

UNDER THE DOME

WITH THE NCLA

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LABOR ISSUES HEATING UP THE RELATIVE CALM FOR BUSINESS

2015 has seen a squaring off between business and labor on the full spectrum of philosophical approaches to workplace and employer relations. Numerous bills have been introduced in the 60-plus days of the 120-day session with several others anticipated in the coming weeks.

Both sides of the aisles have taken up various labor issues with neither side likely to see their respective approaches making their way to the Governor's desk. However, the introduction of legislation has prompted a conversation about the myriad of issues facing employers in their workplace relations.

During the 2013 legislative session, Democrats, newly in charge of both legislative bodies and holding the Governor's office, muscled through several labor-friendly proposals drawing the ire of the Colorado business community. Proposals expanded the scope of discrimination lawsuits, increased punitive damage awards, challenged a well-functioning worker's compensation system, increased family and medical leave mandates, and enhanced collective bargaining.

This year, Republicans, now holding a slim-majority in the Senate, have taken aim at several of the measures passed in 2013 while Democrats are hoping to build upon the 2013 measures while also imposing new mandates upon employers.

Two Republican measures challenge the 2013 expansion of discrimination lawsuits and associated punitive lawsuits. On the House side, Loveland's own Brian DelGrosso, the House Minority Leader, took aim with the introduction of [House Bill 15-1172](#) to reverse the authority for punitive damage awards in discrimination lawsuits. The bill was met with defeat in the Democrat-controlled House. A Senate bill, [Senate Bill 15-069](#), is still alive and awaiting Senate action. The measure fully repeals the 2013 expansion of discrimination lawsuits. The bill is certain to meet defeat on the House side, however.

House Democrats, for their part, have introduced a number of labor-friendly proposals addressing the minimum wage, [additional expansion of the family and medical leave act](#), (HB 15-1258) [a private employer-mandated retirement financing system](#) (HB 15-1235), and [enhanced unemployment insurance benefits](#) (HB 15-1231). The introduction of the bills comes with the full knowledge and expectation by Democrat leaders that these measures will be defeated in the Republican-controlled Senate. The opportunity to have a debate on the topics was not to be missed, however.

NCLA has taken proactive positions on all of the measures. The NCLA Board supports HB 1172 and SB 69. The NCLA opposes HB 1258, HB 1235 and HB 1231.