



Senator Joyce Foster

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"My strength has always been that I bring people together to find common sense, effective solutions to tough problems. I bring a willingness to listen to all sides and relentless determination to bring all sides to reasonable answers and action."

6° of Separation: A Connected Colorado

At the close of the 2011 legislative session, the third year I have served in the Senate, I pause to reflect on what makes Colorado such a magnificent place to live, and on what we at the legislature have done to honor and uphold the quality of life Coloradans cherish.

Making laws is a complex process, and we deal with extremely complex issues that affect everyone who lives in this state, and everyone who may one day call Colorado home.

Bipartisan Balancing Act

In Colorado, we balance our budget every year. That means no deficit and no debt. This year, we faced a staggering budget shortfall, and we successfully came up with a budget compromise that both parties in both chambers supported.

The 2011-12 state budget is costing Colorado about \$7.01 billion. That's a big number, but let's put it in

When considering how to vote on any issue, I contemplate how to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people, and how to keep this the greatest state in the USA. And when I think about how a bill might affect you and me, this community, or that community, I often find myself in awe of just how connected we all are.

By putting kids first and fighting for education, we kept teachers in classrooms across Colorado. By saving teachers' jobs, we helped students continue to excel in

perspective. Colorado's total economic activity is \$252 billion. For every dollar of economic activity that occurs in our state, we spend about 2.5 cents to fund our schools, health care system, judicial system, and other state departments. Most of Colorado's General Fund spending goes to the "Big Six" departments: K-12 Education, Health Care Policy and Financing, Higher Education,

school. Many students will be better able to thrive because we ensured their parents can continue to earn a steady paycheck. And we made sure that all Coloradans can get a fair deal, so we can all live here with peace of mind and a general sense of stability.

We truly are all in this together, and I am so grateful for your participation.

Human Services, Judicial, and Corrections.

That means most of our budget goes toward kids and families, preparing our future workforce, keeping Coloradans healthy, seeking justice, and building safe communities.





Here is the teacher whose job we saved because we fought for education.

Fighting for Education

When the 2011 session began, Senate Democrats made a pledge to do everything possible to reduce cuts to schools. We found savings for every student in public schools in Colorado and reduced the proposed cuts to education by more than \$100 million. **That's the equivalent of 1,741 school jobs or 1.4 million books in the classroom.**

We also fully-funded preschool and full-day Kindergarten.

Knowing that we may face even more difficult times ahead, we prepared by maintaining a four percent reserve and keeping a minimum \$100 million balance in the State Education Fund, a savings account for future education spending. Additionally, we

saved the Read to Achieve program, which helps struggling students learn reading comprehension skills so they have a better shot at lifelong success.

We also passed a Public Education Fund Tax Check-off to allow Coloradans to support early childhood education by adding a voluntary donation option on Colorado tax returns.



By fighting to protect that teacher's job, we continued to support meaningful learning experiences for this student.

Putting Kids First

We owe it to our kids to give them every opportunity to grow and excel in safe and stable environments.

We passed several bills to champion children in our state. **Senate Bill 40** protects our young athletes by requiring coaches of youth athletic activities to complete annual concussions recognition

education and by requiring coaches to remove an athlete from play until he or she has been cleared by a health care provider.

Senate Bill 128 keeps children healthy by requiring all health insurance companies to offer child-only health insurance plans so parents can keep their children healthy even if they

cannot afford health insurance for themselves.

Senate Bill 133 reduces dropout rates and increases graduation rates, makes schools safer and more effective, reduces the number of kids entering the juvenile justice system, saves taxpayer dollars, and builds healthy communities.



That student will be better able to thrive because we ensured that his parents, who are small-business-owners, can continue to earn a steady paycheck.

A Steady Paycheck

For all of us, knowing we can count on a steady paycheck means knowing we can keep food on the table and a roof over our heads. The average personal income in our state continues to increase, and we will continue to craft legislation that creates careers for Coloradans.

