

## On the side

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### Can we quote you on that?

"I hope the students figure out what we do here because the members have been wondering what it is we do for about 90 days."

*House Speaker Andrew Romanoff, D-Denver*

"I like to joke that we are the exact opposite of Lake Wobegon, where everybody is above average. Everybody is below average."

*Rep. Bernie Buescher, D-Grand Junction, about the pleas of college administrators for more money*

## UNDER THE DOME

### Ethics-panel plan advances

A bill that would set up a five-member panel to hear alleged violations of Colorado's new ethics law advanced through a House committee Tuesday.

Senate Bill 210, part of a compromise between House and Senate leaders to implement Amendment 41, passed the House state affairs committee 9-1.

The legislature plans to ask the Colorado Supreme Court for guidance to help the ethics panel determine the gift ban's scope - including whether it affects inheritances, scholarships and gifts for rank-and-file government workers.

Then lawmakers will work with the drafters of Amendment 41 to determine whether voters should weigh in on a clarified ethics amendment in November 2008.

Senate Bill 210, which already passed the Senate, is headed for the House Appropriations Committee.

### House votes for energy efficiency

The House passed a bill 63-2 intended to make state buildings more energy efficient.

Senate Bill 51 from Rep. Claire Levy, D-Boulder, and Rep. Rob Witwer, R-Jefferson County, requires all state buildings to use construction practices that reduce energy consumption.

The steps include new fluorescent bulbs, wall board made from recycled products, nontoxic paints and toilets that use less water.

The measure would exempt some historical buildings.

It now goes to a House-Senate conference committee to consider amendments.

### Rainy-day fund boost in trouble

A bill to boost the amount of money in the state's rainy-day fund is facing a rough road later this week. Sponsors of House Bill 1302, which calls for doubling the size of the state's "statutory reserve fund" over several years, are conceding that opponents who want increased road funding are lining up against the measure.

In next year's budget, about \$47 million would be taken from road-construction projects. "The reporting of its death are greatly exaggerated," said Sen. John Morse, D-Colorado Springs, while acknowledging that a safer bet is against the survival of the bill. The death of the bill is a consequence of restrictive fiscal policies in the constitution that limit revenues while mandating increased spending for schools.

Even with the passage of Referendum C in 2005, the extra revenues are being consumed by growth in existing programs, Morse said, squeezing out the ability to save money and improve roads.

"We've made some decisions as citizens that we don't want to pay taxes," Morse said. "Part of the other side of not wanting to pay taxes is having bad roads."