



NEXT STEPS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY & THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

Andrea Wilkins, LWVCO Legislative Liaison

The Executive Committee of the Legislative Council met on Wednesday April 8 to discuss the session schedule. Speaker Becker identified May 18 as the target date for reconvening the General Assembly, while emphasizing this date is subject to change depending on the status of the COVID-19 crisis in Colorado and the risks to public safety. Priorities for the remainder of the session will be passage of the state budget and the school finance act.

The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) will meet on May 4 to review possible revenue scenarios and staff from the Legislative Council Service and the Office of State Planning & Budgeting will provide an updated economic forecast to the JBC on May 12. This update will take into account the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis and will provide the JBC with the most current information as they work to revise the state budget. Prior to the legislature's temporary adjournment on March 14, the JBC had largely finished work on the budget. Given the new economic reality facing the state however, they now must reassess prior budget allocations as they monitor increased demand for social services and unemployment benefits. On April 9 the JBC released their [plan of action](#), outlining their schedule and priorities over the next few weeks.

The first item of business upon the legislature reconvening will be the introduction of the long bill and the orbital bills in the House the week of May 18, followed by introduction in the Senate the week of May 25. Speaker Becker and the JBC indicate that the General Assembly plans to submit the budget to the Governor by May 30 to allow state departments, school districts, and other government entities throughout the state time to review and finalize their budgets before the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

The process governing remote testimony also was discussed by the Executive Committee on April 8. While there are no constitutional provisions that prohibit the General Assembly from conducting business remotely, there are statutory provisions and legislative rules that need to be addressed. These issues are discussed in a [legal opinion](#) provided by the Office of Legislative Legal Services.

Finally, the possible temporary suspension of interim committees during the 2020 interim

was raised by Speaker Becker during the Executive Committee on April 8. The Speaker indicated she would like to see legislation introduced to suspend all committee activity, with the exception of the Legislative Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Committee. Legislative leadership would sponsor the anticipated legislation. This action is being contemplated as a cost-savings measure and information on the activities of the 2020 interim committees and related costs has been set forth in a [memo](#) prepared by the Legislative Council Service.