



Peter Groff: Leading Is All About Relationships | Dec. 12, 2021 | LTIS Episode 4

Ed: Hello and welcome to “Legislatures: The Inside Story,” a podcast from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Your host is Tim Storey, the executive director of NCSL. Tim talks with legislators, journalists, academics, political analysts, and others about the ideas and policies shaping state legislatures today.

Tim’s guest for this podcast is Peter Groff, the former Senate president in Colorado, who also served in the Obama administration as head of the Faith Based Initiative Center for the U.S. Department of Education. He now works with the Education Trust in Washington, D.C., as a policy and political consultant.

Groff, who served first in the Colorado House and then the Senate, talked with Tim about a variety of topics around legislative leadership. They include how he navigated his role as the first Black person to lead a legislative chamber in Colorado, how to bridge divides with other legislators, and strategies to be an effective leader.

He also talked about the role model he had in his father, who spent 20 years in the Colorado Senate, and the historic nature of the day he was sworn in. Here’s their discussion.

Tim: Peter Groff, former senator, Senate president in the great State of Colorado, home to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Our headquarters is out here in the West. I’m really, really grateful that you’re taking some time to be on this podcast. I know you have many podcasts you could be on, so thanks for giving us a little bit of your time.

You are really the first person directly from the legislatures to be on this fledgling podcast, so thank you for doing that. It's an honor for me. So, I just want to say thanks to start off.

Peter: Well, Tim, thank you. I appreciate it and I'm always good to talk to you and talk to the folks at NCSL. You guys were so critically important to my time in the legislature and I'm sure you continue to do good work, and it's great that you've continued to headquarter in my hometown, so that's a good thing.

Tim: That's right. We have no plans to leave your hometown. In fact, NCSL, we built a building about 15 years ago when Bill Pound, of course, was the executive director, and Bill led that effort, and we had a lot of partnership with the Colorado legislature. So, it's a pretty good spot to be in. We're grateful.

Many groups like ours are based in Washington, which is a lovely and wonderful place to be, but we're really happy that we're an association that is unusually based outside of the D.C. metro area. So, it's a strength. We also, of course, have a Washington office as we do so much work there. But that's a segue because you are no longer a resident of Denver City and County in Colorado. You're now in Washington.

Time Marker (TM): 02:56

Tim: So, let's start there. I want to just ask a few questions about how you wound up where you are now. Tell us about your job now in Washington and we'll work backwards from there.

Peter: Well, currently, I'm doing consulting work a lot with alternative education school networks across the country and do some political consulting and decided to stay here after my time in the Obama administration. My wife is from New York, and she makes all the big decisions. So, each time I say well, maybe we should move back, there was always: well, the kids are in middle school, the kids are in high school.

Now they're both out of the house, so the next time I breach it, we'll see how she uses them again. But it just basically kind of worked out for us. She has family in New York, so our daughters now are in school in New York. It just kinds of happens to be where it is right now. But I'm always trying to get back.

TM: 03:49

Tim: So, remind me when were you the Senate president in Colorado? What was your tenure here?

Peter: 2007 to 2009 – the last two years of my time in the Colorado legislature actually.

Tim: And, of course, we immediately jumped to term limits because Colorado, unlike most states... 15 states have term limits for state legislators, which also means typically term limits for legislative leaders. So, it's really a two-years-and-done kind of process here.

TM: 04:18

Tim: That's where I really want to start and I kind of want to go way back into: Why did you get interested in legislatures? How did you wind up in the legislature, in the Senate? So, tell us a little bit about the path that you took that led you to be Senate President.

Peter: Well, I ran for the House actually in 2000. I had watched my father serve in the Senate. He was only in the Senate, and he used to joke when he was living that I actually won a race that he did not, because I ran for the same House seat that he lost several decades earlier and won.

But just to watch during his time in the legislature, and he was in the minority for all of his 20 years in the Colorado Senate. But to watch his ability to kind of move issues and get people to agree on some of the issues and concerns that he had, and eventually legislation would kind of move out of that, and I saw how government could work, especially for the least of these, and went through a number of career changes before I thought you know, I'm actually going to run and see if we can do some things.

So, I ran in 2000 and was elected to the House then, a seat in northeast Denver, and was in the minority for the first couple of years. But having been the son of a former minority leader, he would give me kind of tips here and there about how to be effective, and I was able to move a couple of pieces through the process and on to the Governor's desk and the Governor signed them.

