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# CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

## AGENCY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DENVER WOMEN'S COMMISSION  
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## Possible 2004 Legislation

Below is a list of possible 2004 legislation. This list is subject to revision until January 2004, when bills are actually introduced.

**Welfare Oversight Committee Bills:** The All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition and their members helped develop these bills:

1. Continue the Welfare Oversight Committee- the joint chambers oversight of our state's welfare program, due to sunset this year. Rep. Jerry Frangas- sponsor
2. Continue evaluation of Colorado's Welfare Program- The last report of a five-year independent evaluation is due out this year. Under this bill by Rep. Frangas, a new RFP would be issued for a new evaluation contract. Especially under Colorado's greatly devolved welfare system, with county to county variations, evaluation is critical.
3. Voc-Ed Training would be allowed more frequently for TANF recipients under a bill by Rep. Betty Boyd. Counties would be given more frequent reports on the work placement rates, so that they can allow some recipients to pursue education and training before work. Such opportunities would be limited based on workforce shortages. The bill does not pay for higher education. Project Wise proposed this bill.

**Self-Sufficiency:** The Bell Policy Institute will again sponsor a bill for the state to adopt regional standards regarding the true cost of living. The widely use "poverty level" is very misleading- it is a nationwide standard based on three times a family's food budget.

**Domestic Violence-** Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence will have one or two bills related to domestic violence and rental housing. A victim of domestic violence could not be evicted for calling the police, or evicted because of the domestic violence. Landlords could not give a bad rental reference based on circumstances related to domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence would be allowed out of their lease or relocated to a different unit.

**Unemployment Insurance-** 9to5-National Association of Working Women & Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute will be proposing changes to the unemployment insurance law, expanding eligibility for part time and short term workers and for workers who lose their job due to domestic violence.

**Housing -** Colorado Housing Trust Fund Coalition will be advancing a referendum or initiative to establish a Colorado Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing. The likely funding is an increase in the document recording fee, which could require a change to TABOR - which bans real estate transfer fees.

**Energy Bill Assistance-** The largest funding source for the Colorado Energy Assistance Foundation (now Energy Outreach Colorado) was the Fort St. Vrain Public Service lawsuit settlement money. This is the last year of that funding. Energy Outreach Colorado is proposing a systems benefit charge on everyone's Xcell bill to help pay costs for those with low income. People could chose to opt out.

**Child Care Tax Credit-** The Colorado Children's Campaign will be working to renew for 5 years the Colorado Child Care Tax Credit, which sunsets this year.

**Reproductive Health-** Rep. Betty Boyd will again sponsor a bill to ask hospital emergency rooms to provide emergency contraception to rape survivors. This bill was proposed by Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault and NARAL Prochoice Colorado.

**Health-** Some of the one-time \$92. million in fiscal relief from Congress for state health care (FMAP money) costs should be used to restore last years health care cuts as a bridge to better economic times. The Governor has indicated he would use part of the one-time \$146. million in general fiscal relief to restore prenatal care for low income women under the Child Health Plan.

Colorado plans to submit a HIFA (Health Insurance Flexibility Act) waiver. The purpose of a HIFA waiver is to cover more people under Medicaid, but the waivers must be cost-neutral, so the effect is to cover more, but with fewer services or higher fees.

Additional advocacy by the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative will focus on the individual insurance market and a stable funding source for CoverColorado ( formerly the Colorado Uninsurable Health Plan)

**Substance Abuse-** The Colorado Association of Alcohol and Drug Service Providers will propose an extension of coverage for substance abuse treatment for women on Medicaid who have recently given birth. Currently the only substance abuse treatment available under Medicaid is for pregnant women until 2 months post-partum. This would extend coverage until 1 year after giving birth.

**Affirmative Action-** The Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce will propose that the State recognize its new certification of Women Business Enterprises. Currently, no one has been certifying businesses as Women Business Enterprises.

A bill to PROHIBIT public colleges from considering race as one factor in higher education admissions will likely be introduced by Sen. Jim Dyer or Sen. Ed Jones. The Supreme Court decision ALLOWS universities to consider race as one factor in admissions in the goal of having a diverse student body. Colorado Unity will be OPPOSING such legislation.

To correct or update this list, or for more information, contact Chaer Robert, Director, Denver Women's Commission [chaer.robert@ci.denver.co.us](mailto:chaer.robert@ci.denver.co.us) or call 720-913-8465