



Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

# Overview of the Current Colorado State Budget and Legislative Updates

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# 2026: The 75th General Assembly, Second Regular Session

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## **Key dates:**

- 1/14: General Assembly convenes
- 3/20: Final passage of bills in the originating chamber (66th day)
- 3/30: Long Bill (budget for SFY 2026-27) introduced in the House (76th day)
- 4/17: Adoption of the conference committee report on the Long Bill (94th day)
- 4/24: Passage of school finance bills (101st day)
- 4/28: Final passage in the Senate of all House bills (105th day)
- 4/28: Final passage in the House of all Senate bills (105th day)
- 5/13: Adjournment sine die (120th day)

**Source:** [https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2026\\_deadline\\_schedule-accessible.pdf](https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2026_deadline_schedule-accessible.pdf)



# Despite majorities, Democrats face challenges

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## Key challenges

- State budget crisis and impacts of H.R.1
- Cuts to Medicaid and other state programs
- No money for new bills or programs
- Intraparty differences between progressives and moderates
- Election year and multiple state lawmakers are running for higher office
- 14 lawmakers are facing primary challenges, historically an uncommon practice

## Sources:

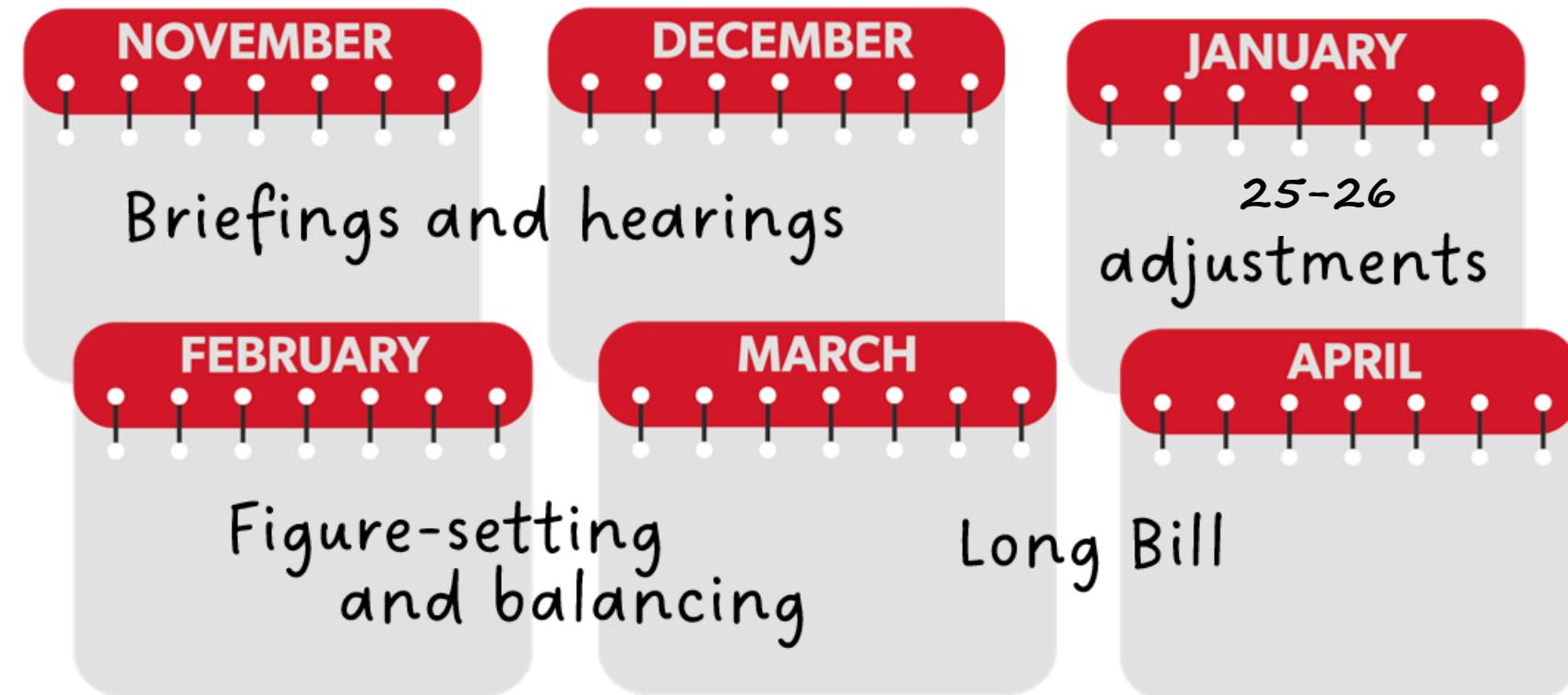
- <https://www.coloradolitics.com/2026/01/06/primary-challenges-surge-as-colorado-lawmakers-head-into-2026-election-cycle/>
- <https://coloradosun.com/2026/01/13/colorado-legislature-2026-budget-problem/>
- <https://www.cpr.org/2026/01/12/upcoming-colorado-legislative-session-2026/>



