

Scores of new laws take effect

Affordable housing and lured bears: Over 200 new statutes start today

BY SETH KLAMANN

SKLAMANN@DENVERPOST.COM

Dozens of new laws take effect in Colorado today as part of state lawmakers' efforts to increase the safety of ride-hailing apps, improve affordable housing development and curb Coloradans from leaving out trash that could lure bears.

Today marks three months since the 2026 legislative session concluded, meaning it's a standard start date for legislation that either didn't take effect immediately or doesn't have a specific start date. More than 200 new laws take effect in whole or in part — a tally that would've been even larger were it not for Gov. Jared Polis' record 11 vetoes this year.

Under the new laws, school districts are required to begin testing the vision of prekindergarten students. An existing tax credit, available to people who donate to nonprofits tackling homelessness, gets a multiyear extension. Colorado gamblers can no longer use credit cards to deposit money into sports betting apps, and their deposits will be limited to six per day.

A regulatory review process prized by business groups rolls into effect, requiring state agencies to more regularly examine their rules and report their findings back to lawmakers. New parents who wish to relinquish their child to hospitals voluntarily, firefighters or a community emergency center can now do so for 30 days after the child's birth without facing a child abuse charge. House Bill 1342 makes it a misdemeanor offense to knowingly place food or edible trash in the open "in circumstances where there is a reasonable probability of luring a wild bear." Senate Bill 132 requires law enforcement to offer voluntary alcohol breath tests for drivers involved in a crash that kill or seriously injured someone else. That law is named for Magnus White, a bicyclist who was struck and killed in Boulder County in 2023.

Here are some of the other laws taking effect Wednesday:

Social media search warrants

In the wake of a 2025 veto and the subsequent shooting at Evergreen High School in Jefferson County, Colorado lawmakers this year passed Senate Bill 11. The law requires social media companies with more than 1 million monthly users to set up "streamlined" processes for law enforcement to contact the companies about search warrants. The companies generally are required to comply with search warrants within 72 hours and to provide regular updates about the warrants' status.

Polis vetoed a more sweeping version of the bill, which included other regulations on social media companies, last year, and he also vetoed another version of SB 11 after the legislative session adjourned in May.

Lawmakers had vowed to bring back the 2025 proposal even before the Evergreen shooting, in which two students were wounded and the shooter died by suicide. After the September 2025 shooting, law enforcement said the social media companies were slow to produce information about the shooter's online profiles, which included posts idolizing of other mass shooters.

Slowing scams of vulnerable adults

Under House Bill 1110, banks in Colorado now can delay providing funds to vulnerable adults, meaning those over age 70 or who are otherwise "susceptible to mistreatment or self-neglect" because of their health status. The law is aimed at blunting financial scams that often target older adults, which frequently include prompting victims to withdraw large sums of money at once.

The bipartisan law also requires certain bank employees to report potential exploitation to law enforcement or other local authorities.

Protections for Colorado ag products

Counterfeit Palisade peaches' days are numbered.

Under House Bill 1031, only agricultural products actually grown in Colorado can be identified and advertised as Colorado-raised. It also prohibits companies or growers from using the "Colorado Proud" designation or logo — a program of the state Department of Agriculture — unless the ag agency gives them permission.

Violations of the law are a deceptive trade practice, which can be investigated by the state attorney general's office.

New safety rules for ride-hailing companies

For the second year, lawmakers weighed new safety requirements for ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft. House Bill 1424 implements a number of new rules, including specific background check rules, amid ongoing scrutiny into the companies' handling of sexual misconduct by their drivers. Many of those new requirements don't kick in until Jan. 1.

But as of Wednesday, the companies will be required to review drivers who have been the subject of a complaint, either from a rider or from the state Public Utilities Commission. That review may lead to the driver's suspension from the app. The companies also will be required to conduct these deactivation reviews if they're notified by law enforcement that the driver has "serious felony allegations," House Democrats said in a news release. That includes charges of sexual misconduct or stalking.

Affordable housing

The first bill introduced in the upper chamber this year, Senate Bill 1 gives county and municipal governments the authority to sell their buildings and other property — other than parks — if the land is going to be used for affordable housing or another identified local housing need.

The bipartisan law also gives county commissioners the ability to use certain local tax revenue for workforce housing and other housing programs.

Discrimination in schools

Amid the Trump administration's gutting of the U.S. Department of Education, House Bill 1141 expands Colorado's existing anti-discrimination laws to include discriminatory practices in K-12 schools, as well as institutions of higher education. The law prohibits excluding students from activities and programs, teaching students differently than their similar peers, and failing to take steps to stop hostile environments, among other protections.

It also expands anti-harassment rules to include students who are pregnant, and it seeks to add existing federal civil rights protections and processes for higher-ed students into Colorado's statute book.

"As the Trump administration slashes funding for the federal Office of Civil Rights, the time is now to strengthen civil rights protections to protect students in Colorado," Rep. Jennifer Bacon, a Denver Democrat who sponsored the law, said in a statement. "Our schools should be a safe place for students to learn and grow, and together we're creating a positive learning environment for all students."

2020-10-22