



Board Summary Report

File #: 24-307

Agenda Date: 6/4/2024

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Prepared By:
Cody O'Brien, Management Analyst I, Commissioners' Office

Presenter: Ed Bowditch & Jennifer Cassell, Bowditch and Cassell Public Affairs; Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office; and Cody O'Brien, Management Analyst I, Commissioners' Office

Subject:
1:15 PM *2024 Legislative Session Debrief

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this meeting is to review key points from the 2024 state legislative session and a proposed plan for the remainder of the year.

Background and Discussion: As a constitutional subdivision of Colorado state government, Arapahoe County can only exercise those powers specifically expressed in statute or in the constitution. Arapahoe County contracts with Bowditch and Cassell Public Affairs for state advocacy activities. The Director of the Commissioners' Office coordinates federal and state intergovernmental relations, in partnership with the County's legislative team, consisting of the Director of Human Services, the County Attorney, the Director of Community Resources, the Director of Public Works and Development, and the Director of Public Health.

On an annual basis, the Board of County Commissioners adopts legislative principles to guide federal and state advocacy work, evaluating policy positions through the lens of fiscal and operational impacts to Arapahoe County, consistent with its stated strategic plan and legal requirements. The Board also identified six specific legislative items to focus on during the 2024 session, including:

- Secure adequate funding to support one-time transition costs associated with the split of the 18th Judicial District.
- Repeal obsolete section seven of C.R.S. 29-2-104 regarding calendar limitations on sales tax questions.
- Engage local community correction programs to ensure state funding can adequately support alternative sentencing and pre-trial programs.
- Ensure any land use solutions to the affordable housing crisis are balanced and coordinated between local governments and state priorities.
- Advance and refine access to funding programs that increase affordable housing and support programs for people experiencing homelessness.
- Increase services and treatment placements for the highest acuity children in partnership with the General Assembly; the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health; and the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.

The County was successful in securing \$4 million from the state general fund to support the transition of the 18th Judicial District and repealing obsolete calendar limitations on sales tax questions. The County actively engaged in land use and housing legislation as well as sought to increase services and treatment placements for the highest acuity children.

During the 2024 state legislative session, Arapahoe County tracked approximately 14% - or 97 - of the 705 introduced bills. The county adopted 59 positions on legislation, a 44% increase from positions taken in 2023. As of May 29, of the 38 bills the County supported, opposed or sought amendments on, we saw a 50% success rate, while 45% of legislative outcomes are still pending. The County most actively engaged with legislation in the human services, housing/land use and general government topic categories, with significant resource investments in 21 bills.

At this study session, our lobbyists from Bowditch & Cassell Public Affairs and members of the legislative team will provide an overview of key points from the 2024 legislative session, review significant bills and outcomes, discuss the county's programmatic approach, and present a proposed plan for the remainder of the year.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Alternatives: N/A

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Be fiscally sustainable
- Provide essential and mandated service
- Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: More information is available online at arapahoegov.com/bocc.

Concurrence: Members of the legislative team will be in attendance to answer questions as needed.