

LEGISLATURE 2007

Roll call

IT'S GO-GO TIME

Sen. Ken Kester, R-Las Animas, has been appointed to the board of the **Greater Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund**, known as GOCO.

"He thought it was the 'Go-Go' board," joked Sen. Steve Johnson, R-Fort Collins. Responded Kester: "We are going to change the board. It's going to be a lot more fun."

PLUGGING ALONG

"We're not plugging a leak; we're plugging the voters."

Rep. Cory Gardner
R-Yuma, during a heated debate over education funding



QUIT WHINING AND PUT ON YOUR DIAPERS

The Bathroom War continued Thursday at the Capitol. It started this week when, at the request of Sen. Bob Hagedorn, D-Aurora, lobbyists were banned from using the bathroom near the second-floor Senate chambers. He complained about being lobbied in the can. Lobbyists aren't too happy. "I'm going to run a resolution to ask Senate members to donate a buck or two to buy a couple of boxes of Depends... for some of these whining lobbyists," Hagedorn joked. Thursday morning, a sign reading "No senators allowed" was briefly posted on a men's bathroom in the Capitol basement.



Aaron Harber, center, with Dick Wadhams and Pat Waak.

PARTY TIME!

The heads of Colorado's two major political parties square off tonight in their first televised faceoff. Republican Dick Wadhams and Democrat Pat Waak appear on The Aaron Harber Show.

■ Time: 9 tonight and 2 p.m. Sunday
■ Station: KBDI-Channel 12

Amendment 41 bill signed

Measure clears way for creation of ethics panel

By Lynn Bartels
and April M. Washington
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Colorado is on its way to creating an ethics commission, hopefully ending six months of utter confusion about what gifts elected officials and government workers can and cannot accept.

Gov. Bill Ritter signed a bill Thursday that supporters say brings clarity to Amendment 41.

Senate Bill 210 creates the ethics commission required in Amendment 41 and offers guide-

lines to commission members on reviewing complaints.

The bill's passage ends a tumultuous effort to implement Amendment 41, the so-called ethics-in-government law that voters approved last year. The amendment sparked concerns over whether government workers' children could receive scholarships or whether blizzard victims could accept donations.

"We are pleased that... government employees can go on with their private lives without fearing the scare tactics that suggested scholarships or blizzard relief would violate the law," said Mark Grueskin, the attorney for a coalition formed to implement Amendment 41.

Confusion arose because of how Amendment 41 was written. Even the chief backer, Jared Po-

llis, conceded that it was poorly worded.

House Speaker Andrew Romannoff, D-Denver, said that Amendment 41 contains two conflicting passages. One outlaws elected officials, government employees and their children, and government contractors from accepting anything worth more than \$50. But another provision states that the ban is necessary only if the gift is given by a person seeking to influence an official act — which is already covered under the state's bribery laws.

"Our guidance to the commission was that unless the complainant can show someone is taking something for private or personal financial gain, toss that complaint out as frivolous," Romannoff said.

"The commission will have to is-

sue opinions on what is appropriate or not," said Romannoff. Leader Andy McElhenny, R-Colorado Springs.

Also Thursday, the Supreme Court declined the legislature's request to review its guidance to the commission was constitutional. The court traditionally doesn't involve unless a matter is involving, and the legislature had passed the bill.

Under Amendment 41, the following appointments: member to the ethics commission: state Senate, House, governor and chief Supreme Court justice. Those four then will select an government worker or official as fifth member. The Senate announced Thursday that the appointee will be former state Sen. Sally Hopper, R-Golden.



Nice hair, baby Seventeen-month-old William McCarthy, left, and 16-month-old Staci Unrau throw decorum out the window during a House committee hearing Thursday. The children, both born with Down syndrome, were with their moms, who were there to support Senate Bill 4, aimed at funding early intervention services for children with disabilities.

Senate OKs measure to regulate online education programs

By Berny Morson
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

A new division of the state Education Department would regulate online schools under a bill approved Thursday in the Colorado Senate.

SB 215 by Sen. Sue Windels, D-Arva, was introduced after

state auditors raised questions about the quality and financial integrity of programs offered by school districts over the Internet.

Most of the questions concerned the Hope Co-op Online Learning Academy. It is chartered by the tiny Vilas school district in Baca County, but operates 79 "learning centers," mostly in the Denver metro area. Vilas

provides learning materials online.

Under the bill, districts such as Vilas would need approval from the new state agency to authorize programs for students outside their boundaries.

The agency would draft rules to determine which districts are qualified to authorize such programs and set quality standards

for the programs themselves. All of the new regulations would take effect on approval by the Colorado Board of Education.

Sen. Peter Gruff, D-Denver, a supporter of charter schools, including Hope, said that increased regulations are needed.

"There is too much money going where it shouldn't go," he said.

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DENNIS SCHROEDER/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

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