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# **The Legislative Operating Budget & Planning**

## **Fiscal Year 2025-26**

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**Natalie Castle**  
**Director, Legislative Council Staff**

**Executive Committee**  
**January 21, 2025**

# Agenda



1. FY 2024-25 Legislative Dept. Budget
2. Budget Process & Timeline
3. Aide budget decisions
4. Automatic budget adjustments
5. Options for addressing shortfall
6. Long Bill Appropriations

THE CAPITOL REFLECTED ON A WINDOW  
IN THE LEGISLATIVE SERVICES BUILDING,  
BY SIMON MAGHAKYAN



# Legislative Department Budget, FY 2024-25

**Total appropriations: \$82.2 million**

Bill	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reappropriated	Total
Legislative Appropriations Bill	\$71.8 million	\$90,000	\$1.7 million	\$73.6 million
Other Bills*	\$0.9 million	\$0	\$0	\$0.9 million
Long Bill	\$7.7 million	\$0	\$0	\$7.7 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$80.4 million</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$1.7 million</b>	<b>\$82.2 million</b>

\*Excludes \$35,140 continuously appropriated from donations received pursuant to SB 24-053 Racial Equity Study.

LCS: \$3.0 million, Blue Book  
\$752,000, Property Tax Study  
NA in FY25; Cost of Living Study

Joint GA: \$2.6 million, Legislative Space Maintenance  
\$0.8 million, PERA Direct Distribution



# Legislative Appropriations from Other Bills

## FY 2024-25: \$889,332

- SB 24-183 Mobile Home Taxation Task Force \$4,718
- HB 24-1054 Jail Standards Commission Recommendations \$41,248
- HB 24-1368 Language Access Advisory Board \$29,741
- HB 24-1427 PERA Study Conducted by an Actuarial Firm \$380,750
- HB 24-1448 New Public School Finance Formula \$32,875
- HB 24-1462 Third-Party Audit Dept. of Corrections \$400,000

## Continuous Appropriations from Donations

- SB 24-053 Racial Equity Study \$35,140



# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

**Total appropriations: \$82.2 million**

Agencies: \$52.2M			General Assembly: \$30.0M	
LCS: \$22.4M	OSA: \$15.3M	OLLS: \$11.3M	House: \$14.6M	Senate: \$9.8M
		JBC: \$3.2M		Joint: \$5.6M

Excludes \$50,000 GF to the Youth Advisory Council, and \$35,140 continuously appropriated donations pursuant to SB 24-053.



# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

## \$80.4M GF, \$90,000 CF, \$1.7M Reappropriated

Agencies: \$52.2M			General Assembly: \$30.0M	
LCS: \$22.4M Total \$22.2M GF	OSA: \$15.3M Total \$13.7M GF	OLLS: \$11.3M	House: \$14.6M	Senate: \$9.8M
Reappropriated: \$1.6M OSA \$141K LCS		JBC: \$3.2M	Joint: \$5.6M GF: \$5.5M Cash Funds: \$90K	

Excludes \$50,000 GF to the Youth Advisory Council, and \$35,140 continuously appropriated donations pursuant to SB 24-053.



# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

**Legislative Appropriations & Other Bills: \$74.7M** (97.8% General Fund)

**Long Bill: \$7.7M GF** (100% General Fund)

Agencies: \$52.2M			General Assembly: \$30.0M	
LCS: \$22.4M Total \$22.2M GF \$141K Reapp.	OSA: \$15.3M Total \$13.7M GF \$1.6M Reapp.	OLLS: \$11.3M	House: \$14.6M	Senate: \$9.8M
LCS Leg. Bills: \$18.6M		JBC: \$3.2M		Joint: \$5.6M Total
LCS Long Bill: \$3.8M				Long Bill: \$3.9M Leg. Bill: \$1.6M

Excludes \$50,000 GF to the Youth Advisory Council, and \$35,140 continuously appropriated donations pursuant to SB 24-053.



# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

## Full Time Equivalent Staff: 450.4\*

Agencies: 277.0 FTE*			General Assembly: 173.4 (staff)	
LCS: 108.2 FTE*	OSA: 83.1 FTE	OLLS: 65.0 FTE	House: 102.5 FTE 65 Members Aides: 58.5 FTE Full Time: 24.8 FTE Session: 19.2 FTE (32 headcount)	Senate: 67.5 FTE 35 Members Aides: 31.5 FTE Full Time: 24.0 FTE Session: 12.0 FTE (20 headcount)
		JBC: 20.7 FTE		Joint: 3.4 FTE

\*Excludes 0.3 FTE funded by continuously appropriated donations pursuant to SB 24-053.





# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

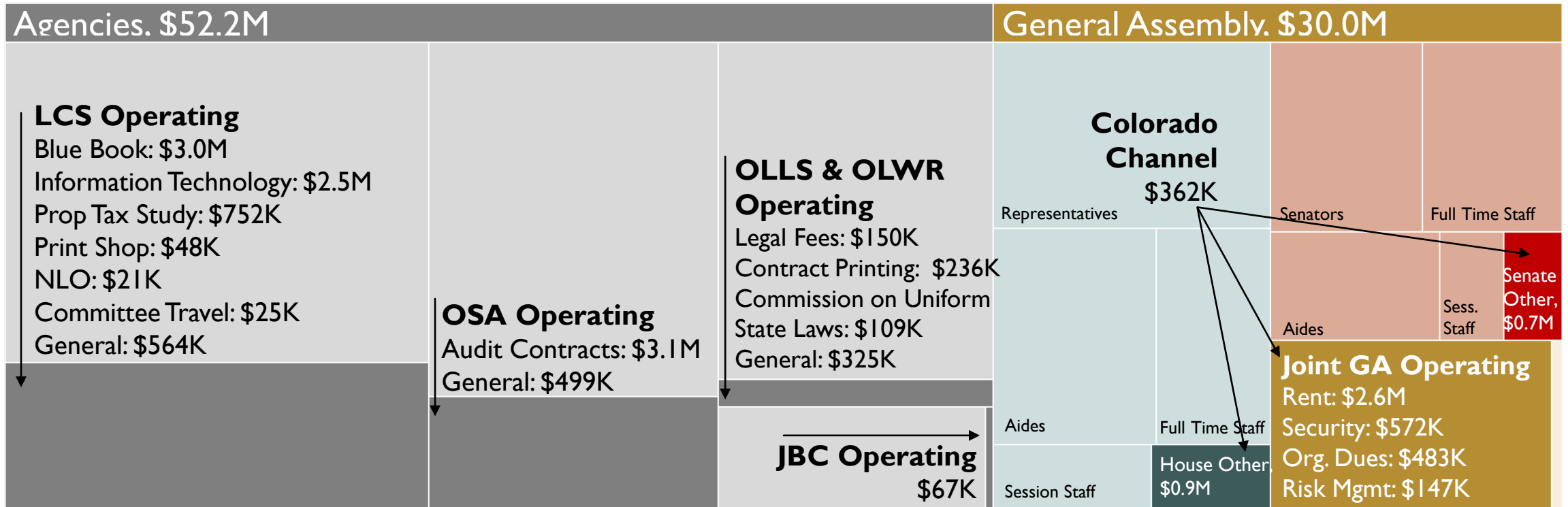
## Salary & Benefits Emphasized (78% of Budget)

Agencies. \$52.2M			General Assembly. \$30.0M			
LCS Salary & Benefits, \$15.4M	OSA Salary & Benefits, \$11.6M	OLLS Salary & Benefits, \$10.5M	Reps, \$5.8M		Senators, \$3.3M	Full Time Staff, \$3.0M
			Aides, \$4.0M	Full Time Staff, \$2.8M	Aides, \$2.1M	Sess. Staff, \$0.8M
LCS Other, \$7.0M	OSA Other, \$3.7M	OLLS Other, \$0.9M			Joint Other, \$5.4M	
		JBC Salary & Benefits, \$3.1M	Session Staff, \$1.2M	Other, \$0.9M	Joint Staff, \$0.2M	



