

HOUSE JOURNAL
SIXTY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF COLORADO
Second Regular Session

Second Legislative Day

Thursday, January 6, 2000

1 Prayer by Pastor Brad Strait, South Fellowship, Littleton.

2

3 The Speaker called the House to order at 9:00 a.m.

4

5 The roll was called with the following result:

6

7 Present--65.

8

9 The Speaker declared a quorum present.

10

11 _____

12 On motion of Representative Hoppe, the reading of the journal of
13 January 5, 2000, was dispensed with and approved as corrected by the
14 Chief Clerk.

15

16 _____

17

PRINTING REPORT

18

19
20 The Chief Clerk reports the following bill has been correctly printed:
21 **HB00-1083.**

22

23 _____

24

House in recess.

25

26 _____

27

JOINT SESSION

28

29
30 The Joint Session was called to order by the Speaker of the House,
31 Russell George.

32

33 On motion of Senator Blickensderfer, the morning roll call of the Senate
34 was made the roll call of the Joint Session.

35

36 Present--34.

37

38 Absent and excused--Senator Wham--1.

39

40 On motion of Representative Dean, the morning roll call of the House
41 was made the roll call of the Joint Session.

42

43 Present--65.

44

45 The Speaker declared a quorum present and as is customary presented the
gavel to the President of the Senate to preside over the joint session.

1 President Powers requested the Joint Committee, composed of Senators
2 Dennis and Reeves, and Representatives Kaufman, Dean and Gordon to
3 escort the Governor from the Governor's Chambers to the rostrum.

4
5 Chief Sergeant-at-Arms Suman announced the arrival of the Honorable
6 Bill Owens, Governor of the State of Colorado.

7
8 The Joint Committee escorted the Governor to the rostrum where he
9 addressed the Joint Session.

10
11 The Joint Committee escorted the Governor from the Chambers.

12
13 On motion of Representative Dean, the Governor's message was ordered
14 printed in the House Journal.

15
16
17 **ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE**
18 **BILL OWENS**

19
20 President Powers, Speaker George, Honorable Senators and
21 Representatives, distinguished guests, my fellow Coloradans:

22
23 I am honored today to report that the State of Colorado is healthy and
24 vibrant. Our economy continues to be the most prosperous in our state's
25 124-year history. Colorado's newest National Park, Black Canyon
26 National Park which was dedicated last year, stands as a symbol of the
27 natural splendor we continue to enjoy and protect. And all across
28 Colorado, families are living the "Colorado Dream."

29
30 The biggest lesson I have learned is that being Governor is a partnership.
31 Thankfully, I have someone who is not only my friend and confidante,
32 but also an excellent source of advice – and criticism. That person is my
33 wife and partner, the First Lady of Colorado, Frances Owens.

34
35 In 1933, Will Rogers said, "Colorado is a grand seat from which to see
36 the world." What Will Rogers said then certainly rings true today.
37 Unfortunately what the *world* saw in *Colorado* on April 20, 1999, was a
38 tragedy that rocked our state, our nation, indeed the world.

39
40 The Columbine High School tragedy changed our lives forever. But
41 while the tragedy at Columbine High School showed us the absolute
42 worst in two young men, it brought out the very best in our people.

43
44 We saw David Sanders – a man, a teacher, a father – sacrifice his own
45 life to save the lives of dozens of students to whom he had dedicated so
46 many years of his life to teaching and nurturing. We saw groups of
47 students helping one another to avoid the gunfire, and then dropping to
48 their knees in prayer, clinging to each other for support and hope.

49
50 We saw neighbors give of their time, their money, and their prayers to
51 victims and their families. We saw Colorado embrace the Littleton
52 community, grieving with families and friends whose lives were shattered
53 by the horrible tragedy. And that night across America we saw parents
54 hold their children a little tighter and a little longer before putting them
55 to bed.

56

1 As a father, I am thankful to live among people who care about each
2 other, who will sacrifice to help each other, and who still – day after day
3 – continue to remember the thirteen victims of that horrible tragedy.

4
5 Last year we also suffered the loss of close colleagues and friends:
6 Secretary of State Vikki Buckley, Senator Tony Grampsas and Jan
7 Duckworth. Vikki, Tony and Jan dedicated their lives to serving the
8 people of Colorado. They were our friends and we all miss them terribly.

