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SENATOR EVIE HUDAK

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— PRESERVING OUR COMMUNITY, PROTECTING OUR FAMILIES —

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A Balancing Act



Evie Hudak
Senator SD 19

The 2011 session of the Colorado Legislature, my third year as your State Senator, was a “balancing act” in many ways. With a Democratic majority in the Senate and a Republican majority in the House, the 68th General Assembly was contentious at times. Faced with a revenue shortfall for the third year in a row, passing a balanced budget was a challenge both fiscally and politically.

Senate Democrats vowed to do everything possible to reduce cuts to schools and fight for Colorado families and businesses across the state. We worked with Republicans and found ways to reach a compromise on the budget, stimulate job growth, keep our state competitive in the clean technology industry, and at the same time ensure the security of Colorado’s economic future.

On the other hand, Congressional redistricting, which the Legislature is required to do every 10 years following the census, was not successful. The Senate Democrats proposed a map that would have kept Colorado politically balanced, with competitive districts that have a similar number of registered Republicans, Democrats, and unaffiliated voters. Unfortunately, the House would not accept this plan. As a result, for the fourth time in a row, the decision will have to be made in the courts.



Senator Evie Hudak with a student
from North Arvada Middle School.

As a former teacher and member of the State Board of Education, I knew that my focus during the 2011 legislative session needed to be on ensuring that our children have the resources they need to succeed. With the substantial budget cuts made to education, I worked to keep our education system effective, accountable, productive, and financially sound.

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As your State Senator, I believe my responsibility includes providing information you need to be an informed and involved citizen. To that end, in addition to delivering this free newsletter to you annually, I make the following available to you:

Monthly **Town Hall Meetings** at **Standley Lake Library**, 8485 Kipling Street, on the **3rd Saturday** of each month, January through November, from **10:30 a.m. to noon**.

Monthly **Legislative Coffees** at **Panera Bread**, 7739 Wadsworth Blvd., on the **1st Thursday** of each month, **7:15-8:15 a.m.** from January to May and **7:30-9:00 a.m.** from June to December.

My **Senate Notes** newsletter sent out via **e-mail** twice a month (if you would like to receive this electronic newsletter, send me an e-mail with your name, home address, and e-mail address).

Giving All Coloradans A Voice

Our population is constantly changing, which is why the U.S. Constitution requires states to redraw legislative and Congressional districts every 10 years. Colorado's population grew by nearly 17% since 2000.

Our State Constitution requires an independent, bipartisan commission to draw new districts for the State Senate and State House of Representatives, a process called "reapportionment."

The 11 members of the Reapportionment Commission are appointed by the Governor, the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, and leaders from both parties and houses of the Legislature. For information about both redistricting and reapportionment, go to the State's website, www.colorado.gov, put "reapportionment" in the Search box, and then click on "CGA-ReDistrict Website - Redistricting and Reapportionment."

Senate District 19 needs to add approximately 23,000 voters. By 2012, our district and our precincts will be different.

FIGHTING FOR EDUCATION

When the 2011 legislative session began, the Governor's proposed budget included \$332 million in cuts to K-12 education. We were able to reduce that to \$227 million – the equivalent of 1,700 school jobs! More education funding is likely if state revenue continues to increase.

Additionally, we fully funded the current enrollment in full-day kindergarten and the Colorado Preschool Program. We saved the Read to Achieve program and the School Counselor Corps. We also passed **SB 109, Public Education Tax Check-Off**, to allow Coloradans to support early childhood education and after-school programs by adding a voluntary donation option on Colorado tax returns.

Knowing that we may face even more difficult times in the future, we prepared by maintaining a \$100 million balance in the State Education Fund, a savings account for future education spending.

SENATOR HUDAK's contributions to improving education during the 2011 legislative session included:

- **SB 29, State Land Board Annual Reports**, provides the education community with easy access to information about this source of school



Governor Hickenlooper signs into law Senator Hudak's bill, SB 29 (see middle column below).

funding that comes from millions of acres of state lands.

- **SB 100, Council of Higher Education Representatives**, preserves the council that approves courses for guaranteed transfer of credits among colleges in Colorado.
- **SB 133, Discipline in Public Schools**, creates a task force to review school discipline policies to determine how to keep schools safe while reducing the number of children entering the juvenile justice system.
- **SB 240, Review of Private Occupational Schools**, requires state review of the policies and procedures of the board that oversees dozens of private technical and occupational colleges.
- **HB 1126, Parent Involvement in Public Schools**, provides parents with more opportunities to get involved in improving struggling schools.

