Colorado Legislature Could Extend Its Break By Weeks, But There's Disagreement Over Whether They Have To Make That Decision In Person

By Bente Birkeland | March 29, 2020

State lawmakers are expected to extend the legislature’s break due to the COVID-19 pandemic for another two weeks, until Monday April 13. Lawmakers took the unprecedented step of temporarily suspending the legislature until March 30, even as major bills remain in limbo.

In a bipartisan effort, legislative leaders and staff circulated a letter to 100 lawmakers over the weekend asking for signatures to extend the legislative adjournment for another two weeks until April 13.

A House Republican said that caucus supported the idea when minority leader Patrick Neville brought up the letter in a caucus call on Friday.

“I am happy that legislators are using common sense by setting the start date back to April 13 but I doubt, given the information we are hearing on a daily basis, that the 13th will be sufficient,” said Republican Rep. Lois Landgraf of Fountain, who signed the letter. "We will certainly know more by then."

But some members of both parties were not sure whether the legislature could adjourn via a letter instead of taking a voice vote. Democratic Rep. Sonya Jaquez Lewis of Longmont said that’s why she hasn’t made up her mind yet on whether to sign the letter.

“If the Speaker of the House calls us in, I will go in,” she said. “The executive director of [the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment] has ruled that Legislators are essential personnel so if we are asked to do our job in person then I need to do my job in person.

"I'm a pharmacist, I believe there is a way that we could go in safely, to not put others at risk and protect our own health. When I worked at the hospital, if I got the call to go in, I would go in. Same thing here, It's my job.”
Colorado Legislature Could Extend Its Break By Weeks, But There’s Disagreement Over Whether They Have To Make That Decision In ...

letter on Monday, although some lawmakers are planning to come to the Capitol at 10 a.m. regardless.

The letter makes the case that it’s not safe for the Capitol to be open for businesses as usual.

“As members of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, we recognize and honor our duty and obligation to transact the legislative business of the State in a timely and orderly fashion, but we also recognize the critical importance of protecting the health and safety of the members and staff of this body and all other persons who work at the Capitol or who seek to observe and participate in their government, by respecting and adhering to the recommendations of public health officials,” the letter said.

“In light of the extraordinary circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in Colorado, we, the undersigned members of the Colorado General Assembly authorize a second temporary adjournment of the House of Representatives and the Senate, when each adjourns on March 30, 2020, until 10 a.m. on April 13, 2020.”

Whenever lawmakers do come back to the Capitol it’s not clear how long they’ll have to finish their work. The session’s end date is May 6. The General Assembly has submitted arguments to the State Supreme Court to ask whether that date could be extended

Our lives have changed...

CPR will not compromise in serving you and our community. Vital news and essential music are made possible by member support.

DONATE!
You Made It!

You read another CPR News story to the end – that makes you one of the people who really care about what's going on in Colorado! We've got a morning newsletter for people like you – The Lookout. Sign up here and join the Lookout crew!
Colorado Legislature Could Extend Its Break By Weeks, But There’s Disagreement Over Whether They Have To Make That Decision In …

Colorado Under Stay At Home Order — What You Can And Cannot Do Under Gov. Polis’ Official Order

MUSIC
WATCH: In Isolation, But In Unison, The Colorado Symphony Performs ‘Ode To Joy’

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Colorado Stay At Home Orders — Do Stay Away From Others, Don’t Worry About Going to Jail

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Polis Issues Colorado Stay-at-Home Order: ‘Now Is Not The Time To Die’

What do you wonder about Colorado that you’d like us to investigate? Ask us your question here.
HEALTH

**In The Face Of Coronavirus, Colorado’s Eastern Plains Hospitals Band Together And Brace For The Worst**

By Sonya Doctorian

HEALTH

**Elderly More Likely To Die, But In Colorado, Coronavirus Strikes All Ages**

By Andrea Dukakis

---

**The Latest On COVID-19**

The novel coronavirus disease continues to affect Colorado families, travelers, businesses, and schools. CPR News is committed to give you the latest, unbiased, fact-based information on the radio and online.

- Got questions? We’ve Got (Some) Answers
- Preguntas Frecuentes En Español
- Sign Up For Our Newsletter
- Support Our Work

**Upcoming Events**

Because of the numerous cancellations of events in our area, we have temporarily suspended our events calendar. If you have questions about a particular event, please check directly with the venue.

**A Programming Note**
p.m. each weeknight. This will be a live national conversation focused on the global coronavirus crisis. "Colorado Matters" moves to 8 p.m. and "Fresh Air" moves to 9 p.m.