

Plug pulled on anti-offshoring bill
Sponsor promises to return with new proposal next year
By Roger Fillion
March 16, 2005
Rocky Mountain News

The sponsor of a Senate bill to bar Colorado from using offshore workers to perform state services pulled the plug on the measure Tuesday after budget analysts said it would cost taxpayers \$24 million.

The death of Senate Bill 23 represents the second year in a row that the bill - sponsored by Lakewood Democrat Sen. Deanna Hanna - has failed. Similar legislation has died elsewhere around the nation.

Republicans and Gov. Bill Owens attacked SB 23, charging it would force higher taxpayer costs, hamstringing contractors and scare away foreign companies.

The bill was drafted to apply only to service contracts - such as call-center operations - vs. products such as computers and other hardware state agencies buy.

But critics charged the anti-outsourcing provision would affect everything from service contracts tied to state computer systems, to military operations and state telecommunications services.

Sen. Jim Dyer, R-Centennial, called the legislation's demise "healthy," saying the \$24 million price tag probably was too low. "It's breathtaking to tell the taxpayers to dig into their pockets for that," he said.

Democrats and organized labor supported SB 23, saying taxpayer money shouldn't be used to send jobs offshore.

"We owe it to the people of Colorado to keep good-paying jobs in our country," Hanna said on the Senate floor.

In an interview, she said state agencies failed to come up with data detailing how the bill would affect their services. That made her reluctant to proceed.

This year, the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration calculated the bill would raise costs by \$28 million to \$73 million.

Hanna vowed to return in 2006 with a new bill and better data.

"We need to come back next year with our facts in order," she said.