A FAIR DEAL— BIPARTISAN AGREEMENT AND COMPROMISE

One significant success of the session was the bipartisan agreement on **SB 200, Colorado Health Benefit Exchange Act**. This allows our state to implement provisions of federal health care reform. It will help hundreds of thousands of Coloradans and small businesses purchase health insurance through a single marketplace.



Senator Hudak chairing the Senate's Joint Transportation Committee.

We passed **HB 1035, Blue Book Information Statement**, which will help Colorado voters make informed choices about proposed changes to state law. The information in the "Blue Book," the ballot information booklet mailed to all voters before each election, will now state who is responsible for placing each measure on the ballot and who

drafted the text. This information has not been easily accessible in the past.

SB 184, Tax Amnesty, increases funding for Colorado schools by providing late taxpayers a period of tax amnesty during 60 days this autumn during October and November. It also makes the

state's tax system more transparent. This bill is expected to generate approximately \$9.5 million.

The biggest achievement of the session was the passage of a **balanced budget**. The Joint Budget Committee, split evenly with three members from each party and each house, was initially unable to produce a proposal for the budget. The Senate Democrats took the lead to reach out to Republicans to create a compromise budget. The House and the Governor concurred. The delay in reaching a compromise was fortunate, because the revenue forecast reported in the midst of the process showed that the shortfall would be a third less than originally expected.

A STEADY PAYCHECK

The average personal income in our state continues to increase, but many people are still seeking employment. In 2011, we made great gains in creating opportunities for new jobs with these bills:



SB 47, Colorado Clean Technology Innovation Reinvestment Act, creates high-paying jobs in bioscience and clean technology, Colorado's

fastest-growing fields. It will help our state stay competitive by providing funding to support innovative industries and new start-up companies.

HB 1083, Hydroelectricity Jobs Investment Act, promotes hydroelectricity, a clean energy source that will increase Colorado's energy independence and improve economic opportunities in the state by allowing public utility commissions to consider using pumped hydroelectricity.

HB 1160, Green Building Incentive Program, creates construction jobs by offering incentives for energy-efficiency improvements to be made to existing homes that currently have home energy ratings below minimum standards.

HB 1209, Small Business Navigator, creates a small business assistance center in the Office of Economic Development to expedite the process of starting a small business by providing a single point of contact and streamlining referrals to credit information.

PUTTING KIDS FIRST



Senator Hudak chairs a mock legislative committee for "Girls With Goals."

We need to provide our children with every opportunity to grow and thrive in safe, stable environments. Several new laws passed this year will improve children's lives:

SB 34, Requiring Reporting of Abuse and Neglect, requires educators who provide services through the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

SB 40, Youth Concussion Act, protects young athletes by requiring coaches of youth athletic activities to complete annual concussion-recognition education and to remove injured athletes from play until cleared by a health care provider.

SB 128, Child-Only Health Insurance Plans, ensures that Colorado children will have better access to health care by requiring all health insurance companies to offer child-only health insurance plans. This will allow parents to keep their children healthy even if they cannot afford health insurance for themselves.

HB 1254, Preventing Bullying in Schools, creates a grant program to help schools address bullying problems; adds electronic forms of bullying to the definition; encourages school officials to conduct surveys of students on bullying

and to designate a team of professionals to develop and implement effective solutions to bullying.

SENATOR HUDAK's 2011 legislative contributions to improving the lives of Colorado's children include:

- **SB 227, Repeal Exception to Child Restraint Law**, repeals an exception to state law on child restraint systems in motor vehicles so that all children under the age of 8 riding in the back seat of a car must be in a child restraint system, even if the vehicle was not manufactured with seat belts.
- **HB 1014, Child Care Contribution Tax Credit**, eliminates the ban on the child care tax credit being given in any year that the state's General Fund increases less than 6% over the previous year; and restores state funding for the tax credit gradually, beginning in 2013.

COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY –

I'm honored to have been elected to represent you in the State Senate. I strive to create and support legislation that benefits our community. We live in a diverse state, and each of us has different talents, opinions, and interests. I participate in numerous community organizations and attend

many community events to stay in touch with you.

Please feel free to e-mail me at any time at senatorhudak@gmail.com; phone me at **303-866-4840**; visit my website www.eviehudak.com; or arrange to meet with me at my office in the Capitol, **Room 330**.



Senator Hudak and City Councilwoman Mary Lindsey celebrate Westminster's 100th birthday.

No taxpayer dollars were used to produce this publication.

Thanks to the many dedicated volunteers who helped deliver it to the people of Senate District 19.