



CAPITOL CONNECTION

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

Dear Katie Kruger,

This Week in the Legislature

CAR Opposes Elimination of Senior Homestead Exemption

[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 is opposed to this legislation; the legislature should not be balancing the budget on the backs of seniors and veterans that may be on fixed incomes in this economic climate.

Governor Makes Appointments to Real Estate Commission

Governor Bill Ritter today announced the appointments of several Coloradans to a variety of statewide boards and commissions, including two new additions to the Colorado Real Estate Commission (CREC). Jill Ozarski of Denver and Doug Ring, a REALTOR® from Pueblo were appointed to a 3 year term on the CREC.

The Commission is composed of five members appointed by the Governor. Three members are brokers with more than five years of Colorado real estate brokerage experience. Two members represent the public at large.

Brandon Shaffer to Replace Peter Groff as Senate President

Senate Majority Leader Brandon Shaffer of Longmont was selected by his fellow Democrats in the Senate to lead them after Senate President Peter Groff steps down next month.

Senator Groff plans to resign his post after the session adjourns for a job in the U.S. Department of Education.

Senator John Morse of Colorado Springs is expected to replace Shaffer as majority leader. Both must still be confirmed by the entire Senate.

Long Bill Update

The House today passed the state's annual budget legislation, 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 attention was given earlier this week to the Joint Budget Committee's recommendation to tap into Pinnacle Assurance, the state's workers' compensation fund, in an effort to free up an additional \$500 million and avoid making cuts to state programs.

The recommendation sparked resistance among many lawmakers and business interests - even the state attorney general's office weighed in by saying the state did not have a constitutional right to use the dollars. Governor Ritter also stated that he did not support the plan.

The House did settle on a package of spending cuts, but avoided making major cuts to higher education funding. The bill will head back to the Senate for a final approval before it heads to the Governor's desk.

NAR Testifies on Need for Increased Capacity for FHA

J. Lennox Scott, member of NAR's Real Estate Advisory Board, testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development on the importance of the FHA mortgage insurance program.

In his testimony Mr. Scott urged Congress to provide additional resources for FHA to increase its staffing and its investment in technology. He also urged FHA to allow the \$8000 tax credit to be provided as an advance loan to be used for down payment.

The testimony also requested that the FHA loan limits be made permanent and that FHA implement the condominium changes that will ease purchasing a condominium with FHA insurance. [Testimony](#)

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House Bills: **350**

Senate Bills: **288**

Total: **638**

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 braoadcasts will also be archived. Live proceedings can also been viewed on Comcast channel 165.

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