

Update from the Capitol ...

Last week was shortened because of the storm that moved in on Thursday, causing the Speaker to cancel Friday's session.

The first part of the week was still plenty busy, though, and we had an extended hearing on the House floor on Thursday to clear what was on the calendar.

Since I last wrote, the House unanimously passed the bill to continue the state's Methamphetamine Task Force. The Senate also passed a House bill to allow insurance companies to offer a more basic health insurance plan that would allow more low-income workers to afford coverage.

There was also a bright spot in the House Education Committee where I serve as the Ranking Republican. We were able to defeat an overreaching bill that would have suspended the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and jeopardized federal stimulus dollars for education.

On a less optimistic note, the Senate passed the controversial oil and gas rules without making needed changes. Many of the new rules strike a better balance for our environment and our energy development policies, however many others threaten jobs in the middle of a recession. The House did not have much better luck when we had the rules, but I was disappointed to see the Senate Democrats take the same hard-lined position.

The Senate also passed House Bill 1057, requiring businesses to give time off to employees for school related functions, which most employers do without government interference.

The Joint Budget Committee met all of last week to continue identifying areas of the budget to help the state meet its growing shortfall. The budget debate, which normally would have begun by now, has been moved back to next week because the task is more challenging this year.

My bills continue to move through the process and the House passed my proposal to help keep students more active and healthy. My busiest day this week will be Friday, when several of my bills are scheduled for an Appropriations hearing.

Thanks for reading,

Tom Massey