



CAPITOL CONNECTION

A brief weekly update from the Colorado Association of REALTORS® Government Affairs Division

Dear Katie Kruger,

This Week in the Legislature

Legislature Continues to Work on Long Bill

The State Senate worked into the night on Thursday to debate this year's budget bill, commonly referred to as the Long Bill. Lawmakers have been charged with balancing a \$1.4 billion shortfall in the state's budget in light of the troubled economy.

Much of the debate yesterday surrounded proposed cuts to higher education – an area of concern for both Democrat and Republican leaders in the Senate. The Senate is adjourned for Good Friday; floor discussions are expected to continue on Monday.

Elimination of Senior Homestead Exemption

In 2000, voters approved a property tax exemption for seniors who were 65 years of age or older and had owned and lived in their home for the previous ten years. The exemption applied to 50 percent of the first \$200,000 of actual value. In 2006, the exemption was extended to veterans who met established criteria.

[SB 276](#) seeks to eliminate the homestead property tax exemption for qualifying senior citizens and disabled veterans for 2009 and 2010 property tax years. By doing so, the bill's proponents hope to provide the state with additional General Fund dollars in the amount of \$91.4 million in FY 2009-10, and \$97.6 million in FY 2010-11.

SB 276 is one among several efforts by state lawmakers, aside from the Long Bill, to help balance the state budget. CAR will continue to closely monitor this legislation.

Groff Reportedly Will Resign

According to various media outlets, Senate President Peter Groff is set to resign his legislative seat for an opportunity to work in the Obama administration. Rumors began swirling yesterday that Sen. Groff had been offered a job working in the U.S. Department of Education.

Sen. Groff has served in the legislature since 2001 and in the State Senate since 2003. In 2007, he made history when he became the first African-American to be elected Senate President. He is widely known in Colorado for being a strong advocate for education.

His current term is not set to expire until 2012. If he resigns, a Democratic vacancy committee will appoint a successor to his seat representing east Denver.

House Bills: 344
Senate Bills: 284
Total: 628

For more information on legislation affecting REALTORS®, bill positions, political

affairs, and other current events, please visit: [CAR Government Affairs Home Page.](#)

An online version of the 2009 Legislative Directory (including committee rosters) and more information on legislation in the House and Senate, visit: <http://www.leg.state.co.us/>

The live broadcast of the House of Representatives is [now online](#) where broadcasts will also be archived. Live proceedings can also be viewed on Comcast channel 165.

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