9
10 Please bow your heads and join me now in honoring and remembering
11 the thirteen victims of the Columbine shooting and our departed friends
12 and colleagues:

13
14 *Dear Lord, may their souls rest in Heaven and may we always*
15 *remember the good deeds they have done. In your name, Amen.*

16
17 Friends, we are a state with a rich and proud heritage. There is no room
18 in Colorado for bigotry, intolerance and hate, and we cannot let the
19 actions of two sick teenagers determine how the rest of the world views
20 our wonderful state.

21
22 Colorado's Families

23 But we need to ask ourselves: "What can we as parents, as a community,
24 and as a state do to prevent such acts of violence in the future?"
25 Unfortunately, there is no easy solution.

26
27 So many people – in and outside of Colorado – have tried to politicize the
28 tragedy at Columbine. But as I have said so often, more laws would not
29 have stopped those two killers who broke dozens of existing laws. The
30 real lesson from Columbine is that we live in a culture that is badly in
31 need of repair.

32
33 The solution to youth violence will come one child at a time as parents
34 teach their children the difference between right and wrong. The solution
35 will come when children are provided with nurturing and unconditional
36 love from their parents. And the solution will come when we reject the
37 violence and hate that fill so much of the pop culture consumed by so
38 many of our children today.

39
40 An important step I have taken as Governor is to create an Office of
41 Families and Children charged with ensuring that Colorado state policy
42 is always family-friendly. I want to see a Colorado where we have
43 healthy, well-educated children who can enjoy schools and
44 neighborhoods safe from drugs and crime, and who can always look to
45 their families for guidance and love.

46
47 I believe we must have as one of our central priorities the strengthening
48 of Colorado's families. That means reducing taxes so moms and dads can
49 keep more of their hard-earned money and thus be able to afford quality
50 childcare. It means recognizing that both mothers and fathers play a
51 critical role in the raising of children. And it also means reaffirming that
52 marriage is a fundamental vow taken between a man and a woman.

53
54 Strengthening families also means that government must admit that it is
55 often a poor safety net for those in need when compared to extended
56 families, faith-based organizations and community groups. The faith-

1 based community worked tirelessly in the aftermath of the Columbine
2 tragedy to help the victims and their families. They opened up their
3 counseling offices and shelters and worked around the clock to help
4 thousands of Coloradans in need. Colorado must continue to foster and
5 encourage more collaboration and partnerships with faith-based
6 organizations.

7
8 Friends, a year ago I asked this legislature, regardless of the issue, to
9 either help Colorado's families or, in words of Hippocrates, "to do no
10 harm." I have issued an Executive Order that requires all departments in
11 state government to do the same. Every action we take must be measured
12 against a simple standard – a Family Impact Statement, if you will. If it
13 harms the family, we shouldn't do it.

14
15 That is why last session I vetoed a bill that did not go far enough to
16 protect children using computers in public libraries from having access
17 to harmful material on the Internet. This session I ask the General
18 Assembly to be proactive and pass legislation that would require every
19 public school and library in the state to adopt policies and procedures to
20 prevent children from accessing obscene, hateful and violent material on
21 those taxpayer-funded computers.

22 23 Fighting Crime in Colorado

24 We can also help Colorado's families by providing them with safe
25 communities. In response to legislation that we have passed over the past
26 ten years, our crime rates continue to drop as we put more violent
27 criminals behind bars. But there is more we must do.

28
29 Just passing laws is not enough. We must also enforce the laws we
30 already have on the books and vigorously prosecute those who break the
31 law. Local law enforcement officials *must* have the resources they need
32 to prosecute offenders of these laws. Thus I am announcing today the
33 award of up to 35 Rural Law Enforcement Grants with funds totaling
34 almost half a million dollars for use in fighting crime in rural Colorado.

35
36 And what about our judicial system? Well, a year ago, I promised to
37 appoint men and women of unquestioned experience, integrity, fairness
38 and character to serve as judges. I am pleased to report that the 14
39 judges I have appointed will be tough on crime and care as much about
40 the victim's rights as the criminal's. In fact, many of the 14 judges I have
41 appointed were either prosecutors at the time of their appointment or had
42 prior prosecutorial experience.