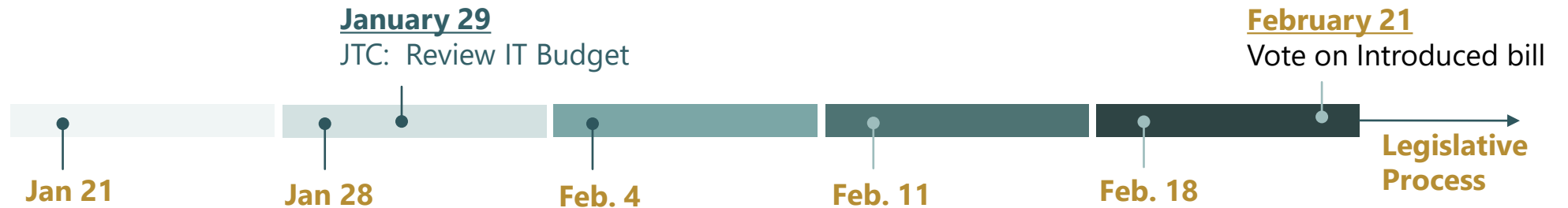
# Legislative Branch FY 2024-25 Appropriations

## What's in the Operating Budget?



# Legislative Appropriations Bill

## Process & Timeline



	Jan 21	Jan 28	Feb. 4	Feb. 11	Feb. 18
<b>Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aide Budget</li> <li>• Blue Book</li> <li>• Prop. Tax Audit</li> <li>• Cost of Living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation</li> <li>• Aide budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT budget</li> <li>• Int. Committees</li> <li>• NCSL, CSG-West, ECS, EC dues</li> <li>• COYAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative Department budget request</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Deadline</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Book</li> <li>• Prop. Tax Audit</li> <li>• Cost of Living</li> <li>• Compensation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation</li> <li>• Aide Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All remaining decision items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative Department budget request</li> </ul>



# Aide Budget Decision Items

- Hours per member per fiscal year
- Hourly wage
- Anything in the policy that drives cost

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ROOM 029 STATE CAPITOL  
DENVER, COLORADO 80203-1784  
E-mail: [lcs.ga@coleg.gov](mailto:lcs.ga@coleg.gov)  
303-866-3521 FAX: 303-866-3855

July 1, 2024

For FY 2024-25, the Executive Committee of Legislative Council approves 1,800 aide hours annually for each Senate and House district. Aides must be designated as a Senior Aide or a Junior Aide. Although members may hire up to two aides, only one aide per member may be designated as a Senior Aide at any point in time.

**Compensation.** All aides are paid a wage of \$24.57 per hour. Senior Aides are eligible to receive insurance benefits, but do not have to elect to receive them. Junior Aides are not eligible to receive insurance benefits.

**Allocation of hours.** Members may allocate these hours among aides as they see fit, except for the following:

1. Members may not use more than 40 hours per week per aide.

First few paragraphs of the FY 2024-25 Aide Policy

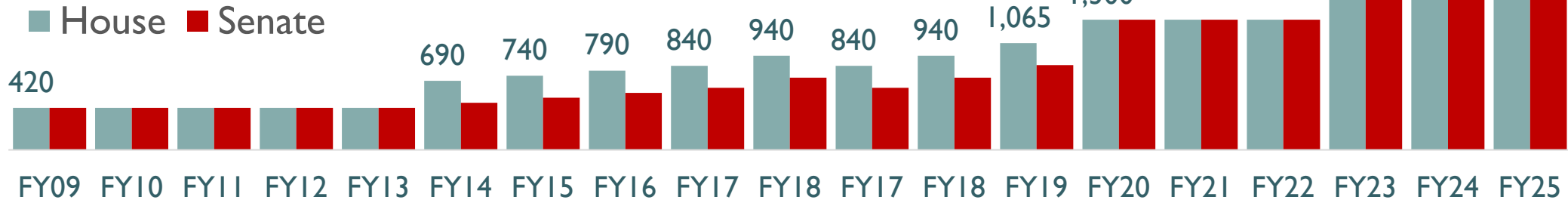


# A history of aide compensation

## Hourly Wage



## Annual Hours Per Member/District



# Aides: Stipends and RTD EcoPass

Benefit	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Stipends*	\$10 per day, per member during session	\$10 per day, per member during session	\$10 per day, per member during session	\$10 per day, per member during session	The value of the stipend was rolled into wages in FY24.	The value of the stipend was rolled into wages in FY24.
RTD EcoPass	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Available to aides not receiving stipends	One aide per member in 2024	One aide per member

\*The stipend was originally intended to offset transportation costs, but was alternatively available to offset telecommunication costs beginning in late FY 2019-20. The two purposes, however, were not consistently tracked for all four years. Since the stipend was rolled into the wage base for FY 2023-24, it is currently being provided within the hourly wage to all aides and its value increases each year along with the increase in the hourly wage.



