

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 26-0441.01 Shelby Ross x4510

**HOUSE BILL 26-1227**

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**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Gilchrist and Bradfield,**

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Mullica,**

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**House Committees**

Health & Human Services  
Appropriations

**Senate Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING AFFIRMING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN**  
102 **DEPENDENCY AND NEGLECT PROCEEDINGS.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

Current law states that a child or youth named in a petition related to dependency and neglect proceedings is a party to the proceedings and has a right to attend and fully participate in all hearings related to the case. The bill affirms that as a party to the proceedings, the child or youth has legal standing regarding all matters related to the child's or youth's interests and the right to have the child's or youth's interests fully

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.  
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

represented by the guardian ad litem or counsel for youth throughout the proceedings, including appeals.

Once a petition is filed, ordered, or authorized for a dependency and neglect proceeding, if a county department of human or social services seeks dismissal of the petition prior to the adjudicatory hearing and the child or youth, through the child's or youth's guardian ad litem or counsel for youth, objects to the dismissal, the child has a right to a determination by the court as to whether the child or youth is dependent or neglected.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 19-3-502, **amend**  
3 (4.5); and **add** (4.7) as follows:

4 **19-3-502. Petition form and content - limitations on claims in**  
5 **dependency or neglect actions.**

6 (4.5) A child OR YOUTH named in the petition shall be a party to  
7 the proceedings and have the right to attend and fully participate in all  
8 hearings related to the child's OR YOUTH'S case. AS A PARTY TO THE  
9 PROCEEDINGS, A CHILD OR YOUTH HAS LEGAL STANDING REGARDING ALL  
10 MATTERS RELATED TO THE CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S INTERESTS AND THE RIGHT  
11 TO HAVE THE CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S INTERESTS FULLY REPRESENTED BY THE  
12 GUARDIAN AD LITEM OR COUNSEL FOR YOUTH THROUGHOUT THE  
13 PROCEEDINGS, INCLUDING APPEALS. The child's OR YOUTH'S guardian ad  
14 litem or counsel for youth shall provide developmentally appropriate  
15 notice to the child OR YOUTH of all hearings related to the child's OR  
16 YOUTH'S case.

17 (4.7) (a) ONCE A PETITION HAS BEEN FILED, ORDERED, OR  
18 AUTHORIZED, IF A COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN OR SOCIAL SERVICES  
19 SEEKS DISMISSAL OF THE PETITION PRIOR TO THE ADJUDICATORY HEARING  
20 AND THE CHILD OR YOUTH, THROUGH THE CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S GUARDIAN

1 AD LITEM OR COUNSEL FOR YOUTH, OBJECTS TO THE DISMISSAL, A HEARING  
2 MUST BE HELD BEFORE A JUDICIAL OFFICER TO DETERMINE, BY A  
3 PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE, WHETHER THE CHILD OR YOUTH IS  
4 DEPENDENT OR NEGLECTED, UNLESS THE CHILD OR YOUTH, THROUGH THE  
5 CHILD'S OR YOUTH'S GUARDIAN AD LITEM OR COUNSEL FOR YOUTH,  
6 CANNOT ARTICULATE A BASIS UPON WHICH ADJUDICATION CAN BE  
7 GRANTED.

8 (b) THIS SUBSECTION (4.7) DOES NOT LIMIT A PARENT'S RIGHT TO  
9 DEMAND A JURY TRIAL PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-3-202.

10 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 19-3-203, **amend** (6)  
11 as follows:

12 **19-3-203. Right to guardian ad litem and counsel for youth.**

13 (6) A person appointed to serve as counsel for youth pursuant to  
14 this section shall comply with the Colorado rules of professional conduct,  
15 provisions set forth in a chief justice directive concerning the court  
16 appointment of counsel for youth in this title 19, and subsequent chief  
17 justice directives or practice standards established by rule or directive of  
18 the chief justice pursuant to section 13-91-105 concerning the duties and  
19 responsibilities of a guardian ad litem and counsel for youth in legal  
20 matters affecting children or youth. Counsel for youth shall ~~ensure that~~  
21 ~~the child or youth has representation through pending appeals~~  
22 PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE PROCEEDINGS TO THE DEGREE NECESSARY TO  
23 REPRESENT THE YOUTH, INCLUDING APPEALING MATTERS TO THE COURT  
24 OF APPEALS OR THE SUPREME COURT.

25 **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This  
26 act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
27 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August

1 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a  
2 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the  
3 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act  
4 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect  
5 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
6 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
7 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.