43
44 We must make sure that we are able to find and apprehend our State's
45 most violent fugitives, and bring to justice those who continue to avoid
46 prosecution. I want to thank Senator Gigi Dennis and Representative
47 Gary McPherson for sponsoring legislation that would create the Fugitive
48 Squad within the Department of Public Safety. This squad will be
49 responsible for locating and arresting those felons who remain at large
50 and bringing them to justice so that they are unable to victimize anyone
51 else.

52
53 We must also ensure that repeat offenders are treated and punished as
54 such. That is why I support Representative Andy McElhany's legislation
55 that will ensure that parolees or previously convicted felons found
56 carrying a gun will have their parole revoked, they will be recharged as

1 a felon, and will be immediately returned to prison.

2

3 Now let me be clear. The Second Amendment guarantees that law-
4 abiding citizens have a right to own firearms. But we must take
5 commonsense steps to keep guns out of the hands of children and
6 criminals. In our report on youth violence, Attorney General Salazar and
7 I outlined several commonsense measures regarding firearms.

8

9 First, we should ban “straw purchases” of firearms. Second, we should
10 include juvenile records in background checks for firearm purchases.
11 Third, we should require that firearms be safely stored in the home. I am
12 not talking about trigger locks or locking up all firearms – I am talking
13 about safe storage. I co-sponsored this proposal as a State Senator in
14 1992 – we should pass it in 2000. Fourth, there should be a state
15 background check for guns purchased at gun shows to ensure that
16 criminals are not trying to purchase weapons. And fifth, Colorado law
17 should mirror federal law and raise the age for purchasing handguns from
18 18 to 21.

19

20 We should also make the possession of a weapon used in a class one
21 felony an aggravating factor for purposes of imposing the death penalty,
22 as a bill by Representative Shawn Mitchell will do.

23

24 Finally, I encourage the General Assembly to pass a bill by Senator Dave
25 Owen and Representative Gayle Berry to make permanent the state
26 criminal background check system for gun purchases. During a four-
27 month period last year when *only* the FBI conducted background checks
28 – meaning Colorado was not conducting checks – 67 individuals who
29 committed crimes such as homicide, domestic violence, aggravated
30 assault and drug trafficking, and were prohibited from owning firearms,
31 were permitted to purchase one. Had the Colorado Bureau of
32 Investigation been conducting background checks in conjunction with the
33 FBI, these criminals would not have been permitted to purchase guns.
34 Friends, we *must* reinstate background checks.

35

36 There is even more we should do to safeguard Colorado’s citizens – wage
37 a fight against drugs. Methamphetamine is the new drug of choice in
38 Colorado. It can be manufactured with legal substances, which makes it
39 more dangerous and threatening than other illegal drugs. Because
40 methamphetamine is so accessible and inexpensive to produce, dealers
41 often offer it free to children until they become addicted. Therefore, I
42 ask this Legislature to make it a felony to possess with intent to
43 manufacture the ingredients of methamphetamines.

44

45 I also support Representative Penn Pfiffner’s concept to create a “two
46 strikes and you are out” rule for child molesters. I believe Representative
47 Pfiffner’s proposal is a critical step toward protecting our children from
48 pedophiles.

49

50 Tax Relief for Colorado’s Families

51 Next I would like to discuss with you the need to provide tax relief for
52 hard working Coloradans. Last session when you passed, and I signed,
53 the largest tax relief package in Colorado history, we passed 19 separate
54 tax relief bills, including a permanent reduction in the state income tax.

55

56 Last year we also passed a number of other important tax relief bills,

1 including the elimination of the marriage tax penalty, a refund of the
2 business personal property tax, and a reduction in taxes on capital gains,
3 dividends and interest earnings. We also provided an enhanced earned-
4 income tax credit for the poor, to ensure that all Coloradans benefit from
5 tax relief.

6
7 Yet even with last year's \$922 million dollars worth of permanent and
8 temporary tax relief, my budget office estimates that over the next six
9 years the surplus will be \$5.8 billion. Legislative Council's estimates are
10 even higher at \$6.4 billion.

