



The Bell Policy Center

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1905 Sherman St., Suite 900, Denver, Colo. 80203 • 303-297-0456

www.bellpolicy.org

Fiscal Notes on Interim Committee Bills

HB15-1335

Rich Jones, Director of Policy and Research
Testimony to the House Finance Committee
April 22, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to the committee today.

I am Rich Jones, the director of policy and research with the Bell Policy Center. The Bell is a non-partisan, non-profit research and advocacy organization founded on progressive values and dedicated to making Colorado a state of opportunity for all.

The Bell Policy Center supports House Bill 15-1335 to require that the legislative service agency provide fiscal notes on legislative measures considered by interim committees. The notes will be provided with sufficient time for the members to consider the fiscal impacts of the proposed legislation before the final vote of the interim committee. This will provide lawmakers and the public with more complete and accurate information on interim committee proposals, improve the work of the interim committees and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the interim committee process.

In recent years, we have been actively involved in the work of several interim committees. We conducted research on issues, offered language for draft legislation and talked with lawmakers to gain support for the proposals. At times, we and the lawmakers were not fully aware of the fiscal impacts of the various proposals under discussion and the suggested changes to these proposals. As a result, the work of the interim committees was less thorough and effective than it could have been.

Lawmakers were understandably reluctant to commit to supporting measures until they reviewed a fiscal note so they could better understand the fiscal implications of the proposals. Because fiscal notes are not available until the bill is introduced in the legislative session, the interim committees had less thorough deliberations of the issues than would be possible with this information. Having fiscal notes available on interim committee bills will result in better legislation being introduced at the start of the legislation session.

In addition to having the fiscal notes available before the final vote of the interim committee, it would be helpful to have this information available at the meeting when the interim committees consider final language for their proposals. This is usually the next-to-last meeting of interim

committees. If available at this time, the committee could consider possible revisions to the proposals to address the information presented in the fiscal note, similar to the way committees work during the legislative session.

We thank Rep. Sias for bringing this bill to you today.

I am available to answer any questions you may have on this bill.