# Automatic Budget Adjustments

## PERA and Common Policies

**These costs expressed as a percentage of wages & salaries**

- PERA contributions: **up .02% from 21.61% to 21.63%**  
Includes AED/SAED; *Employee contributions flat at 11%*
- FAMILI: no change at 0.45% for employer and employee
- Short term disability: **decreasing from 0.15% to 0.07%**
- Medicare tax: no change at 1.45%

**Health, life, dental and vision premiums**

**going up an estimated 6.5% for the General Assembly budget**



Graphic created by AI.



# Automatic Budget Adjustments

## Member Compensation Set in Statute

### Member Salary: 25% of Class B County Court Judge Salary

- Terms starting January 2023: \$43,977/year  
*(about half of the Senate)*
- Terms starting January 2025: \$47,561/year

### Per Diem

- Session, metro: increases from \$45/day to \$77/day for 2026
- Session, non-metro: Up from \$238/day to \$277/day for 2026
- Interim: all members, fixed at \$99/day for committees & events authorized in statute

**Travel:** budgeted mileage rate increasing from 60 cents to 63 cents per mile



Graphic created by AI.





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# Options for Addressing the Budget Shortfall

Options are not comprehensive and should not be considered to be staff recommendations

- Reduce the number of interim committees
- Postpone or phase-in the HB24-1059 session per diem increase
- Budget for fewer days of special session
- Divert reversions from the Legislative Department Cash Fund to the General Fund
- Reduce Blue Book appropriation
- Staff costs, travel, & operating



# Types of Interim Committees

- **Year-Round Committees**

Executive Committee, Legislative Council, Joint Budget, Joint Technology, Capital Development, Committee on Legal Services, Legislative Audit Committee, Statutory Revision, Legislative Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery, Commission on Uniform State Laws, Capitol Building Advisory Committee, CO Health Insurance Exchange Oversight; and Black Coloradan Racial Equity Study Commission (donation/cash-funded)

- **Statutory Interim Committees**

Pension Review Commission & Subcommittee, Water Resources & Agriculture, Transportation Legislation Review, Statewide Health Care Review, Legislative Oversight Concerning Jail Standards, Legislative Oversight Concerning Tax Policy, Artificial Intelligence Impact Task Force, Rep. Hugh McKean Youth Advisory Council Committee, Sales and Use Tax Simplification Task Force (Repeals July 1, 2026), Wildfire Matters (repeals September 1, 2025)

- **Single-Interim Letter and Executive Committee Resolution Committees**



# Interim Committee Cost Drivers

- Member per diem & associated costs: \$121.85 per day  
\$99 plus PERA, Medicare, FAMLI, PERA AED&SAED
- Travel for meetings at Capitol: \$124 per day  
Members and non-legislators
- Travel for meetings away from Capitol: \$219 per day  
Average lodging, mileage, and meals  
Members, staff, and non-legislators
- Hearing room rentals: \$200 per meeting
- Van rentals: \$300 per van
- Staff

Meetings held during the session at the Capitol are covered by session per diem and travel.



