

UNDER THE DOME

WITH THE NCLA

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DELGROSSO SPEARHEADS BI-PARTISAN EDUCATION PROPOSAL

The resounding defeat this past November of Amendment 66, the \$1 Billion education reform and funding ballot initiative, left proponents and opponents with a conundrum. Both agreed that policy changes and reforms were necessary but raising taxes to fund the program was not an option for voters or for Republicans. Newly-elected Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso (R-Loveland) committed early on in his leadership that education reform was a priority and doing it within current revenues could be accomplished.

He engaged an unlikely friend in his promise, Speaker of the House Mark Ferrandino (D-Denver) For several weeks, DelGrosso and Ferrandino have been crafting a proposal to accomplish the objective: Bring about important reforms to education with current revenues. This week, the [Student Success Act](#) was introduced.

House Bill 14-1292 is a \$263 million proposal that encompasses many of the reform outlined in last year's Senate Bill 13-213, the basis of Amendment 66. Senator Mike Johnston (D-Denver), the lead driver behind Amendment 66, will serve as the Senate sponsor of the bill. House Bill 1292 will be heard in the House Education Committee this week.

House Bill 1292 includes \$100 M increase in funding for schools to elevate the base funding they say drop with the economic downturn. The balance of the funding will be split among various one-time expenditures and programmatic reforms, including:

- \$40 M to address current mandates, including tests and educator evaluations
- \$10 M in one time funds to establish a better system to count students for funding
- \$5 M to implement a new website to track funding
- \$40 M from marijuana taxes to school capital construction, including \$30 M to full-day kindergarten, \$5 M for technology assistance, and \$5 M to charter schools.
- \$13 M for charter school capital construction
- \$35 M into English Language Learners
- \$20 M in ongoing funds for implementation of the READ Act, a program for struggling readers in grades K-3

"All of us share the goal of ensuring that the children of Colorado get the best education possible so they can compete for the jobs of the future," said Speaker

Ferrandino in announcing the package alongside Leader DelGrosso. “This isn’t a Democratic or Republican priority — it’s a Colorado priority.”

“Quality education should not be a partisan issue and I’m thankful that we could come together to create a bill with significant reforms to help Colorado students excel,” added DelGrosso. . “The Student Success Act provides education reforms which will provide fiscal transparency, more accurate student counts and greater funding of charter schools all while using available state resources.”

ANGEL INVESTOR PROPOSAL GETS OVER FIRST HURDLE

Start up businesses and their angel investors got a boost this week with the passage of [House Bill 14-1012](#), a bill to renew a tax credit for angel investment in entrepreneurial dreams. In 2009, NCLA led the effort to create the tax credit with now-Senator John Kefalas (D-Fort Collins). The passage of the tax credit was a feat in of itself as the NCLA advocated for it at a time when state revenues were down significantly. Demonstrating the need and the opportunity for a significant return in 2009, the tax credit paid great dividends in its first year with investment in companies throughout Colorado. Although the funding couldn’t be found in the following year with the economy worsening, four years later, many of those companies told their story of how that boost in 2009 to incent the angel investor made the difference between success and failure.

NCLA stood with the technology, bioscience and clean tech industries in support and testimony this past week in the House Finance Committee. The committee passed the bill on a 7-6 vote and it is on it’s way to the House Appropriations Committee. The bill has several more hurdles to overcome before the credit will be available again.

4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT UP FOR GRABS AS GARDNER SEEKS SENATE

The decision by Congressman Cory Gardner to forgo his safe Congressional seat to seek the US Senate against Senator Mark Udall in 2014 left the 4th Congressional District up for grabs. State Representative Amy Stephens and Ken Buck, both leading contenders in the Republican primary for US Senate jumped out of the race, leaving 2nd tier candidates to challenge Gardner.

Republican chess pieces were being moved frantically in the aftermath of Cory Gardner’s announcement. In announcing his departure from the US Senate race, Ken Buck is now running for the 4th Congressional. Term-limited State Senator Scott Renfroe (D-Greeley) has officially announced he will seek the seat as well, while a slew of others are considering the seat. Those who have raised their flag expressing interest are State Representatives Tim Dore (R-Elizabeth) and Clarice Navarro (R-Pueblo) and Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer. Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway has announced he will not seek the Congressional seat.