11
12 Friends, I believe it is wrong to collect those taxes, keep them for a year
13 without paying interest, and then refund these taxes back to those who
14 often did not pay any taxes in the first place. I know a lot of Coloradans
15 who were excited about getting a tax refund until they realized it was
16 their money to start with.

17
18 Therefore, today I would ask this General Assembly to pass additional
19 permanent tax cuts. We should permanently reduce the state income tax
20 rate, the state sales tax rate, or both. Several months ago I called for a
21 minimum of \$100 million in new permanent tax cuts. But because the
22 surplus keeps going up, so too should the tax relief we provide.

23
24 I believe we should permanently cut taxes by at least \$200 million. Let
25 me repeat that: I believe the floor on permanent tax cuts must be \$200
26 million, though there is certainly room to go higher. With budget
27 surpluses so large, there is plenty of room to cut taxes and still ensure
28 adequate state resources for a rainy day.

29
30 It was Ben Franklin who said "in this world nothing can be said to be
31 certain, except death and taxes." Let's work together to make certain that
32 there are a few less taxes in Colorado.

33 34 Government Streamlining

35 Our goal in State Government should be to do more with less, to provide
36 even more efficient and effective services for citizens. As we move into
37 this new century, those of us responsible for state government are facing
38 a moment of truth. Colorado business is on the cutting edge of the
39 technology world. It is essential that we transform state government so
40 that we too are prepared for the digital age.

41
42 That is what New Century Colorado, in partnership with the Joint Budget
43 Committee, will do.

44
45 The goal of this long-term effort is to make our state government more
46 efficient in order to better serve our citizens. This project – still in its
47 infancy – has already found \$17 million dollars in executive branch
48 savings. The long-term savings will be even greater. I welcome the
49 assistance of state employees working with the New Century Colorado
50 team to help me make state government more efficient – and more cost
51 effective.

52 53 Smart Growth: Colorado's Future

54 I would now like to talk with you about one of the most important issues
55 facing Colorado – growth. During the next decade, hundreds of
56 thousands of people will move to Colorado to find the lifestyle that we

1 enjoy. Our challenge is to welcome the prosperity that our new residents
2 provide while maintaining the quality of life that we benefit from every
3 day.

4
5 That challenge is the foundation of "Smart Growth: Colorado's Future."
6 This initiative recognizes the diversity that makes Colorado unique. It is
7 a specialized package of incentives – not mandates – geared toward
8 saving our natural landscapes, promoting strong neighborhoods, and
9 building our transportation future while providing economic opportunities
10 for the entire state. This plan is right in line with work being done by an
11 Interim Committee on growth chaired by Senator Bryan Sullivant, and I
12 thank them for their efforts.

13
14 I urge the legislature to support and pass bills such as Representative John
15 Witwer's to promote the preservation of more open space and wildlife
16 habitat.

17
18 We also need to provide more tools to allow our local governments to
19 better address growth issues. I am pleased that Representative Matt
20 Smith is working with our cities and counties on an important bill to bring
21 real change to how our incorporated and unincorporated areas work
22 together. I also believe it is long past time that we put an end to the worst
23 excesses of flagpole annexations, as is outlined in legislation sponsored
24 by Senator Stan Matsunaka and Representative Jack Taylor.

25
26 Of course, we must recognize that while Colorado on the whole is
27 currently enjoying a prosperous economy, this prosperity is primarily
28 concentrated in our more heavily populated areas. Much of the remainder
29 of the state continues to struggle with low incomes, little job creation and
30 diminished opportunities for economic prosperity. We must bring
31 prosperity to all of Colorado. I support President Ray Powers' efforts to
32 reform the enterprise zone program so that we can better target tax
33 incentives to those areas of our state that truly deserve this assistance. I
34 also support Speaker Russ George's effort to find a way to provide for
35 revenue sharing among local governments.

36 37 Improving Public Education

38 Next I would like to discuss the single most important issue facing
39 Colorado: Providing every Colorado child with a safe and excellent
40 education.

41
42 Public education in Colorado is doing a good job for many of our
43 children. There are tens of thousands of wonderful and dedicated
44 teachers in our public schools. And I know that hundreds of our public
45 schools provide a good education – including the three public schools that
46 our children attend.