# SB20-214: Paused Statutory Committees in 2020

**Table 2**  
**Expenditures Under SB 20-214**

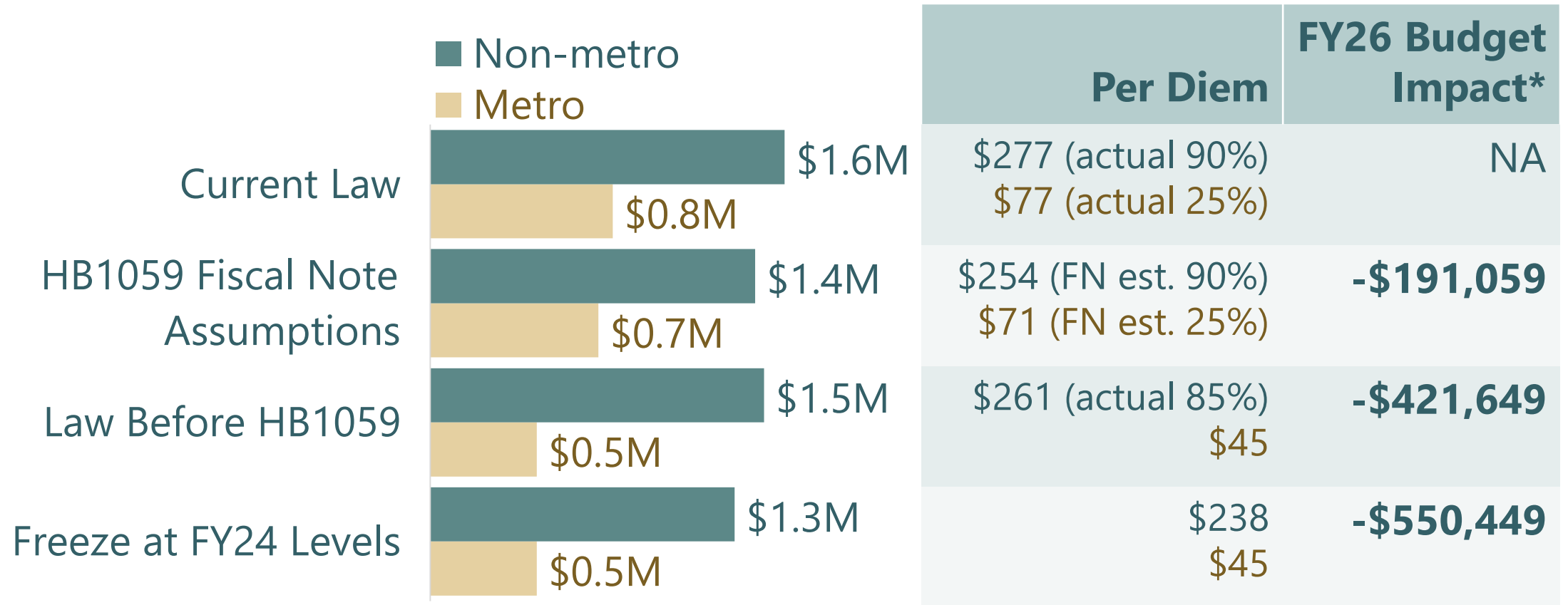
	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
<b>Legislative Department</b>		
Legislator Per Diem	(\$39,487)	-
Capitol Meeting Expenses	(\$25,668)	-
Tour Travel Expenses	(\$32,412)	-
Van Rental	(\$3,300)	-
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>(\$100,867)</b>	<b>-</b>

The reduction in legislative per diem is based on a reduction of a total of 355 days for which members would claim per diem of \$111.23 per day for attending meetings and trips. Capitol meeting expense reductions are based on a reduction of 207 days of meeting expenses at a rate of \$124 per day. Tour travel expenses are based on a reduction of 148 days of legislator travel across all committees at a cost of \$219 per day. Finally, van rental is based on a reduction of 11 days at a rate of \$300 per day. Travel reductions for legislative staff who accompany interim committees have been made in the legislative budget and are not estimated as part of this fiscal note.