# Budget process for the next fiscal year

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- **Governor's budget submitted by 11/1** to the JBC; balances his priorities with agency requests
- General Assembly hears input from JBC, Capital Development and Joint Technology Committees; receives state revenue and economic forecasts





NEWS: POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

# Colorado lawmakers return to Capitol facing \$850 million mountain of tough budget decisions

The shortfall means two major things: The General Assembly will have to make funding cuts and it also has no money available to spend on new programs. Those two realities will shape the legislature's entire 120-day lawmaking term.

***"The JBC is expecting to save somewhere in the neighborhood of \$5 million to \$10 million for legislation."***



Jesse Paul and Brian Eason

4:00 AM MST on Jan 13, 2026

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# Future areas of focus for Medicaid sustainability

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For FY 2026-27:

- Budget increase needed to keep Medicaid offerings the same as last year: \$631 million
- Current HCPF budget increase request from Gov. Polis: \$300 million

Potential areas of focus for additional action and cuts include:

- Long-term services and supports (LTSS)
- Pediatric behavioral therapies
- Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)
- Behavioral health services
- Utilization management for prescription drugs
- Medical education spending



# Current status of the legislative session

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Showing 1 - 25 of 347 bills, memorials, & resolutions [Hide filters](#) Sort By: Most Relevant ▾

[Clear all](#) 2026 Regular Session X

- Currently, 317 bills and 30 resolutions have been introduced
- As of February 12<sup>th</sup>, no bills have been signed into law nor passed both chambers
  - 9 bills have been postponed indefinitely



## Highlighted bills – Health care access & costs

Bill	Status
<a href="#"><u>HB26-1139</u></a> : Use of Artificial Intelligence in Health Care	February 4, 2026 - Introduced In House - Assigned to Health & Human Services
<a href="#"><u>HB26-1096</u></a> : Colorado Medicaid Access to Primary Care Services	February 3, 2026 - Introduced In House - Assigned to Health & Human Services
<a href="#"><u>SB26-041</u></a> : Consumer Protections Medical Care Entities	January 27, 2026 - Introduced In Senate - Assigned to Health & Human Services
<a href="#"><u>HB26-1044</u></a> : Measures to Improve Black Maternal Health Equity	January 14, 2026 - Introduced In House - Assigned to Health & Human Services
<a href="#"><u>HB26-1002</u></a> : Provider Participation in Health Insurance	February 10, 2026 - Refer Amended to Appropriations



# Additional and Upcoming Legislation

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- **Budget Cuts**
  - Lawmakers may be less likely to introduce bills with major new spending.
  - Conversion of Colorado's worker's compensation provider (Pinnacol Assurance) to a member-owned mutual insurance carrier (could generate \$400 million in savings).
- **Health care costs & affordability**
  - Funding the Health Insurance Affordability Enterprise (HIAE)
  - Additional legislation on reducing costs for Medicare and Medicaid recipients, telehealth, vaccines, scope-of-practice, and anti-trust regulation.
  - Additional regulation of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs)
  - Additional transparency in the federal 340B drug pricing program
- **Continued fight over union law**
  - The "Worker Protection Act" is expected to be reintroduced in 2026. Was passed by Democrats in 2025 but vetoed by Gov. Polis.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
  - Further edits to SB24-205 (currently scheduled to go into effect in June 2026)



# THANK YOU!

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