47
48 However, we are in danger of leaving too many of Colorado's children
49 behind. The Colorado Student Assessment Program scores dramatize the
50 problem facing public schools:

- 51 • Thirty percent of Colorado's third grade students could not read at
52 grade level.
- 53 • And nearly 50 percent of Colorado's seventh grade students could not
54 read at grade level.
- 55 • And friends, the figures are even worse for writing: More than 65
56 percent of fourth graders cannot write at grade level.

1 The test scores are alarming enough. But when we consider illiteracy,
2 high dropout rates and issues concerning school safety, it is clear we have
3 a serious problem. So as I think about our education challenge, I am
4 reminded of what Dwight Eisenhower once said, "We succeed only as we
5 identify in life, or in war, or in anything else, a single overriding
6 objective, and make all other considerations bend to that one objective."
7 So it is with reforming our public schools – it is time to make all other
8 considerations bend to that one objective.
9

10 Friends, it is time to take action. In December I announced my plan for
11 reforming public education, called *Putting Children First: A Plan for Safe
12 and Excellent Public Schools*.
13

14 I will make passage of this plan my top priority this legislative session.
15 This plan reflects conversations with countless teachers and principals,
16 listening and learning about their concerns regarding education.
17

18 I want to share with you the frightening results of a survey on school
19 discipline. In the 1940's, the top five problems in public schools were
20 talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls and getting out
21 of turn in line. A more recent survey listed the top five problems to be
22 drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide and rape.
23

24 We all agree that most decisions about school safety must be made at the
25 local level. However, the State does have an important role to play in
26 ensuring that every child in Colorado has a drug-free and crime-free
27 school. I am pleased that Senator Ken Arnold and Representative
28 Dorothy Gotlieb are sponsors of our school safety reform legislation.
29

30 We must also strengthen the ability of schools, law enforcement agencies,
31 and other government agencies to share information about disruptive
32 children, as Representative Scott McKay's bill would do. A child
33 arrested on Saturday night is just as capable and likely to again misbehave
34 on Monday morning. We must make it clear that a school can
35 communicate with any law enforcement jurisdiction in the state – even
36 across county lines.
37

38 And no teacher should be subject to verbal or physical harassment.
39 Students should not be kept from learning because of a disruptive
40 classmate. Therefore, I am proposing that teachers be given enhanced
41 powers to remove troublemakers from their classes. I sponsored such
42 legislation as a state senator and it was vetoed after school administrators
43 objected. Yet empowering teachers to maintain order in their classrooms
44 is an even more important priority today.
45

46 That raises the question: What do we do with the disruptive students who
47 have been expelled? We must provide suitable alternatives for them other
48 than wandering the streets. Principals and teachers across Colorado have
49 told me that we need to have more schools capable of dealing with high-
50 risk students, potential dropouts, and those who are disruptive.
51

52 Thus, I propose the creation of *Alternative Charter Schools* for high-risk
53 and expelled students. The schools will provide a more suitable
54 education environment for disruptive students than regular public schools.
55 However, because these schools for high-risk students can be expensive,
56 I suggest that, over the next few years, the State invest in these

1 *Alternative Charter Schools* by using state capital construction dollars to
2 fund the start-up capital costs of these schools.

3
4 Children cannot learn in schools that are not safe and orderly – that is
5 why I have emphasized this issue first in discussing education. Next I
6 would like to address an even more fundamental question: How can our
7 public schools do a better job of educating every child? I believe we can
8 improve education by always remembering that education is first, last and
9 always about the child.

10
11 It is not about school boards, it is not about legislators, it is not about
12 school principals, teachers or the School Finance Act – it is about the
13 child.

14
15 That is why I am asking the General Assembly to invest significant new
16 dollars in Colorado's public schools. Last year you passed and I signed
17 a School Finance Act that, for the first time in this decade, fully funded
18 public schools for enrollment and inflation. In the budget I submitted to
19 the Legislature several weeks ago, I again put education first and
20 proposed \$111 million in new dollars to once again fully fund public
21 schools. In addition, every education reform I am proposing is fully
22 funded in my budget and will impose no unfunded mandates on local
23 schools.