So, that's kind of how I started, just watching him work for 20 years in the legislature.

TM: 05:56

Tim: Which must have given you a terrific perspective that not a lot of legislators have, legislative leaders have, one, to have your father who was in there for so long but was in the minority party and got things done. That in and of itself is unique, especially in today's legislature sometimes. So, there must have been a real secret to that.

Catch me up. So, then you ran for the House and were elected, and then how many years there before moving to the Senate?

Peter: I was in the House for that first term and then was reelected in 2002. And then the state senator from our district decided to run for mayor in 2003. So, he resigned and even though a lot of folks said please don't do that, he resigned because he wanted to give full effort to his race for mayor.

That left an open seat and then I ran for that in the vacancy committee and didn't have any opposition. The House member whose districts overlapped mine said hey, you do it, I want to stay here in the House, and she had her sights on chairing some committees and was beginning to make relationships there.

And so, I said I'll do it and didn't have any opposition in the vacancy committee and showed up in January 2003 in the Senate and served there for the rest of my time.

TM: 07:21

Tim: So, then how did you wind up getting chosen as the leader?

Peter: It was interesting. Because my father served 20 years in the Senate, I understood actually better than the House the nuances of the Senate, how the Senate works, Senate rules, kind of obscure Senate rules that the minority folks could use. And so, I came in knowing a lot about that chamber and it was a unique situation where our minority leader and assistant minority leader did not like one another. And so, I found myself often kind of in-between them trying to cut deals within our caucus to get things done between the two groups.

I had some skill in the well, and so when I would see members in trouble, I'd go down and kind of help them debate bills and then work with them on how to make a better presentation on what we were trying to do and the messages that we were trying to get across. And so, that election of 2004 when we actually won control of the chamber, it was kind of a given who was going to be the president and a given who was going to be the majority leader. And I said, well, I'll run for president pro tem and had a lot of support.

Just so just one year in the chamber, but really having created a great deal of relationships within our caucus, I was elected president pro tem.

TM: 08:46

Tim: I mean, a lot of legislators, they set their eyes and if they're smart, they have vision for their time, especially in a term-limited place where it's a finite amount of time; you know you're going to go. Have you thought about just getting to that leadership role, the advice that you... if someone comes, they're a young up and comer from northeast Denver and they come to you and they say, boy, you really made a mark here; how do I do that?

You alluded to a couple of those things, but what do you tell legislators who might want to wind up in leadership some day?

Peter: Well, I have this model called the "know model" – k-n-o-w, although I do have one which is part of that with the n-o- pieces of things you should not do. I think you've got to know your members, you've got to know the opposition, really understand their skill level, what they're trying to do.

I think you've got to know the role that you're going to play as a leader and whether that's going to be kind of an aggressive leader, whether that's going to try to be someone who brings folks together – what role can you play – and also the rules certainly – what you can and cannot do. And those are all things that really benefitted me in terms of how I got to be president pro tem and then president once our president decided to run for Congress.

I can't overstate the role of relationships in legislatures and really getting to know your members as well as the folks on the other side of the aisle.

TM: 10:20

Tim: How did you do that? I mean, there's always sort of knowing what to do, but then how? Is it just as basic as we might assume or did you have any fundamental tricks, or tricks is not the right word, but how did you do it?

Peter: I have a genuine curiosity about people. In a legislature, you're going to have rural members, suburban members, urban members. How did they get to be where they are? Jim Isgar was a farmer from southwestern Colorado, and I would sit down with him, and he would talk about his farm and all the stuff he had to do, and it was of interest to me.

So, I think a lot of the members thought that I had a genuine interest in who they were and what they were about and kind of what makes them tick. And so, I think once you do that, then you can understand why they're saying what they're saying at the well, or why they're offering this amendment, or why they are so gung-ho against a bill that you would think, because you're on the same team, that they would be supporting. And I think that makes it easier to listen, it makes it easier to talk to them from kind of where they are.

And so, I think that was for me just figuring out people's different stories. Why are you here? When I was president, I would ask the question another way because if there was a tough issue and there would be some handwringing, I would say: Why are you here? Are you here just for the fancy title? Are you here just to be chair? Are you here to make a difference? I mean, what is that one issue that you'd lose your seat over?