- CO Health Insurance Exchange Oversight
- Early Childhood & School Readiness
- Pension Review Commission & Subcommittee
- Statewide Health Care Review
- Transportation Legislation Review
- Water Resources Review
- Wildfire Matters Review
- Youth Advisory Council Review



# Postpone/phase-in HB24-1059 Per Diem Increases



# Budget for fewer days of special session

- Custom and practice is **20 days: \$600,280 in FY26**
  - based on current law per diem: \$277 non-metro; \$77 metro
- Costs of Special Session:

Expense	One Day	Four Days
Member per diem & associated costs	\$16,787	\$67,148
Member travel expenses	\$7,731	\$30,924
Session staff wages & associated costs	\$5,496	\$21,984
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30,014</b>	<b>\$120,056</b>



# Long Bill Appropriations

- Blue Book Voter Information Guide
  - Recommend two-year total be reduced from \$6M in FY24 & FY25 to \$4M in FY26 & FY27
- Property Tax Audit
  - Recommend \$852,000, up from \$752,000 in FY25
- School Finance Cost of Living Study
  - Every two years
  - Recommend \$200K in FY26, down from \$270K in FY24



# Long Bill Appropriations

## Blue Book

- Constitutional and statutory requirements

Colo. Const. article V, § 1 (7.5) and article X, § 20 (3)  
Newspaper publication: §1-40-124.5, C.R.S.  
Blue book requirements: §1-40-124.5, C.R.S.

- Funding requirements

Colo. Const. article V, § 1 (7.5) (d). The GA shall provide sufficient appropriations for the preparation and distribution of the book pursuant to this paragraph 7.5 at no charge to recipients.

§1-40-124.5 (3)(a), C.R.S. Moneys shall be appropriated in the long bill to the ballot information publication and distribution revolving fund, and are continuously appropriated to the Legislative Council to pay the costs of publishing the text and title of measures in newspapers and the costs of distributing the book.





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# Long Bill Appropriations

## Blue Book Language Access

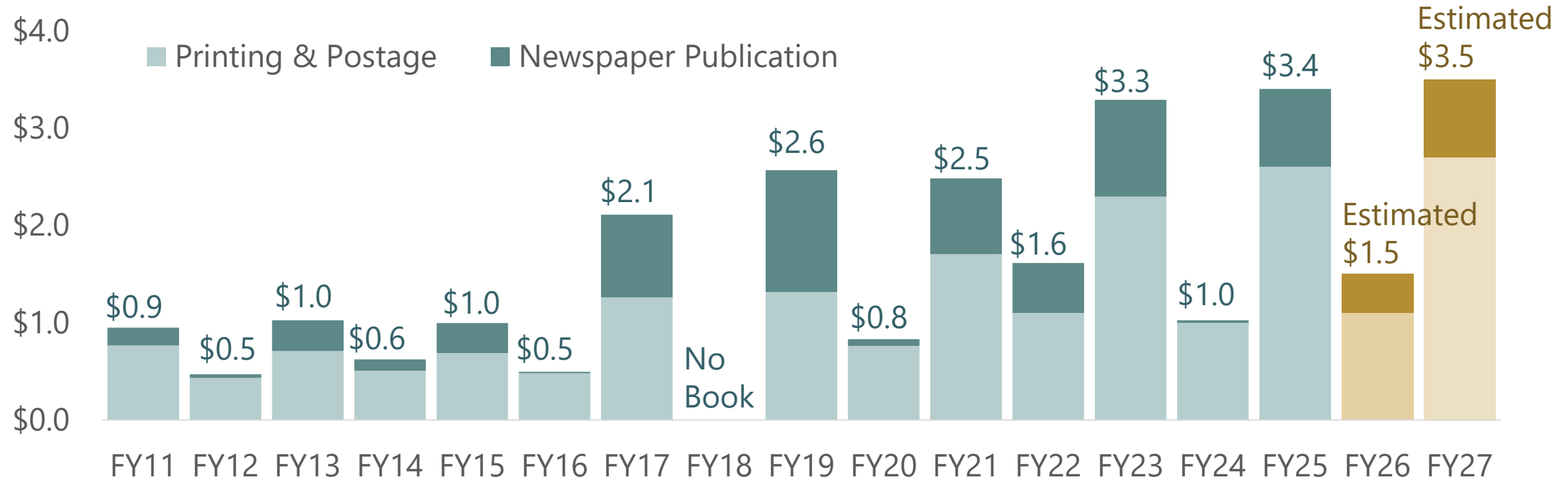
- Federal Voting Rights Act
  - Spanish version available online and mailed to Adams, Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Denver, and Saguache counties (list will be revised in 2026)
  - English audio version courtesy of the Talking Book Library in CDE at no cost to the Legislative Department
  - Hotline for people to request bilingual books
- Language Access Advisory Board Recommendations
  - Continue status quo but do a better job advertising the availability of bilingual books to other counties



