

## **2020 Colorado General Assembly Wrap-up by Dan Jablan, Shelly Kalkowski and Robby Robinson**

- On Monday June 15, 2020, the 2020 Colorado General Assembly adjourned for the year. During its 20-day second act -- including what used to be rare Saturday (and Sunday) sessions -- the legislature operated with remarkable focus, efficiency and largely across partisan lines to pass the budget, the School Finance Act, a long list of “orbital” bills balancing the state budget, sweeping police reform, bills which were still in process when the session was truncated in March and legislation to address impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Legislation that was adopted during the final week was substantial and included:
  - The repeal of several CARES Act tax breaks.
  - State budget cuts including K-12 funding by \$621 million and \$598 million from higher education and eliminates a \$225 million payment into the state employee retirement fund.
  - School Finance Act.
  - Legislation making it more difficult for parents to claim vaccine exemptions.
  - Police Accountability and Transparency Act which, among other things, bans the use of chokeholds.
  - Extended to-go alcohol sales by restaurants.
  - Increased unemployment insurance contributions.
  - Allocated \$70 million in federal dollars for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, small business grants, rent and mortgage assistance, a fund to prevent utility shutoffs and a new public-private fund to support loans to small businesses.
- With regard to the UVC specific legislative initiatives, the following bills were lost: Disabled Veteran Registration Fees and Ownership Tax; Veterans Community Living Center Services Assessment, Veterans Hiring Preference, Mobile Veteran Support Unit Grant Program, Property Tax Exemption Value Adjustment and Women Veteran Disability License Plate. Additionally, to help meet the budget reduction requirement, the General Assembly transferred money from the Veterans Trust Fund, Veterans Assistance Grant Program Fund and the Ft Logan Sale Capital Construction fund. They also withdrew the \$3.5 million general fund contribution to direct care staff salary increases at the Veterans Community Living Centers.
- On the brighter side, we were able to get the following legislation passed: A bill to make it easier to allow abandoned veteran cremains to be interred in a national cemetery, a bill to provide in-state tuition rates for military and families at community colleges, a bill to provide free state park passes for members of the National Guard, a bill to provide a free transferable state parks pass to disabled veterans and bills to provide new State Awards and minimum State pay to members of the National Guard.