So, trying to get them, trying to pull that out of them. That's one piece of it. But I think the other piece is getting to know: Why did you run in the first place? Generally, you can make a connection. I remember we had a senator by the name of Bob Bacon and Bob was at the time probably 65ish or so. He was from Fort Collins, which is northern Colorado, the home of Colorado State University. And he was a teacher.

And I found out in talking to him that he grew up in a town 16 miles away from where my family grew up. My mom and dad and grandparents at the time were still living there. And so, we began to talk about Galesburg and Monmouth, Illinois and how the silver streaks. And he said: How do you know that? I said: because my family is from Monmouth. He goes: Monmouth, really? And so, we had a connection.

I mean, I think if you talk to folks in the legislature, you're going to find that somewhere there's going to be some connection that you can hold on to that will create a relationship.

TM: 13:06

Tim: Would you say your time as Senate president, were you happy with it when it was over? What were your success stories, you know, using these skills to get things done?

Peter: When I look back at it now, it was fun, it was hectic, there was a lot of pressure. I was the first African American to do that and not knowing what that was kind of like. There was no one else obviously that I could talk to.

After the former president resigned her office to run for Congress, after we had the caucus meeting and they designated me to be the candidate for president and generally, there is no

competition; there is no other nominee from the other side in the Colorado legislature. So, I knew I was going to be president.

So, I called every living president in Colorado and said: Hey, what am I not supposed to do? What should I do? I'm not really the president of the Democrats. I'm president of the Senate. What does that mean? I had some really good conversations with them. One was Native American, so I talked to him quite a bit about how you deal with that as a leader of color. But there was really no one else.

I called one other person who was president of the Senate who was African American, Emile Jones from Illinois. And there was an African-American Speaker in California, Karen Bass, who is now in Congress, and there was a Latino Speaker in the House of Representatives in Florida who now has a different job as a United States Senator from Florida, Marco Rubio. And called them and said: Okay, tell me how to do this. All of them gave great ideas and great suggestions.

That kind of eased it, but when I look back at it now, there was okay, I don't want to screw this up, so they don't ever have another African-American president or a speaker at the time. And then the very next year, Terrance Carroll was the Speaker of the Colorado House, so I could give him a lot of advice.

I think I tried to run a fair and open chamber. I always knew, and I think it was Tom Norton who was a Republican, actually told me: Allow the opposition to come down to make as many arguments and amendments as they want because when it comes time to vote, you have at least 18 votes. You always have the votes. And so, there isn't a reason, unless there's a time limit, there really isn't a reason not to allow the opposition to offer their side. And if you believe in your position, that's even better for you to show the public.

And so, I tried to remember that. But we got a lot of ed reform issues through the process. We began the process of really trying to deal with criminal sentencing and kind of the racial issues in terms of criminal justice; began to put that on the map. So, I think we were relatively successful.

I left with 21 Democrats, which is the largest number of Democrats I think at that point, and maybe ever. I'm not sure where they are now.

Tim: Out of a 35-member Senate, right?

Peter: Yes. So, 21 out of 35. So, it was the largest majority for Democrats ever at that time. So, we were really able to do a whole lot of things that we on the left side of the spectrum believe are the right things. We had a Democrat governor in Bill Ritter who would sign anything we put on his desk. So, I think we were relatively successful, and I think we were able to do so without the vitriol that you see in politics today.

TM: 16:59

Tim: Spending a few more minutes on that, because there's a lot of interesting stuff, one, I want to reemphasize this whole notion of getting to know your members both to get to the position and to make progress. What I also sense is that it was authentic to you. You liked to hear about people's stories. Is that fair to say? You didn't have to do it as a pretense because it was the

means to an end, like I want to be the leader, but you genuinely found these other folks interesting in what they did, be it a farmer from eastern Colorado or a mining person from the western slope, I don't know.

Peter: That's true and I think if folks sat down now and just talked to members, they would find some incredible stories. It was always interesting to me when I would sit down with other members, particularly rural members, how many issues and concerns and problems really crossed over and overlapped with the urban issues and concerns and problems that I was seeing and trying to deal with.

A lot of the bills I passed--and I think I ended up passing around 90 in the nine and a half years that I was there--a lot of those where I would go to rural members and say: You have a problem with x. I have a problem with x. How do we fix it? Even if they were Republicans. And certainly, the Democratic rural members that we had were conservatives. There weren't many progressives coming from rural Colorado, even as Democrats.