24
25 I continue to support the *Read to Achieve* initiative because it goes to the
26 heart of solving Colorado's literacy crisis. *Read to Achieve* is based on
27 a simple goal: By the time a child enters the fourth grade they should be
28 reading at grade level or above. My plan calls for enrolling third graders
29 in public schools who fail the state reading test in proven reading
30 programs such as after school tutoring, summer school programs, or in-
31 school reading clinics.

32
33 Friends, we are in danger of having two groups of children in Colorado
34 – one that can read and one that can't; one that dreams and one that
35 doesn't. I want *all* of Colorado's children to be able to read and I want
36 *all* of Colorado's children to be able to dream. It was Victor Hugo who
37 said, "There is nothing like a dream to create the future." I couldn't agree
38 more, which is why learning to read at an early age is so important.

39
40 I continue to believe that a significant portion of the tobacco settlement
41 monies should go to funding *Read to Achieve*. But we can jump-start the
42 program now – this year. Early this session you will get a bill sponsored
43 by Senator John Andrews and Representatives Abel Tapia and Joyce
44 Lawrence authorizing the *Read to Achieve* program and appropriating \$12
45 million in one-time General Fund dollars for the current fiscal year. I ask
46 for your support of this bill, which will allow thousands of third graders
47 to attend reading summer school this year – and which will save many of
48 them from a lifetime of failure.

49
50 We also need to focus in education on the basics of reading, writing and
51 math. The current state testing should be expanded to annually test
52 reading, writing and math in order to better monitor student achievement.
53 The state should pay for these assessments, and my budget therefore
54 provides the funds to cover the cost of these tests.

55
56 I believe that every child can learn. We must therefore test in order to

1 ensure that teaching is translated into learning for every child – yearly
2 testing will allow us to measure the progress of our children and of our
3 schools.

4
5 You know, Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed that “what we call
6 results are beginnings.” Emerson may have had in mind our proposal to
7 produce a Performance Report Card for every public school in the state.
8 Just as students receive grades of A, B, C, D or F, so should Colorado’s
9 public schools. Academic performance will be measured using the ACT
10 and the CSAPs, examining each school on overall scores, year-to-year
11 growth and how well all students perform. School safety will also be
12 measured.

13
14 Some will say that grading schools is insensitive. They say it is wrong to
15 use the letter “F” because it signifies failure. To me, that is *exactly* why
16 we need the rating system. Effective
17 reform starts with accountability. Someone should be praised when
18 schools succeed, and someone must be responsible when schools fail. If
19 schools fail, we must be bold enough to challenge the status quo. Our
20 children deserve at least that.

21
22 Seeing that a child’s school has a failing grade would certainly serve as
23 a wake-up call to parents – it would motivate them to get more involved
24 in their child’s school. And since no community wants to be the home of
25 a failed school, the local community would quickly become involved in
26 improving these failing schools.

27
28 And when we hear people complain that we can’t reform education
29 because it is just too hard, or too complicated to make things better, I
30 want you to remember that it was Mark Twain who once said, “Few
31 things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.”
32 I want you to think about Bessemer Elementary School in Pueblo.

33
34 In just three years Bessemer raised its third grade reading scores from 12
35 percent proficiency to 74 percent proficiency. What a remarkable
36 accomplishment for their students, and what an “annoyance” to those
37 who argue for the status quo.

38
39 The principal of Bessemer, Gary Trujillo, is here with us today.

40
41 I also want to reward our top performing schools by allowing them to be
42 free of these rules and regulations that stifle innovation. Public schools
43 that have proven they can achieve education excellence should be granted
44 a waiver from state red tape.

45
46 While rewarding excellence, we must also work to prevent public school
47 failure. President John Kennedy said, “A child miseducated is a child
48 lost.” Friends, we cannot afford to lose even one child – let alone
49 thousands of children. But when one out of every two Hispanic students
50 who enters the first grade drops out of school before graduating from the
51 twelfth grade, we are losing too many children.

52
53 We must help those students consigned to failing schools. My plan will
54 do that. First, any low-income parent whose school’s overall academic
55 performance is graded a D or below on a School Report Card will
56 become eligible for a transportation token. The parents will use these

1 transportation tokens to help offset the cost of transporting their child to
2 a better public school. These tokens will finally help make public school
3 choice a reality in Colorado.

