

# 2018 Session Priorities

## Representative Chris Kennedy

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This is a challenging time for our country with a great deal of uncertainty about the future of federal policy, but here in Colorado we must keep moving forward. Our economy is booming, but our rapid growth and high cost of living are making it difficult for hard-working, middle class families to stay afloat. I will be focusing most of my energy this upcoming session on affordable health care and affordable housing.

I will also be working together with my colleagues on a variety of other big priorities including strengthening our public education system, accelerating our transition to renewable energy, investing in transportation and broadband infrastructure, protecting the equal rights of all our people, addressing the sustainability of our public employee retirement system, and working to eliminate sexual harassment from the workplace. It's going to be a busy session!

### Affordable Health Care

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we've made great progress on expanding access to health care. Now it's time to get serious about controlling costs. In June, the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care concluded three years of work and issued its final report on what's been driving the cost increases. Unfortunately, part of their conclusion was that we don't have enough data to really know. That's why my #1 priority is to **increase transparency in health care spending**. I am sponsoring a bill (again) to require our hospitals to submit more data to the state so we can analyze both price and utilization trends and identify changes to reduce costs. I am also supporting a similar bill to increase pharmaceutical cost transparency.

Over the last few years, we've seen **free-standing emergency departments** spring up all over the Denver metro area. Sure, these facilities increase access to emergency services, but at what cost? Consumers are often faced with surprise out-of-network bills and the high operational costs are passed along to the rest of us in our increased premiums and deductibles. I am working with a bipartisan group of legislators on a trio of bills that will improve disclosures to patients, better track expenses, and create a more appropriate license type that comes with more appropriate regulations for these facilities.

Lastly, I will be continuing the work we started with the opioid interim committee to pass **a package of six bills to address Colorado's opioid epidemic** by improving prevention education, limiting prescriptions, removing payment barriers in our insurance and Medicaid systems, and more.

### Affordable Housing

Growth. It's happening, and it's our job to make sure it happens responsibly. That means investing in transportation infrastructure and protecting our open spaces and public lands. Most of all, it means incentivizing and requiring the inclusion of a significant number of affordable units in new construction projects. We must also improve renters' rights, and I'll be (again) sponsoring a bill to **limit rental application fees to the actual costs** so that landlords aren't profiting by taking applications for units they never intend to lease.

Last but not least, I am taking a hard look at various senior tax exemptions and credits and exploring ways to reform them to **give more support to seniors who own or rent** so they can stay in their homes.