But we had a common bond. We had that common bond about things going on in their district and my district and in finding some personal connection. I will tell up-and-coming members now: get to know everything about your colleagues. I knew colleagues' birthdays, I knew where they were born, generally maybe where they went to high school, I knew their significant others, I knew sometimes when they had others. And so, I was able to find a connection somewhere with somebody about that, or I would say: Hey, senator so-and-so, how is Mr. so-and-so if it was a woman, or Mrs. so-and-so. Isn't today her birthday? Oh, how did you remember?

There was that connection and I think they trusted me because of that. So, I probably got some more leeway with decisions that I would make from the chair because they didn't think that I was doing it as an affront to them but doing what I thought was in the best interests of the chamber.

And I think that's the other piece is you've got to make a decision whether you are up there as speaker or president, whether that's something that you're using to springboard you to something else or are you trying to do it for the betterment of the state. You have a minority leader if you're on the minority side, but you have a majority leader if you are president and speaker. Let them do the politics. I was trying to do what was in the best interests of the state.

TM: 20:1549

Tim: So, you called around and you specifically targeted leaders of color from not just Colorado, but other states. I don't want to blow past that. I mean, this was historic in Colorado. How did that make your leadership different being African American, being from the background of that community? How did that change how you were a leader, or did it?

Peter: That's a good question. I'm not sure it necessarily changed it. I think I knew that there was kind of a greater weight that more people were looking, whether it was the media to see: well, how is he going to handle this, or whether it was the community saying: now that you're there, you need to make sure that x gets done. You can't now come back to us at your community meeting and say oh well, I tried to do it. Now there is no reason you can't do it is kind of what the feeling was.

But there was a great deal of pride in the community. I remember the first day that I was sworn in, the gallery was full. You've been in the chamber; it's not that big. The floor seating was completely taken up and it was the first day, so that's when other members' families come down. And so, there were chairs in the aisle. Sure, if the fire marshal from the county had come in, they would have been like you can't do any of this.

But the gallery was full and there were so many people in the hallways that they even piped the sound into the old supreme court room and chamber, which I think now might be from the committee room, but before it was just there for big committee hearings that we might have on any big issue. And so, hundreds of people were in there and just kind of filling the building, which I didn't know till a reporter told me after. It kind of gave me the sense that this was just bigger than kind of picking up the gavel as an African American and how much it meant.

And so, that kind of lofty aspiration stays with you from the day you pick it up to the day you put it down. But I don't think it necessarily changed how I served as president, but it certainly changed how I tried to present myself in public or, if I had to go down to the well understanding that a lot of people were kind of waiting to hear what not just the president had to say, but an African-American president.

TM: 22:50

Tim: Yeah, I can totally understand that. You mentioned, again, calling those folks, people to kind of tell me what to do. You called Republicans, you called people from other states. When you get those calls now from new leaders, new legislators, I do like this notion of flipping it and saying okay, get to know your members, be interested, expect the unexpected.

What do you tell people not to do? And another piece of that: do you remember any moment when you were leader where things were just your least favorite part of that job? What would you warn leaders, like, there's part of this job that you're not going to enjoy, I guess to be polite about it?

Peter: Well, I think that the one piece that was tough was I assigned the bills to committee, and so when you have 18 members, it only takes 18 to get control. So, the Republicans did exactly what they were supposed to do. They introduced bills to draw very distinct differences between Democratic legislative control and what a Republican legislative control might look like.

And so, you want to protect as much as you can, your vulnerable members, those members in swing districts, so that they don't have to vote on them. But you also want to give your vulnerable members high-profile committee assignments so they can say hey, I'm on the health committee or I'm on education or judiciary or whatever it might be, and so you've got to protect them.

There is a committee called the state veterans and military affairs committee. That's the kill committee. I was the chair of it when I was president pro tem and we got every single bad, in terms of Democratic, bill that you could have. So, our committee meetings were in the big old Supreme Court chamber room. They were always packed with media, hundreds of folks,

witnesses to testify. But it was me, it was Chris Romer, who was a Democrat, and Abel Tapia who was a Democrat from Pueblo, which is a strong Democratic seat.

And so, we just got those bills. You keep it small because you don't want someone to go rogue. It was just five people on the committee, three of us Democrats and then two Republicans. And so, it was really hard to take a bill that a Republican legislator brought because he thinks it's the right thing or she thinks it's the right thing to do, but it's controversial. It's just purely a political move. It's not a policy move. It's not something where we can have the debate on the floor. You don't want it on the floor.