4
5 We must take an additional step with the handful of schools across
6 Colorado that will get an overall academic grade of "F." We are not
7 talking about hundreds of schools, just the relative handful of Colorado's
8 worst schools. These are the schools that consistently fail with few
9 prospects for improvement.

10
11 The evidence is clear that if a child receives a poor education three years
12 in a row, that student will never catch up. So to say to a child: "We
13 know your school has failed, but we are content to wait years for it to
14 improve," is to risk condemning that child to a lifetime of failure.

15
16 Therefore, Colorado should no longer leave even one child in a failed
17 school. Any poor child in a failed school should be able to use
18 transportation tokens to transfer to a better public school. And for those
19 who choose to remain, the State should convert the failed school into an
20 *Independent Charter School*.

21
22 The State Board of Education will select – through a competitive bid
23 process – public, private, for-profit or non-profit groups with successful
24 track records to come in and implement proven management, academic
25 and operating programs in the school. The failed school will be
26 converted to an *Independent Charter School*. This will free the new
27 management to put in place necessary reforms, including staff changes
28 and curriculum improvements.

29
30 When we hold our schools more accountable, we must ensure that they
31 have the tools to succeed. That is why my reform plan also calls for \$4
32 million dollars in grants for professional development for teachers. These
33 grants will go to individual schools for the principals to improve teacher
34 training and development.

35
36 There are, however, those teachers who would perhaps be better suited
37 for a different profession. Therefore, my plan calls for replacing teacher
38 tenure for all newly hired teachers. I believe that teacher tenure has
39 outlived its original purpose and today serves to protect a relative few
40 teachers at the expense of not only their colleagues, but also the children
41 that they are entrusted to educate. Therefore, I believe that in the future,
42 all new teachers should be hired on contracts that give school districts
43 more flexibility in the retention and dismissal of teachers.

44
45 I cannot discuss education in Colorado without mentioning higher
46 education. The importance of higher education for future generations is
47 growing every day, particularly as technology advances literally at the
48 speed of light. But in order to keep up with these technological advances,
49 again, students must have a clear and solid grasp of the keys to education
50 – reading, writing and mathematics. In fact, many of today's high tech
51 courses don't necessarily require a high-tech background, but instead they
52 require reading, writing and math skills, as well as some basic computer
53 skills.

54
55 That is why I am proposing – in my education reform bill – a required
56 exam for sophomores in college that would test their understanding of the

1 basics. I am pleased to report that the Commission on Higher Education
2 is moving forward to implement these tests. It is my hope that Colorado's
3 fine colleges and universities will be able to deliver these tests in an
4 efficient manner.

5
6 All of these proposals are part of a larger vision – seeing that every child
7 in Colorado receives the quality education they deserve. I am pleased
8 that Senator Norma Anderson and Representative Debbie Allen will
9 sponsor this education reform effort. The passage of this legislation is
10 my highest priority.

11
12 Today I make this commitment – I will not waver in my dedication to
13 transforming our public schools into centers of educational excellence.
14 *Every single child* in Colorado – regardless of race, income, background
15 or geography – deserves a quality teacher, a safe and orderly school, and
16 an education that prepares them to succeed.

17
18 We spend more than \$2 billion dollars of state money alone every year
19 on our public schools. The time has come to stand up, to be bold and to
20 demand more from our investment in education. Therefore, before
21 signing into law the next School Finance Act, I hope that this General
22 Assembly will have first sent to my desk education reform bills that truly
23 put children first.

24
25 Let me be clear: Without reforms such as these in place, it will be
26 difficult for me to merely sign a School Finance Act that would continue
27 the status quo. The status quo is no longer acceptable.

28
29 When it comes to education reform and this session of the Legislature, I
30 think most Coloradans will agree with Andrew Carnegie when he said,
31 “As I grow older I pay less attention to what people say. I just watch
32 what they do.”

33
34 And so this year, my friends, Colorado will pay less attention to what we
35 *say* about education reform and more attention to what we *do* about
36 education reform.