The Hydroelectricity Jobs Investment Act (House Bill 1083) creates jobs, improves economic

opportunities, and increases our energy independence by promoting hydroelectricity.

The Green Building Incentive Program (House Bill 1160) will create construction jobs by offering grants for energy efficiency upgrades to homes.

House Bill 1209 creates a Small Business Navigator to expedite the process of assisting small businesses.

Senate Bill 47 creates jobs and expands economic development by promoting bioscience and clean technology—two of our fastest-growing sectors.

House Bill 1045 creates new Colorado companies and jobs by increasing access to capital through angel investors. Encourages angel investors to invest in start-up companies by providing an income tax credit.

A Fair Deal

A fair deal means protecting you. Creating a fair and equitable atmosphere for life and business means less worry for you and the more time you can spend with your families.

The **Colorado Taxpayer Empowerment Act** (Senate Bill 25) increases transparency on public contracts so taxpayers can better examine privatized government functions.

Senate Bill 200 helps individuals and small businesses compare and purchase health insurance by establishing the Colorado Health Exchange, a single marketplace or “one stop shopping” for health insurance.

House Bill 1035 empowers Colorado voters to make informed choices by providing the necessary information to consider

proposed changes to state law.

The **Veterans’ Employment Act** requires the State of Colorado to consider an applicant’s military education, training, or service when considering an applicant’s qualifications to receive a professional license or certification.



In addition to a steady paycheck, all Coloradans deserve a fair deal. Here are those parents’ neighbors.

Giving All Coloradans a Voice

Our population is constantly changing. Colorado’s population grew by 16.8 percent since 2000. In view of this fact, the US Constitution requires state legislatures to redraw congressional boundaries every 10 years. The Senate Democrats proposed a map that keeps Colorado connected and competitive, and gives a voice to all

Coloradans.

Competitive districts have a similar number of registered Republicans, Democrats, and unaffiliated voters, so elected officials can be held accountable. Our proposal would not divide cities, rural counties, transportation corridors, or economic development corridors. It would preserve

communities of interest, provide a greater reflection of water basins, and keep districts more compact than the current districts.

Unfortunately, the House and Senate could not reach agreement on a map prior to the session ending, so the maps will be decided by the courts for the fourth time in as many decades.



These are the Colorado farmers who grow much of our food. We fought to give them, and all of the people in rural and metro areas, a choice and a voice.

I’m for Our Community

I am honored to serve in the Senate, and I strive to create legislation and make decisions that will benefit our community.

We live in a beautiful and diverse state, and each of us shares different insights, brings special talents, and offers a unique voice. Our Colorado community would not be the same without

each of you, and I am so grateful to be a part of it.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to best represent the needs of our community, and of our state as a whole.

Together, we have accomplished a great deal toward rising out of the recession, protecting jobs,

our economy, our children, and our education system. Together, we have empowered Coloradans to earn a steady paycheck, to be informed voters, and to hold elected officials accountable to all voters.

Read on to learn more about the specific ways I worked to better our community this year.



This is our Colorado community. We are all connected.

200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
303.866.4875

JoyceFoster.com
Joyce.Foster.Senate@state.co.us
ColoradoSenate.org



Here's how I helped build and shape our community:

HB 1196: Flexibility in Funding Family Services

Protects struggling Colorado families by allowing counties to provide family preservation services when abuse or neglect is suspected before the family enters the child welfare, mental health, or juvenile justice systems.

HB 1113: Impact Fees Transparency

Creates greater transparency in county and municipal governments who charge an impact fee by requiring them to provide concise, dollar-by-dollar information on how the fee is spent.

HB 1031: Creative Districts

Creates jobs and drives economic development by allowing counties and municipalities to form creative districts.

SB 86: Appeal Periods & Local Sales Use Tax

Helps taxpayers cut through red tape and bureaucracy when requesting a tax dispute hearing from local counties or municipalities.

SB 123: Technical Changes Child Support Process

Helps children thrive by making changes to the child support process to provide a more efficient and effective system.