# Long Bill Appropriations

## Blue Book Costs: History & Estimates

Millions of Dollars



# Long Bill Appropriations

## History & Forecast of Blue Book Fund Balance

Budget Year	Actual FY 2020-21	Actual FY 2021-22	Actual FY 2022-23	Actual FY 2023-24	Preliminary FY 2024-25	Estimated FY 2025-26	Estimated FY 2026-27
Blue Book	2020 Book	2021 Book	2022 Book	2023 Book	2024 Book	2025 Book	2026 Book
Begin Balance	\$2,100,863	\$1,251,202	\$1,240,222	\$385,536	\$2,421,503	\$2,063,569	\$1,097,603
Appropriation	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$500,000	\$3,500,000
Expenditures	\$2,467,576	\$1,611,990	\$3,327,810	\$1,040,198	\$3,421,921	\$1,500,000	\$3,500,000
Net Interest	\$17,914.87	(\$1,009.62)	(\$26,876)	\$76,165	\$63,987	\$34,034	\$35,123
End Balance	\$1,251,202	\$1,240,222	\$385,536	\$2,421,503	\$2,063,569	\$1,097,603	\$1,097,603

•estimated figures are in green

**Recommendation:** A total of \$4.0 million over the next two years, at least \$0.5M of which in FY26.

**Why:** Assumes a similar number of measures on the 2025 & 2026 ballots as in 2023 & 2024, respectively; historical increases in the cost of paper and postage, and augmenting current language access practices with additional public notice about the availability of bilingual books. This also hedges against risk by ensuring a sufficient fund balance.



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# Long Bill Appropriations

## Property Tax Audit Appropriation

**Study objective:** To determine if county assessors are correctly and consistently applying constitutional and statutory provisions to arrive at the actual value of property. This study also produces detailed property tax data for the legislative and executive branches.

*Colo. Const. art X, § 3; Sections 39-1-104 and 2-3-304, C.R.S.*

**Recommendation:** \$852,000

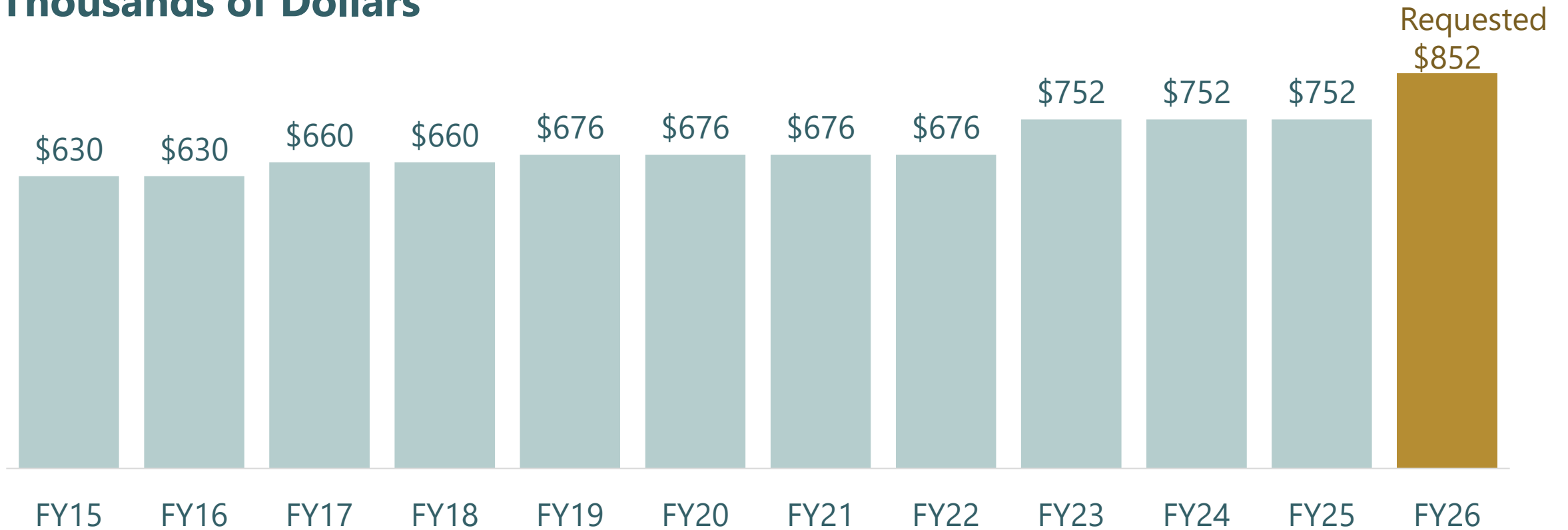
**Why:** This represents a 3.1% increase in the vendor's salary costs, plus adjustments for operating costs to reflect actual expenses.