37
38 Conclusion

39 Ladies and gentlemen, we have worked hard to build a promising future.
40 Today, from Grand Junction to Burlington, more people are working.
41 Today, from Alamosa to Pueblo, our schools are striving for excellence.
42 Today, from Gunnison to Sterling, Colorado families are able to keep
43 more of their hard-earned dollars by paying less in taxes.

44
45 We certainly have a lot to be proud of, but we cannot be content. The
46 agenda I have outlined today is bold, broad and ambitious. I want to
47 reach out my hand to everyone here – in both Houses, in both parties –
48 and ask you to join me in saying to all Coloradans that we will work
49 together to make Colorado an even better place to live and raise a family
50 – and that we will accept nothing less.

51
52 Let's show the people who hired us – the people of Colorado – what we
53 can accomplish when we work together with a shared vision. With
54 energy, dedication, and resolution I ask you to join me in saving what is
55 best about Colorado and improving the rest.

56

1 Thank you, God bless you, and may God bless the great State of
2 Colorado.

3
4
5 On motion of Senator Blickensderfer, the Joint Session was dissolved.

6
7
8 House reconvened.

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS
First Reading

The following bills were read by title and referred to the committees indicated:

HB00-1129 by Representative Zimmerman--Concerning the decrease of the privatization of the regional transportation district's bus service operations.
Committee on Local Government

HB00-1130 by Representative Chavez--Concerning a prohibition on open alcoholic containers in motor vehicles.
Committee on Transportation & Energy

HB00-1131 by Representatives Ragsdale, Coleman, Larson--Concerning enforcement of the offense of failure to wear a motor vehicle safety belt.
Committee on Transportation & Energy

HB00-1132 by Representatives Coleman, Ragsdale--Concerning a reduction of the alcohol content level required for certain offenses.
Committee on Transportation & Energy

HB00-1133 by Representative Kaufman--Concerning the department of corrections.
Committee on Judiciary

HB00-1134 by Representative McElhany--Concerning the exclusion of certain individuals from the definition of "resident individual" for purposes of Colorado individual income taxation.
Committee on Finance

HB00-1135 by Representative Allen--Concerning the refunding of excess state revenues through the use of state sales and use tax holidays during which the state sales and use tax shall not be imposed except in specified circumstances.
Committee on Finance

HB00-1136 by Representative Tapia--Concerning the creation of the learning improvement grant program for public schools.
Committee on Education

- 1 **HB00-1137** by Representative McElhany--Concerning the licensure of
- 2 real estate appraisers.
- 3 Committee on Business Affairs & Labor
- 4
- 5 **HB00-1138** by Representative Leyba--Concerning limitations on civil
- 6 liability of foster care providers for the actions of the
- 7 foster children in their care.
- 8 Committee on Judiciary
- 9
- 10 **HB00-1139** By Representatives Mace, Tapia, and Williams S., Tapia,
- 11 Williams S.--Concerning the appointment of guardians for
- 12 minors.
- 13 Committee on Judiciary
- 14
- 15 **HB00-1140** by Representative McPherson--Concerning the accurate
- 16 measurement of value used to assess vehicle taxes.
- 17 Committee on Finance
- 18 Committee on Appropriations
- 19
- 20 **HB00-1141** by Representatives Dean, George, Spradley, Gordon; also
- 21 Senators Blickensderfer, Powers, Feeley--Concerning the
- 22 clarification of statutes relating to the conduct of interim
- 23 activities of the general assembly.
- 24 Committee on State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

Correction

H.J. page 26, after line 7, insert:

INTRODUCTION OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

The following resolution was read by title and referred to the committee indicated:

- 37 **HCR00-1001** by Representative Fairbank; also Senator Anderson--
- 38 Concerning the submission to the registered electors of the
- 39 state of Colorado of an amendment to section 8 of article
- 40 XIV of the constitution of the state of Colorado, which
- 41 requires the selection of county surveyors by election, to
- 42 also allow the appointment of county surveyors.
- 43 Committee on Local Government

44
45
46 On motion of Representative Spradley, the House adjourned until

47 9:00 a.m., January 7, 2000.

Approved:

RUSSELL GEORGE,
Speaker

Attest:

JUDITH RODRIGUE,
Chief Clerk