

Under the Dome November 18

Yikes, what happened?

Thanks to all of you wonderful and engaged citizens in Garfield, Moffat, and Rio Blanco Counties who voted for me to return for my fourth and final two year term as your state representative. I was hoping for 100% of the vote and I'm baffled about what those no votes want from their humble servant. Actually, my margins were better than most Republicans so thank you.

I haven't had time to do much analysis about what happened on election day (I don't plan to do so) but plenty of political watchers are digging into the numbers, interviewing voters and offering opinions. Evidently President Trump was on the ballot and I missed it while many unaffiliated voters did not and voted against him. Interesting to me is the fact that voters rejected ballot initiatives that increased taxes and then elected Senators, Representatives and statewide officers who supported those same ballot initiatives and intend to spend the dollars. How will we pay for what they have planned for Colorado?

It looks to be an interesting year at the Capitol. Maybe I'll take notes and write a book. I'll feature useless long speeches, dumb ideas, overreach, personal conflicts, futile statement bills, late nights, ambition, out of control ego, uncontrolled weeping, hysterical lobbyists, and a budget so complex that nobody understands it. But wait! Am I being cynical and defensive? There are some very smart and dedicated people in state government on both sides of the aisle in the legislature and possibly on the Joint Budget Committee. I plan to seek them out and to work with them.

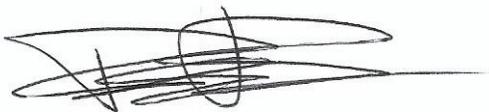
But I'm still trying to digest the impact of that radically new dynamic on outcomes in the state legislature. What does it mean for rural and

western Colorado? Can I leverage my senior position on the Joint Budget Committee, my six years of experience as a representative, and my momentum on critical issues to make a difference for the western slope? We shall see.

For example, I'm waiting to see if the new administration embraces the work of the non-partisan Education Leadership Council that I've been honored to co-chair. Thousands of hours of work by hundreds of volunteers over the past year have resulted in a vision and a strategy for education from early childhood to the workforce. Colorado can now share the direction and plans for a world class system of education with all of our citizens. I hope it can take root in the new executive direction.

I'll continue to work to repeal the Gallagher amendment, lower health care and insurance costs, equal opportunity for students no matter where they live, fair collection and use of severance taxes, tourism, and every effort to share Colorado's booming prosperity with every corner of the state. I hope those are also issues for the majority party.

I wrote this article by hand in cursive (see Joyce's column). I'll need a lot of help this session whether you voted for me or not. Stay in touch.

A handwritten signature in cursive, appearing to read 'Bob Rankin', written in black ink. The signature is somewhat stylized and includes a vertical line through the middle.

Representative Bob Rankin