So, I would send the bills there and those were hard because members would come, and I had an open-door policy for any member. I went and actually talked to the Republican caucus, which was something unusual, and said: my door is open. If you're a member of this body, you can come to me at any time, and we'll talk. So, they would come and say hey, I've got this bill and I would look at them and I would say: Senator so-and-so, you know this bill is not going to health because Linda Newell can't vote on it. You know this bill is not going to business because Sheri John just cannot vote on it.

So, that part was hard because it was purely political. And I love policy debates, but there are just times where you have to be political, and that was tough. Part of the job is in the well debating policy ideas. That was the best part of the job.

TM: 26:45

Tim: Let me sort of sum up what I think you're saying is that there was a conflict of your values. You value this every bill deserves a good chance, let's listen, see what's there, but you also knew that you had these big political bills that you pretty much couldn't compromise on. So, at the end of the day you had to move them to that committee, take care of business, and that probably didn't jive because what you really wanted to do was see these all go and see what happens, but I hear you.

What do you try to counsel members to avoid? What are the derailers that you saw members do, or even now in the work that you do, you're still active with legislatures in different places – what are the mistakes that too many legislators make that sometimes just seem unavoidable or inevitable that you would say don't go down that track, advice you gave yourself back in those days?

Peter: One, I think it's members who don't do their homework, who are kind of caught off guard not knowing if a bill comes to your committee, and generally titles don't do this, but sometimes a clever person can come up with a title and you think oh, this bill will be fine, so I'm going to vote for it, and then all of a sudden it's on the floor and it's kind of loose and you're not really sure how to do it. Always do your homework. Always listen to the other side because periodically folks on the other side actually do come up with new ideas.

I think in the kind of atmosphere that we have now with social media, a lot of legislators kind of go through the process where they think well, it's all about me, and so I need to be out in front on this bill or I need to be out in the press or I need to be standing next to the speaker or the president at this press conference, or I need to chair this committee.

It's about what's going to move the state forward. It's about what's in the best interests of your constituents. If you do that right, you will get attention. So, I think particularly now with social media, trying to get folks to understand it's not about you, but it's about the policies that you're trying to drive and get the state where you think it needs to be. You'll get the attention.

The late Kim Gordon who was my majority leader used to always say: good policy equals good politics, not the other way around. And I think that's hard for particularly new legislators to understand.

TM: 29:23

Tim: Because there's definitely a strong cynical strain in this business. I mean, you're in Washington. It's the world capital of cynicism. I hope I don't offend anybody by saying that, but you know, everybody is skeptical of everything, and it seems perpetual.

So, how do you convince people of... you know, I remember we would do training with Ken Gordon, and he would use that line and it always seemed great, and there was the part like yeah, listen to this, and then the Senate is like oh, that's what the softies say. How do you convince people in this era of hyperpolarization that good policy is good politics?

Peter: I think you can just look and see when you actually pass something it's implemented, the good work that it does, and I think people always need to go back to that. Right now, when you look at what's going on in Washington and the argument between the left wing of the Democratic party and the moderates where it's not really about the values of the party; it's about how much this particular wing can get in terms of how much of the money, you know, how much can we get over here or how much can we kind of save over here.

I think a good leader rallies their caucus and their conferences, they call it in D.C., around the values of the party. And out of that will come an answer about whether it should be \$1.5 trillion or \$3 trillion. You know, what's a trillion here or there? One and a half, three and a half, you know, you settle it at two because when you do that, all of the things that the Biden administration to pass, all the things that a governor might be trying to pass when they come to you and say we really need for you to vote for this at this level and this is why, because it's the values.

I think that's what's missing a lot of times, certainly in D.C., and when I talk to members increasingly at the state level. Generally, it's about winning and saying our side won, when it needs to be about the values and the role that government should play or on the Republican side not necessarily play, but the role that you intend for government and how to make that move going forward. That is a win, not whether your side got more money than the other side.

TM: 31:52

Tim: So, a guy I'm sure you remember, Andrew Romanoff. You probably are still in touch with Andrew. And Andrew had this line when we did training, and I would use him. He was a Democrat, but he was often working on a bipartisan thing, and he would say we think that

everybody is paying intent attention. Of course, interests are, lobbyists are, groups that help with campaigns are.

