

Colorado State Visit

March 6-7, CSG West Director Edgar Ruiz, and accompanying staff traveled to Denver, Colorado to meet with legislative leadership, Western Legislative Academy (WLA) alumni, legislators eligible to apply for the 2019 WLA class, legislative staff, as well as a representative of the Governor's office.

Conversation focused on the sharing of information about CSG West programming and learning about key legislation topics of the current session.

Director Ruiz was introduced on the floor of both the Senate and House for a brief introduction to legislators followed by meetings with Speaker of the House Becker and Senate President Garcia. Ruiz also had meetings with the Director of the Colorado Legislative Council Staff and the Governor's liaison to the legislature. During the visit, CSG West hosted a lunch for WLA alumni and those legislators eligible to apply for the 2019 class. The lunch served as an opportunity for Director Ruiz and the alumni to inform and encourage new legislators to apply. Throughout the two-day visit, staff also met individually with a number of legislators to hear reflections on the current session.

There are many pieces of legislation this year drawing major attention in the legislature. One in particular is a bill ([SB181](#)) that would change the mission of the commission that regulates the oil and gas industry by placing more emphasis on health and safety concerns. The bill would also increase authority to local officials to be able to negotiate where future drilling operations could occur. The bill passed the Senate and now heads to the House.

Health insurance has also received significant attention this session. A bill meant to decrease health care costs, particularly in rural areas, would create a state-backed reinsurance program ([HB19-1168](#)). The program would create a pool of money to help pay for the costliest patients. Insurers could apply to tap into the pool to help pay for their costliest clients who tend to increase overall premiums. Bill language would also modernize state law to incorporate consumer protections such as preexisting conditions. Another bill focused on health care would require employers to provide up to 12 weeks of medical leave to their employees, as well as a wage replacement fund for those taking leave.

A highly debated bill referred to as the “red flag” bill ([HB19-1177](#)), or extreme risk protection order, would allow law enforcement agencies across Colorado to remove firearms from people whom a judge determines is at high risk of harming themselves or others. Under this bill, members of law enforcement, a family member or a household member could petition a judge for the removal of a

person's firearms. The judge would hold a hearing — without the gun owner being present — to decide whether to grant a temporary order for up to 14 days.

Other significant legislation involve the repeal of the death penalty ([SB19- 182](#)); improving teacher preparation that would include a full-year of classroom residency co-teaching alongside a mentor teacher ([SB19-190](#)); full funding for all day [kindergarten and preschool](#); and simplification of the [marijuana laws](#) that would combine the medical and retail codes.

The Colorado legislature is scheduled to adjourn May 3, 2019.