

## CAPITOL UPDATE - Week Ending April 3, 2026

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### THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNDER THE DOME

#### Pace Picks Up Before The Budget Drops

Ahead of a three-day Easter weekend, House members worked Thursday to pare down the calendar before the big FY2026-27 budget package drops in their laps next week. Democratic Majority Leader Monica Duran pushed members through two dozen third-reading bills and a dozen previously-passed House bills that were amended in the Senate.

The most emotional debates were over two gender-identity bills:

- [HB 26-1322](#) allows lawsuits by conversion therapy survivors and passed 40-23. This comes the same week the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against a Colorado law that banned conversion therapy.
- [SB 26-018](#) requires courts to maintain the privacy of records associated with name change petitions for minors. It passed 42-22.

The House also passed the following notable bills on third reading:

- [SB 26-014](#) – Modifies the not guilty by insanity defense, passed 44-19.
- [SB 26-087](#) – This measure to create job leave protections for lower-income legislators squeaked by 33-31 after long debate.

The most interesting twist of the day involved [HB 26-1330](#), which would have liberalized rules for drinking in “entertainment districts.” First, it died on a 32-31 vote. Later in the morning, Representative Bob Marshall, D-Highlands Ranch, asked for reconsideration so he could change his vote to yes. The vote to reconsider was 42-22, two votes short of the 44 needed under House rules. Also of note was House approval of Senate amendments and repassage of [HB26-1144](#), the bill to restrict printing of 3D guns.

Other news this week included Senate passage of two bills:

- [HB 26-1058](#), which creates protections for minors featured in compensated online content by requiring content creators to maintain records, set aside earnings in trust accounts and comply with privacy removal requests.
- [HB 26-1011](#), legislation that would ban the sale of dogs and cats in stores. It passed with an amendment delaying implementation until January 1, 2028.

Governor Jared Polis signed [SB26-011](#), which sets requirements for how large online social media platforms must receive, acknowledge and respond to search warrants issued by Colorado courts.

Finally, the Joint Budget Committee finished work on its FY2026-27 budget plan, a little less than a week after the original deadline to do so (details below).

Friday was the 80th day of the 120-day session.

## **TALLYING THE BILLS**

With the bills introduced this week, total bills introduced put the [session total over 500](#).

The one measure of note was [SB 26-150](#), the latest legislative attempt to streamline the RTD board and turn it into a smaller body of both appointed and elected members. All sponsors are Democratic.

As of Thursday morning, 501 bills had been introduced. The total jumped significantly Friday morning when the more than 60 FY2026-27 budget package bills were introduced in the House.

## **THIS WEEK AT THE JBC**

The JBC closed the FY 2026-27 long appropriations bill on Wednesday, clearing the package for House consideration next week. The committee faced a difficult path to closing due to the significant budget gap. The gap theoretically sat at \$1.5 billion, but in reality it was about \$740 million (plus \$53 million in the current budget year). The JBC closed both of those with a combination of tactics, including shrinking the state reserve from 15% to 13% percent and transferring nearly \$800 million from cash funds to the General Fund.

[61 orbital bills](#) were introduced on Friday, providing only a glimpse into the severe budget cuts the committee had to make to balance the budget this year. The public testimony hearing in January illustrated the heartbreaking impacts of JBC decisions yet to come. Every dollar in the state budget has a constituency that will be hurt when cuts happen.

While the committee cut several Medicaid programs to slow runaway growth, the FY2026-27 budget will ultimately be larger than the FY2025-26 version. Floor consideration may prove difficult this year.

The committee's balancing scheme did not include revenue from the sale of Pinnacol Assurance, something the Governor has been pushing for more than a year. JBC members have been skeptical. However, Democratic House Speaker Julie McCluskie is renewing her push to sell Pinnacol and is circulating a bill draft. She's estimating \$300 million in revenue to be split among several budget areas, the largest slice would be \$100 million into the State Education Fund.

JBC members shared praise and thanks on Wednesday for the difficult job of concluding their work this year. However, feelings soured Thursday afternoon when the committee stalled on a proposed bill to allow the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to conduct "extrapolation" audits on some care providers, specifically autism treatment providers. The budget package requires this bill because balancing calculations include the projected \$6.9 million in audit recoveries. Representative Emily Sirota and Senator Jeff Bridges argued audits are needed to catch "bad actors" in the business. Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer pushed for a set of guidelines to protect providers from department overreach. Compromise on the wording eventually restored peace.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

All the best,  
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## KEY NEWS LINKS FROM THE WEEK

### Notable Stories of The Week

To save you time, here are links to key stories of the week that you should read if you have not already.

- Regulations review and cleanup bill clears committee (Sum & Substance) - <https://www.westword.com/news/colorado-warning-cancer-causing-chemicals-hair-products-40865910/>
- JBC finishes its work (Sun & Substance; CPR) - <https://coloradosun.com/2026/04/01/colorado-budget-draft-billion-shortfall-2026/> [Mostly accurate but overemphasizes cuts.]
- Polis takes aim at sugary drinks with pending executive order (Sun) - <https://coloradosun.com/2026/04/01/sugary-drinks-snap-ban-polis-executive-order/>
- Polis bets on housing bills (Sum & Substance) - <https://tsscolorado.com/can-new-laws-solve-the-housing-crisis-gov-polis-bets-his-signature-on-it/>
- Legislative decisions helped drive Medicaid costs (CO Pols) - <https://www.coloradopolitics.com/2026/03/31/colorado-legislators-drove-up-cost-of-medicaid-program/>
- Governor, JBC change course on prison expansion plans (Sun) - <https://coloradosun.com/2026/04/01/colorado-private-prison-decision-jbc/>
- Bimestefer bails out of HCPF as criticism mounts (Sun) - <https://coloradosun.com/2026/03/30/medicaid-director-resigns-no-confidence-vote/>
- How Medicaid spending exploded (CO Pols) - <https://www.coloradopolitics.com/2026/03/29/unsustainable-how-colorados-medicaid-spending-exploded/>