But he had this notion that outside about a half a mile from the capitol, it kind of didn't matter as much as people thought it did. There was so much concern about getting the win, because inside the building and a half a mile around it, there was this intensity about who won and who lost. And he would say it doesn't matter; it's here today, gone tomorrow, that people who vote and constituents don't matter.

Do you think that's accurate? I mean, I heard you allude to something along those lines. That's why I wanted to bring that forward. Do people over worry about, and people meaning legislators, legislative leaders, are they overly concerned about just getting the win when maybe it doesn't matter as much, or is it all about fundraising and it really does matter there? What do you think?

Peter: Andrew and I came into the legislature together in 2000 and he was speaker for a year when I was president. So, yes, we're good friends. We still communicate. And he is 1000% correct. I remember going to--my wife was a pastor at a church two and a half miles from the capitol. And so, after a day of just knock-down, drag-out arguments and the press was all around, and lobbyists were buzzing through the lobby, did a couple of interviews and then would go to a meeting at a church for her and people were like: What are you guys doing down there? I don't ever see you doing anything. I was like, well wait a minute, I was on the news, I was just on the radio. Like, you guys aren't really doing much.

So, yeah, he's right. Outside the building nobody cares. And so, I think you also have to keep that in mind. One of my favorite lines from a lobbyist is they never talk to freshmen legislators until they figure out they're not going to be president. I mean, there's a lot of self-importance in the legislature and, for those who understand what they're doing is not being picked up, but what they're doing is right are the ones who are going to be successful.

TM: 34:13

Tim: Well, we're rapidly coming to the end of our time. I have about 14 more questions to ask.

Peter: I talk too long.

Tim: No, on the contrary. Content is not a competitive thing, right? It's the quality that matters. It's not the numbers on the list. But I have so many other questions.

Let me ask one quick one because I don't want to neglect that a lot of legislative staff listen to this podcast from what I hear. What are your thoughts about staff and what makes for the best staff? I just want a bit of a different detour before we wrap up.

Peter: I think that the most important people in the building, despite what legislators think and then shortly, right underneath them lobbyists think, are the staff, both nonpartisan staff and partisan staff. They keep the train on the tracks, they make sure that things get done in a timely manner. I mean, the most important person for me was the secretary of the Senate, Karen Goldman, and then my chief of staff, Khadija Haynes.

They were the ones who said: You can't do that or why haven't you assigned this bill yet, or no, you have to have to have this meeting, or no, we have to make sure that we get these bills out by x because that's what the constitution says. And I'd always say: Well, what happens if we don't? And the secretary of the Senate, her head would explode.

They are certainly the most important folks, so you've got to treat them with kid gloves and certainly remember their birthdays and anniversaries because they're going to make you look good and they can really make you look bad if you get on their wrong side.

TM: 35:53

Tim: All right, that's terrific. What about, before we end, I mean, again, your bottom line, if you want to be a great legislator, do x? Even if you reiterate something you've already said here, let's just wrap up and leave it on a high note. What do you do to be great at this job?

Peter: I think you have to do three things. I think you have to listen, but you can't really listen unless you have a relationship with someone, because the easiest thing to do, as we're seeing in Washington right now, is call people names when you don't know who they are. It's really hard to call somebody a name when you know that person and when you know what it took for them to get to be duly elected just as you are.

And then do your homework. Make sure that you're ready for when your bill comes up to argue it in committee or on the floor, or if another bill comes up in your committee or on the floor, make sure that you've read it and make sure that you understand the pros and cons so that you can argue it to the best of your ability and ensure that whatever passes or doesn't pass is in the best interests of the state.

TM: 37:00

Tim: And that's some great advice regardless of your party or regardless of whether you're a big state or a small state or a rural district or an urban district, it doesn't matter. It's about doing right by those folks on the policy. That's terrific.

So, thank you Peter. I wish I had a fancy way to say that, but let's just basically say thank you. I really enjoyed the conversation, so many good insights. Colorado is still waiting for you when you and your wife sort things out as to where you're going next if anywhere, and maybe bringing you back to Denver is what the Colorado Rockies need to get back into the playoffs, so why don't you come out and cheer them on because we need some more help on that front as well.

Ed: And that concludes this episode of our podcast. We encourage you to review and rate our podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, or Spotify. We also encourage you to check out our other podcasts: "Our American States" and the special series, "Building Democracy." For the National Conference of State Legislatures, thanks for listening.