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## Legal community offers virtual court proceedings

For some, virtual proceedings offer benefits to the court process; for others, they cause complications

BY MICHAEL KARLIK  
michael.karlik@coloradopolitics.com

Virtual court proceedings enable lawyers to more easily represent clients at a lower cost, are less disruptive to the lives of litigants and are more technically demanding on judges

and their courtrooms.

Those were the broad messages contained in more than 200 pages of comments submitted to the Colorado Supreme Court on a pair of proposed directives governing remote access to judicial proceedings. However, those who weighed in to the

state's highest court also illuminated many benefits, burdens and less-obvious complications that accompany the move away from in-person appearances.

"There are times a person is in hiding from their perpetrator and participating in virtual proceedings allows them to

stay safe," wrote Jenny Santos, who works with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

"Running a virtual courtroom has become the worst part of my job," countered Park County Court Judge Brian Green.

Late last month, the Supreme Court publicized two draft chief justice directives, which



JENNAYE DERGE

The La Plata County courthouse in Durango.

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## Biden's pick to lead FAA withdraws amid shaky Senate support

BY DAVID KOENIG  
AND SEUNG MIN KIM  
The Associated Press

WILMINGTON, DEL. • President Joe Biden's choice to run the Federal Aviation Administration has withdrawn his nomination, a setback for the administration that comes after Denver International Airport CEO Phillip Washington appeared to lack enough support in the closely divided Senate.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg confirmed Washington's withdrawal in a tweet Saturday night, calling him "an excellent nominee" and blaming undeserved and partisan attacks.

Republicans were united in opposition to Washington, calling him unqualified because of limited aviation experience. Democrats and allied independents still might have pushed the nomination through, but key senators on their side balked at supporting Biden's pick.

Washington's fate appeared settled when Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., abruptly called off a scheduled vote on Wednesday — a sign that she lacked enough votes to move the nomination out of committee. She said some senators wanted more information about Washington.

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, who was a Dem-



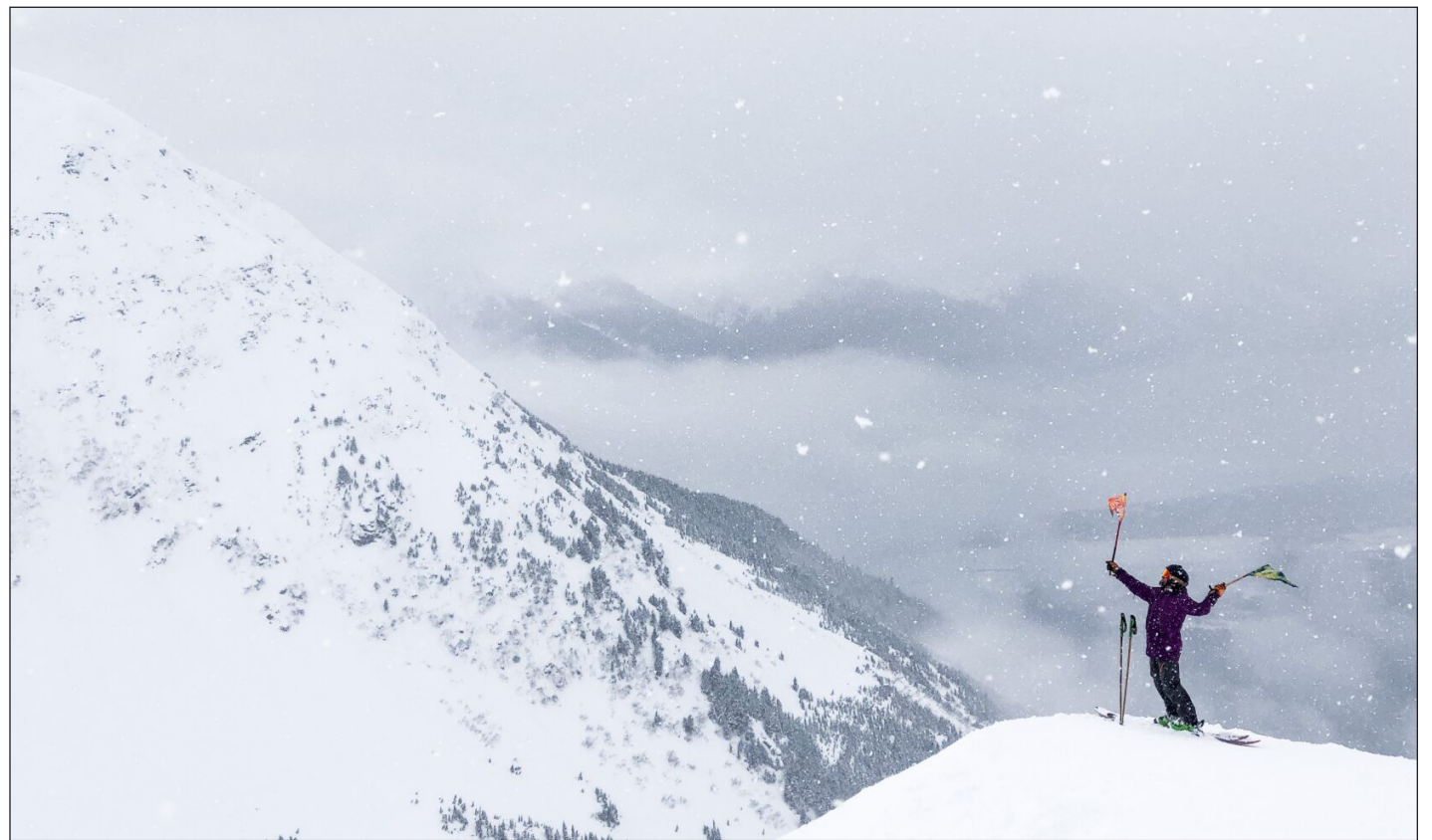
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Denver International Airport CEO Phillip Washington has withdrawn his nomination to head the Federal Aviation Administration.

ocrat until switching to independent in December, and moderate Democrat Jon Tester of Montana declined to say how they would have voted. A person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press that Sinema was holding up the nomination and had indicated her opposition. The person was not authorized to discuss the process publicly and insisted on anonymity.

Before the White House announces a new nominee, it likely will want assurances of support from Sinema, Tester and other moderates.

The FAA has lacked a Senate-confirmed administrator since March 2022. The agency is trying to reassure Americans that air travel is safe despite a surge in close calls between planes this year. It

SEE FAA • PAGE 6



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LISA GERSTNER AND STEVE SHUTE

Joel Shute skis atop a mountain.



Joel Shute in 1989, just weeks before his second birthday, skiing for the first time.

## Man killed in avalanche skied before he was 2, 'never looked back'

BY KYLA PEARCE  
The Gazette

Joel Shute knew he wanted to ski before he turned 2.

In 1989, when skiing with children in backpacks was allowed, Shute's parents, Steve Shute and Lisa Gerstner, would put him in a pack, ride the lift and ski down behind his 6-year-old brother.

The backpack only lasted a season. By winter's end, about a month before he turned 2, Joel Shute decided he wanted out.

"He's back there kicking me going,



Joel Shute takes a selfie while skiing with his dog Bombadil (Bomba).

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