# Long Bill Appropriations

## Property Tax Audit Appropriation

Thousands of Dollars



# Long Bill Appropriations

## School Finance Cost of Living Study Appropriation

**Study objective:** To create a cost of living index for each of the 178 school districts for use in the school finance formula.

*Section 11-54-104 (5)©(III)(A), C.R.S.*

*Reappropriated from the state's share of total program.*

**Recommendation:** \$200,000 (down from \$270,000 in FY24)

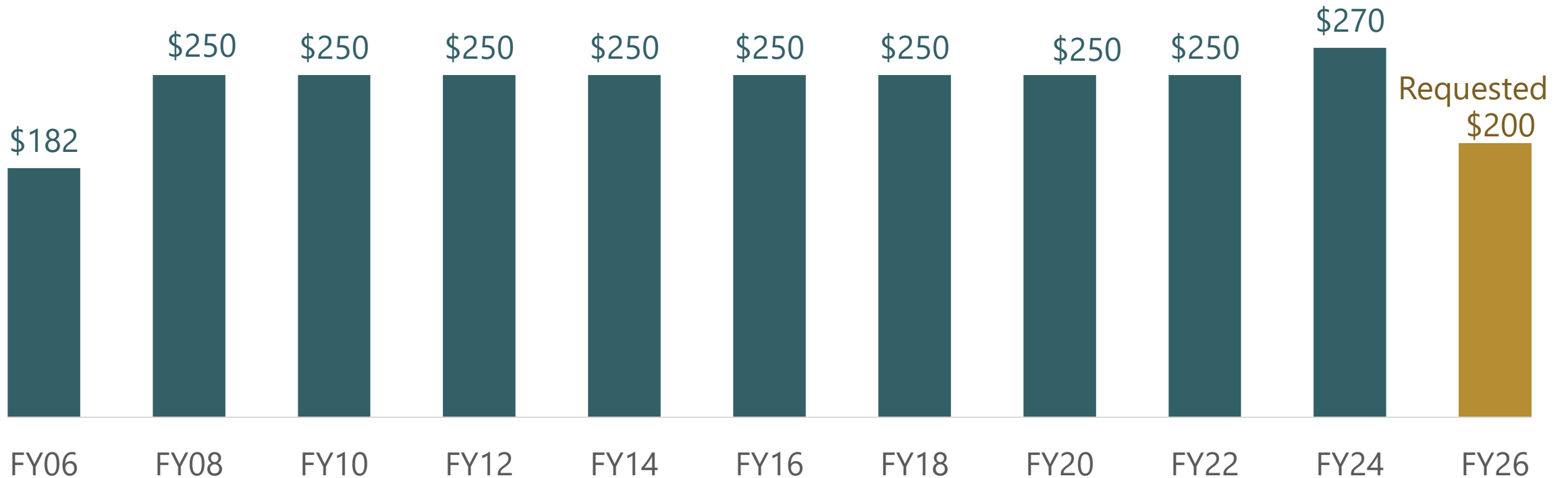
**Why:** This amount is enough to update all portions of the index except for shopping patterns, which we do not believe need to be updated this year.



# Long Bill Appropriations

## School Finance Cost of Living Study Appropriation

Thousands of Dollars



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# Questions?

**Natalie Castle**

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[www.leg.colorado.gov/lcs](http://www.leg.colorado.gov/lcs)

