columbine High School, April has become a difficult and even frightening month for many students, teachers and parents.

Last week, the tragic events at Virginia Tech fell very close to the eighth anniversary of the attack at Columbine High School. On the anniversary day, several Colorado schools were locked down due to threats, and there was even a small explosion behind our own Ponderosa High School.

I have had several meetings and conversations this week with our governor and our attorney general to discuss school safety issues. As part of our approach to this problem, we will be working to send the message that threats and pranks will not be tolerated in Colorado schools.

You may not know, but to make a false bomb threat involving a school it is a Class 6 felony, punishable by 12-18 months in prison and a fine of up to \$100,000. To actually detonate a bomb in a school can be a Class 3 felony, punishable by 4-12 years in prison

with a fine of up to \$750,000.

Beginning next year, we will make April an awareness month to show that threats and pranks will not be taken lightly when they involve our children. Hopefully we can start driving fear and violence out of our schools.

THE ONCE UNTENABLE COMPROMISE

In Colorado, there has been a long-time feud between land owners and those who have rights to the minerals on those lands.

Last year, a bill to tackle the problem failed because a compromise between the two groups could never be reached. To address the situation, Republican Gov. Bill Owens practically locked all of the involved parties in a room together and told them to resolve their differences.

The resulting compromise is now [Senate Bill 237](#), which I am sponsoring in the House. The bill passed the House this morning with only one dissenting vote.

GOLDEN ANVIL

The *Golden Anvil* was created as a way to draw attention to harmful proposals being discussed at the capitol. This week's winner takes the cake for the session.

Gov. Bill Ritter is proposing a \$1.7 billion property tax increase over the next 10 years.

The House passed the partisan proposal today as part of the typically non-partisan [School Finance Bill](#). On a recorded vote yesterday, 25 out of the 26 Republicans in the House voted to remove the tax increase proposal from the bill, but the attempt failed.

The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights clearly states that all tax increases must be approved by the people. Colorado's solicitor general and attorney general both concluded in an opinion released today that it would be unconstitutional to move this measure forward without a vote of the people.

Republican Rep. Tom Massey, from Poncha Springs, urged the House to send the proposal to the people. He sponsored an amendment in committee, but it was defeated by Democrats on a party-line vote. He sponsored a similar amendment on the House floor yesterday, but the Democrat chairing the hearing refused to allow the amendment to be debated.

The measure will now go to the Senate, where hopefully it will be defeated so that we can move forward a School Finance Bill this session that will not raise property taxes. If not, the governor is sure to sign what appears to be an unconstitutional measure that will raise property taxes for a majority of Coloradans.

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you're interested in catching a Broadway show and supporting one of our local schools,

stop by ThunderRidge High School Auditorium tomorrow at 7 p.m. to watch their production of “Grease.”

To find the nearest Douglas County planning meeting next month, visit <http://www.douglas.co.us/CMP2030/> or call 303-660-7460.

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