



Legislature 2008 - Lights, camera, House action - - Denver Post, The (CO) - January 22, 2008 - page B-02

January 22, 2008 | Denver Post, The (CO) | Tim Hoover The Denver Post | Page B-02

Coloradans on Monday had the chance to see their lawmakers at work as the House began live TV broadcasts of its proceedings.

The House launched the broadcasts on Comcast channel 165 and on the Internet at coloradochannel.net.

The House will **broadcast** gavel-to-gavel proceedings every day, replaying them on cable. The broadcasts also will be archived on the Internet. The televised broadcasts were made possible through private donations of about \$200,000 for equipment and the use of some \$100,000 in House funds for operating costs.

The first day of broadcasts featured speeches from lawmakers about the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and civil rights.

House Speaker Andrew Romanoff, D-Denver, said in a statement that the goal of the broadcasts "is to make Colorado's government the most transparent, the most accountable, the most citizen-friendly in America."

Colorado joins more than 30 other states that **broadcast** at least some of their legislative proceedings on television.

But not everything happening in the House chamber will end up on TV.

The cameras turn on after the daily prayer has been said but before the Pledge of Allegiance. It was during the prayer last week that Rep. Douglas Bruce, who was not yet sworn in, kicked a photographer who snapped a picture of him.

Romanoff told a reporter that there was no conscious attempt to exclude the prayer, it's just that legislative leaders wanted to show the official business of the House, which happens after the prayer when the gavel falls and the chamber is in session.

But Romanoff said he was not in favor of another decision legislative leaders made: to prohibit cameras from showing lawmakers'

desks during the second-reading phase of the legislative process.

Second reading is when lawmakers typically deal with amendments to bills, and voice votes are common. It's also a time when a number of lawmakers may not be at their desks or may be talking to fellow lawmakers.

"It looks a little bit like mayhem to the public," said House Majority Leader Alice Madden, D-Boulder. "I've had school kids say, 'No one was listening'" to what was being said at the podium."

The cameras can show lawmakers at their desks during other phases of the legislative process, where recorded votes are taken.

Romanoff said he was fine with showing everything the House does while it's in session.

"I think it's a public place, it's a public space," he said. "Anything that goes on here is fair game."

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