

Under the dome January 2019

Transitions

It looks like I'll be moving from the Colorado House of Representatives to the Senate on January 22nd. All because Senator Baumgardner the current Senator representing Senate District 8 is resigning effective the 21st and a vacancy committee, meeting on January 2nd, chose me as his replacement. I've enjoyed six years in the house, with its 65 members, lots of turnovers every two years, members from every imaginable background and many late nights. Even in the minority for all six years, I believe that I've been able to make a difference for my constituents.

I'll stay on the Joint Budget committee as its longest-serving member and only rural member. Those roles come with some special responsibilities, and I intend to be very vocal in support of education opportunities for rural kids, rural economic development, transportation, and lower health care costs.

I'll be representing four new counties and several tourism hubs in Senate district 8. My six years of service on the Colorado Tourism Board will help me understand their issues. I may have to pull my skis out of storage.

I'll continue to serve as co-chair of the Education Leadership Council. Our new Governor has expressed interest in our work and the vision articulated for making Colorado the best state in the nation for education from early childhood to the workforce. Now that our vision has been voted on by the council and published we are creating an implementation plan.

I'm very concerned about the fairness of state and local funding for education. The Denver Post, in an editorial, has called me "a modern Robin Hood" for insisting that poor rural districts deserve funding equivalent to the rich resort and urban districts. I intend to remain a leader in this area and intensify my effort, working from the Senate, to rectify years of abuse of both taxpayers and students resulting from conflicting constitutional and legislative actions of the past. Those efforts include repealing and replacing the Gallagher amendment, bringing school taxes into equity and compensating for local mil-levy override disparities.

I'm no longer term-limited so I have plenty of time to work on these budget crippling longstanding problems should I win reelection in 2020 and beyond.

And let's not forget the discrimination wrought by health care disparities between the urban front range and both resort and rural Colorado. I'll be jointly introducing bills this year that will reduce our insurance costs substantially and will start to reveal and hopefully reduce basic cost factors.

It sounds like a lot of action, you bet, meanwhile I'll stick to my conservative principles of small government, low taxes, and personal freedom.

It's been an honor, and hard work to represent House District 57 and the future as your Senator will be just as much so.