

Memo

To:

From: Brandeberry McKenna Public Affairs (BBMK)

Date: January 13th, 2022

Re: Legislative Session Opening Day and State of the State

2022 Legislative Priorities from the Majority and Minority Parties

On January 12th, the General Assembly convened for the 2022 Legislative Session. Majority and Minority leadership from both chambers outlined legislative priorities for the upcoming session including affordability, education, and public safety. Senate President Garcia spoke about the opportunity to create transformational change in Colorado through money from the American Rescue Plan Act. Specifically, the Senate President highlighted improving housing, behavioral and mental health, investing in education, and supporting small businesses. Speaker Garnett emphasized similar goals such as affordability and housing, continuing to reduce prescription drug costs, and investing in behavioral health.

Both Minority Leaders began their remarks with statistics on increased crime, poor education access, and overall affordability challenges of living in Colorado. The Minority Leaders expressed that these statistics are worse than they were a year ago because of legislation signed into law from the 2021 Session, and that there will be legislation from Republicans concerning these areas. Minority Leader Holbert briefly mentioned several pieces of upcoming legislation such as improving police officer training through grant programs, addressing housing affordability, and expanding funding for Colorado schools. Minority Leader McKean emphasized the effect of increased crime and inflation on Colorado families. Additionally, he mentioned the importance of expanding education to create better jobs.

2022 State of the State Address – Governor Polis

On January 13th, Governor Polis addressed the members of the General Assembly. The Governor reviewed the administration's goals for the upcoming year, including:

- Healthcare
 - Continue savings on healthcare (referenced the reinsurance program and capping insulin prices from last year)
 - Support healthcare system by increasing hospital capacity
- Expanding Education
 - Implementing universal preschool
 - Emphasis on more investment in higher education
- Tax Relief
 - Continue tax relief efforts (referenced last year's efforts including the CO Child Tax Credit, State Earned Income Tax Credit, property taxes, and exempting Social Security from the state income tax)

- Specifically said efforts would “never cut taxes at the expense of teachers and law enforcement”
- Specifically said tax cuts are from “reducing lobbyist loopholes and special interest tax giveaways”
- Supporting Law Enforcement
 - Expressed goal for Colorado to be one of the nation’s top ten safest states
 - Strengthening penalties for individuals illegally distributing fentanyl
- Behavioral Health Services and Addressing Homelessness
 - Mental health services, substance abuse recovery programs, living solutions including shelters
- Progress on Environmental Goals
 - Improve air quality and cut emissions
 - Secure a sustainable water future for Colorado