



Nexus Weekly Legislative Report
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The Colorado General Assembly convened for the 12th week of the legislative session. This was another busy week at the Capitol, as the FY18-19 budget for the state, known as the Long Appropriations Bill, which was finalized last week, was debated in both the House and Senate.

The House of Representatives debated the Long Bill this Wednesday on second reading. The debate went late into the afternoon. House Democrats, because they are the majority party, were able to amend their budget priorities into the Long Bill. An extra \$1 million was appropriated to the Tony Grampsas Youth Services grant, which provides funding to different entities that offer youth mentorship and substance use prevention for children. Another \$1 million was appropriated to the Department of Local Affairs to fund Affordable Housing Construction Grants. There were also a number of amendments that had bipartisan support which were amended into the Long Bill. \$6 million was added to the Department of Education for the lease purchase payments of the BEST program, which provides funding to schools across the state for the purchasing of new buildings and the maintenance of existing ones. Another bipartisan amendment added a line item in the Department of Public Health and Environment for medical marijuana research grants and appropriated \$3 million to this grant, so that institutions of higher education can begin to conduct research and studies on the impact of marijuana on people suffering with epilepsy and general marijuana use. There was also bipartisan support for an increase of \$1.78 million for technical colleges through Marijuana Tax Cash Fund dollars. A lot of the amendments passed in the House used Marijuana Tax Cash Fund dollars. If the JBC decides to officially amend these into the Long Bill during conference committee in a couple of weeks, they will have to find other sources to appropriate from because this cash fund is over spent.

A large portion of the amendment debate on Wednesday night was around school safety. This debate was very partisan. House Republicans brought forth several amendments to fund physical security improvements at schools and school resource officers, whereas House Democrats wanted to see money appropriated to school districts for counseling and student support services. The debate turned into a broader discussion about how to protect students from the school shootings that are so common in the United States. At the end of the evening, the House came to an agreement and amended the Long Bill to divert \$750k from the Office of Economic Development and International Trade's film incentive program into the Department of Public Safety School Safety Resource Center Cash Fund to be accessed by school districts.

Despite all of the work of the House, next week the Long Bill will be stripped of all amendments and heard in the Senate for debate as the bill came out of the Joint Budget Committee. There will most likely be similar debates around school safety, affordable housing and transportation funding.