

“Takin’ It To The House...” A Calendar And Commentary From The Golden Dome: February 24th, 2019 Edition



REPRESENTATIVE JIM WILSON · SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2019

The past 2 weeks could have been called “Constitution Time” at the Capitol. In my 6+ years under the Golden Dome I have never experienced so many Legislators referencing the U.S. & Colorado Constitutions during floor and committee debates. Controversial bills prompted references to intrusions on freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the Electoral College, the right to keep and bear arms, due process, unreasonable search and seizure, the accused not being allowed to face their accuser and Colorado’s local control statutes. It looks like a long list, but I am not sure I covered all the constitutional issues raised. I am not saying our constitutional rights are under direct attack, but I figure if you are receiving flak, you are not far from the target...

One of the debates -- SB 19-042: National Popular Vote, prompted one of the more humorous (albeit inappropriate) amendment titles of the week. Rep. Saine’s proposed amendment (L. 023) stated: “The Short Title of Part 40 is the ‘We Really, Really, Really, Really, Really Hate Donald Trump Act of 2019’”. After a round of laughter and many photos, the amendment was defeated. The floor debate on SB 19-042 lasted ONLY 3 1/2 hours! SB 19-042 passed out of the House on a 34-29 vote.

The longest debate “Prize of the Week” went to HB 19-1177 -- Extreme Risk Protection Order, or as it is known by its nickname, “The Red Flag Bill”. The 9 1/2+ hours of debate on HB 19-1177 lasted until nearly midnight. Rep. Sullivan (whose son was killed in the Aurora Theatre shooting) and Majority Leader Garnett are the co-sponsors of the bill. The bill is being touted as a “mental health” bill. However, just like last year’s bill, only a small part of the bill addresses mental health issues. The majority of the bill text specifies how firearms can be confiscated, how long the accused can be detained, who has to retain the confiscated firearms, how the accused can attempt to refute the accusations and the process (after finally being found innocent) to recover their confiscated property.

I have found very few who disagree over the issue of someone who is mentally ill not having access to firearms. No sane person kills innocent people – no matter what the weapon of choice. The disagreement comes over declaring someone mentally ill and confiscating their property without due process. The bill passed out of committee on a 7-4 party line vote and will, no doubt, ride the partisan wave right into law. Meanwhile, the real issues of our mental health crisis remain on the back burner...

Another controversial bill is returning from last session – HB 19-1096 (Colorado Right To

Rest Act) was heard in the House Transportation & Local Government Committee on Tuesday. This bill, if it becomes law, will allow homeless individuals the right to rest in any public space, to shelter themselves from the elements, to eat or accept food in any public space where food is not prohibited, to occupy a legally parked vehicle and to have a reasonable expectation of privacy of their property. Watch this one – it has a lot of ramifications for public spaces/property.

So far, all the bills I am sponsoring are still in the process. One, a bill requiring 4 year colleges and universities to offer a 4 year guaranteed tuition rate, is on life support – but the rest are moving forward. HB 19-1137 (Expand Teacher Cadet Program to Include Early Childhood Education) passed out of the House on a 62-0 vote. Two more of my bills are scheduled to be heard in committee this week. HB 19-1201 (Board of Education Executive Session Negotiations Strategy) was heard on Tuesday and HB 19-1134 (Identification & Interventions for Students With Dyslexia) is scheduled to be heard on Thursday. According to testimony, 10-20% of all students have some sort of dyslexia. If that is indeed the case, imagine the impact on our stagnant test scores if we could engage 10-20% more of our students!

As always, please feel free to call my office in the Capitol at 303-866-2747 or send me an e-mail: wilsonforhd60@gmail.com or james.wilson.house@state.co.us. We are also able to schedule a visit to the Golden Dome if you would like to visit on site.

Yours for HD 60,

Representative Jim Wilson



Write a comment...

