

Polis signs bill; critics say more reforms are needed

METRO DISTRICTS

By David Migoya

The Denver Post

Gov. Jared Polis on Monday signed into law a bill that makes substantive changes to how metro districts operate in Colorado, but not as many as reformists have called for.

Senate Bill 262 requires districts to inform residents about upcoming board-of-director elections so they can better participate in a process many have said they felt excluded from. Additionally, the new law mandates that potential buyers be told of the extra tax burdens they will take on by purchasing a home in a district.

Long before any homes are built, district boards are typically controlled by developers who approve bonds that will reimburse them for infrastructure construction and are to be repaid by future homeowners for decades.

“The governor’s signature on this bill puts the final touch on a legislative process in which all stakeholders successfully provided input along the way,” co-sponsor Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, an Arvada Democrat, said in a statement. “I’m proud to have crafted legislation that addresses so many obvious problems, that provides transparency to a complex situation, while still supporting a valuable sector of our business community.”

The bill was largely the work of the Metro District Education Coalition, a group of developers, businessmen and attorneys associated with district construction.

But the bipartisan bill was not well-met by members of Coloradoans for Metro District Reform, a grass-roots group of residents who say the measure was merely window dressing to more pressing issues they face.

“CMDR represents metro district residents and concerned citizens committed to eliminating taxation without representation and other root causes of fraud, waste and abuse that drive up the property taxes and fees collected by metro districts,” member Jim Gibson wrote Polis in a plea for him to veto the bill.

“CMDR is very concerned that this bill, if signed, will send a message to the legislature that the problem has been solved, making future authentic reform that much more difficult.”

The group said it will press for legislation in the next session that will tackle many of the issues raised in Denver Post stories, which prompted the new law as well. *David Migoya: 303-954-1506, dmigoya@denverpost.com or [@davidmigoya](https://twitter.com/davidmigoya)*

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