



HISTORY Colorado

HB 17-1217 - State Historical Society Governance

Representatives Winter and Saine and Senators Donovan and Smallwood
March 16, 2017

History Colorado and the Department of Higher Education Request Your Support on HB 1217

Purpose

HB 17-1217 repeals obsolete language and makes some statutory modifications to SB 15-225, an Audit Committee bill that implemented an audit recommendation concerning the governance and organizational structure of History Colorado.

Background

The July 2014 governance audit recommendation stated "History Colorado management and its Board of Directors should (a) work with the Department of Higher Education to assess its current structure and, if necessary, develop an appropriate governance and organizational structure that balances its needs as a nonprofit corporation with that of a state agency, and achieves its organizational objectives and obligations; and (b) work with the General Assembly to develop legislation to incorporate any changes to its governance and organization structure as a result of implementation of part (a) into the State statutes, if necessary." History Colorado and the Department of Higher Education agreed to implement this recommendation by July 1, 2015. SB 15-225 implemented that recommendation. Senate Bill 15-225 implemented the audit recommendation by:

- Creating a nine member board that took effect on July 1, 2015. The Board was transferred to the Department of Higher Education by a Type I transfer. The Governor appointed five members to the board with Senate confirmation, while four additional members were selected by the former board and the names were submitted to the Governor for approval and appointment and included Senate confirmation. Previously, board members were elected by members of the Society at the annual meeting.
- Requiring board members to possess skills in state financial, legal and regulatory expertise required to oversee the state historical society and consider both geographical and cultural diversity in appointing the nine members.
- Establishing a Director's Council of the State Historical Society to advise the board on the State Historical Society's operations and accomplishing its mission and objectives and specified that Members of the Council would be elected by members of the Historical Society.

What HB 17-1217 Accomplishes

- Repeals the outdated statutory language concerning the initial appointments made to the 9 member board that included recommendations made to the Governor by the former board. The bill specifies that the Governor make the board appointments, subject to Senate confirmation.
- Modifies the statutory language concerning the creation of the Directors Council by making it permissive, instead of mandatory. If the Board does not create the Directors Council by June 1, 2020, the bill repeals the section authorizing its establishment. The intent behind the creation of the Council was to have former board members continue their involvement with History Colorado projects if they wished to remain active with the organization. The current Board has spent the past two years addressing financial and organizational issues and creation of the Council has not occurred. This change allows the Board to implement the Directors Council.

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