



House District 16 Update

Representative Larry Liston



SUMMER 2008

Dear Constituent,



This is my third newsletter to the people of House District 16 over the past year. It is with great pleasure that I report back to you, both as your Representative in Denver and as your friend and neighbor. I have a special affinity for the citizens of our district, because I grew up here and have lived here for over 40 years.

I'm finishing my fourth year as your representative at the Capitol. This past session has had its share of highs and lows for me as your voice in Denver. The Democrat controlled legislature passed, and the Governor signed, an all time **record spending budget of nearly \$18 BILLION** dollars for fiscal 2008-09.

This bloated budget came on news of fresh weakness in our national, state, and local economies. New home starts are at a 16 year low and foreclosures are at a 6 to 7 year high. While most rational people would rein in personal spending and save for the proverbial rainy day, the party currently in power did neither.

I believe we need to spend less and at least set up, if not fund some kind of Rainy Day Fund.

Democrats would permit neither, so I could not vote for ballooning government spending, new social programs, and at the same time adding another **1330 new State employees** to the payrolls.

I have heard first hand from many of you that you are curtailing spending. The Colorado State government should do the same.

Over the balance of this newsletter, I want to share with you some of the legislation I sponsored or actively supported. In addition, I've tried to give you some perspective on the bills and how they might affect you.

As always, I welcome your comments, legislative ideas, and questions on any matter that concern you. You can call me at 649-9742 or e-mail me at larry.liston.house@state.co.us.

I hope you enjoy this update. It is truly my honor to represent you and all the fine citizens of HD 16.

Respectfully

Representative Larry Liston

HB08-1127

Tax Credits to a Business for Hiring the Developmentally Disabled

Sponsors: Rep. Liston and Sen. Dan Gibbs

It was a real joy for me to work with leaders of developmentally disabled communities and businesses to sponsor and pass HB-1127. This pilot program allows legitimate business entities, both large and small; to receive a partial tax credit for the wages they pay to developmentally disabled employees.

With an unemployment rate of 75% to 80% for people with disabilities, HB-1127 will provide a strong incentive for businesses, such as restaurants and hotels, to hire, train, and retain disabled workers.

This is win-win legislation. Not only is it good for disabled Coloradoans, but it's good for Colorado businesses and taxpayers. Capable people who want to work will be taken off the welfare rolls and given the means to be productive citizens.

HB08-1115

2nd Hand Threats Against Judges

Sponsors: Rep. Liston and Sen. Scott Renfroe

I was pleased to carry legislation to offer some protection for our sitting judges, who face intimidating threats against person, family, and property. Before HB-1115, even though a judge knew of threats intended to intimidate or otherwise influence an upcoming

ruling, that judge had no effective legal means of protection.

This bill provides fair and legal means of defense for judges facing these threats, while not being overly harsh on the accused.

What Others Say About Your Representative

"Rep. Larry Liston stands out from the legislative crowd. He studies the issues, takes time to listen to many points of view, and speaks up once he knows the facts. His constituents can count on him."

Cathy Wanstrath, State House lobbyist since 1992

"Time and again, I rely on Representative Liston's leadership and

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thoughtful approaches in addressing economic issues ... critical business and regulatory issues which affect everyday people and their jobs is where he does not compromise”

Virginia M. Love, Governmental Affairs Analyst

“Rep. Liston is a consistent, reasoned voice for business in Colorado. While others waiver and wring their hands, Larry rolls up his sleeves and finds solutions. He is a great advocate in the state house”

Travis Barry, C-3 Communications

HB08-1393

Consumer Guide for Hospital Charges

Sponsors: Rep. Stephens and Sen. Morse

Co-Sponsor: Rep. Larry Liston

I was honored to co-sponsor, with Rep. Amy Stephens, legislation which requires each hospital report card to include information about its charges for the 25 most common inpatient procedures.

The Commissioner of Insurance must now work with the Colorado Hospital Assn. to standardize reporting of charges for common procedures, such as hip replacement surgery and tonsillectomy. In addition, health insurance carriers must also submit certain information, such as reimbursement rates for their most common procedures.

This resulting transparency will enable patients to be better informed consumers, allowing them to shop for the most cost effective medical care.

Potential saving to you could be hundreds, if not thousands of dollars. This report card is available at <http://www.cohospitalquality.org>.

Legislative Health Care Proposals Offered in 08 Session

As the ranking Republican on the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee, I worked with sponsors of several pro-consumer, free enterprise

bills to shepherd them through our committee.

I co-sponsored the "Small Group Limited Health Benefit Plan", HB-1311. This bill would have created two **low cost**, limited health benefit plans. In addition, I strongly supported legislation by Rep. Cory Gardner, which would have allowed individuals to purchase qualified, but less expensive health insurance across state lines. Today, citizens are free to buy virtually any goods or services from other states. They can buy cars, food, gasoline, financial services, and even auto insurance, all at lower prices. Why not health insurance too? Both these bills were killed in committee by the Democrats on a party line vote.

SB08-233

Authority of State Treasurer to Lease-Purchase Buildings for Institutions of Higher Education

Sponsors: Sen. Williams and Rep. Marostica

Co-sponsor: Rep. Larry Liston

From time-to-time, the State of Colorado has sufficient revenue to fund improvement or construction of facilities for our colleges and universities. Since the economic downturn of 2000-03, however, very little of this construction has been funded. Funding was available this year and competition for it was intense.

As you may know, our University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, UCCS, is located in HD 16 and is a crown jewel of our city. UCCS has been in our fair city for over 40 years and is the fastest growing part of the CU system.

For years, UCCS has made due with an outdated, antiquated, and over utilized science building. This session, I was able to work with several of the members of the Legislature’s Capital Development Committee to secure \$17.1 million in Federal Mineral

Lease revenue to fund the UCCS Science Renovation project. **No additional Colorado taxpayer money was authorized to secure this grant!**

This critical project will revamp one of the most important buildings on the UCCS campus. It ensures that UCCS students, faculty, and staff have the science lab and classroom facilities they need. The science building is of great importance to the nursing program at UCCS, and will help ease some of the demands on the Nursing School wait list. This state investment will help the campus bring millions of private dollars to the campus and to our city.

This construction brings an estimated 175-200 **new**, well paying construction-related jobs to our City. I was greatly pleased to take part in securing the economic and educational benefits of this project for HD 16.

Do You Know?

- That the majority party in the Colorado State Legislature, (the Democrats) have added over **3000 NEW** full time positions to our state government in just the last 2 years.
- The average pay for full time state employees is over \$48,000, **16th highest** in the nation.
- Colorado spends over **\$8900 per pupil** for public school students. The U.S. average is \$9557.
- Colorado appropriates only \$3.72 per \$1000 of personal income for operations of Higher Education, **48th in the nation**.
- Colorado’s relative ranking of health for its citizens is **16th best** in the nation. Mississippi is worst, Vermont is best.
- The State of Colorado will spend **\$5.8 BILLION** for health care policy and human services (Welfare) for fiscal 08-09.
 - This is **29%** of the entire state’s General Fund.
 - K-12 education represents another 42% of the general fund
 - Our Transportation needs got **nothing** from the General Fund.

Sources: (1) Colorado Joint Budget Committee and (2) The Taxpayers Network: 50 State Comparisons, 08 ed.