

I would like to voice my opinion on the repurposing of the Ridge View Campus east of Aurora. I believe that the continued use of the campus to aid in the welfare of Colorado youth should be continued. There are very few places where underprivileged youth can get an education that will prepare them for a productive place in society.

That campus is already equipped and constructed to educate our youth. I would propose that it be continued to be used as a VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FACILITY to help educate students in vocational studies and prepare them for the workforce so they can become income producing, taxpaying citizens rather than drain our welfare system.

Ridge View is already setup to handle vocational education programs. Ridge View Academy (a charter school) operated not only an academic education program there, but also successfully ran programs for culinary arts, barbering, welding, construction, AI/IT training, drama and arts among them. The academy successfully trained and equipped many under privileged young men and placed them out into the workforce as productive citizens.

I would propose that instead of spending the forty five million dollars to remodel and repurpose the campus that the legislature would want to keep it for use as it was originally intended, spending that money to scholarship and support the many needy youth of or state.

Please consider your commitment to govern and lead our state in a beneficial and progressive manner and give some serious thought for this proposal.

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SB 211

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
05/03/2022 01:30 PM
SB22-211 Repurpose The Ridge View Campus
Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Bob Eikermann Against Self	Via submitted letter



May 2, 2022

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee
Colorado General Assembly

RE: Support SB22-211 – Repurpose the Ridge View Campus

Dear Members of the House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee:

My name is Kathy Smith, and I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Colorado's Legislative Action Committee. **I am writing in support of SB22-211, on behalf of the League's Legislative Action Committee.**

The League is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions of the state. The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, and access to safe and stable housing for people with behavioral health challenges including those who are chronically homeless.

Colorado's chronically sheltered homeless population grew by 266% between 2007 and 2021, which is more than any other state, according to a [report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#). Colorado's homelessness crisis has worsened during the pandemic. First-time homelessness in metro Denver doubled in 2021 over 2020 according to the [State of Homelessness](#) report by Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI). Black, Indigenous, and people of color were overrepresented in the numbers compared to White people.

The Ridge View Supportive Residential Community is modeled after the Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community in Las Animas that opened in 2013. Individuals who are chronically homeless are often the highest users of community services (e.g., emergency, in-patient and out-patient physical and behavioral health care, and social services). The [Fort Lyon 2018 Evaluation](#) report states that "The average total costs per Fort Lyon Program participant decreased by 33 percent from pre-enrollment in the Fort Lyon Program to post-enrollment for participants who had 1-year of post-enrollment data and who received Medicaid both pre- and post-enrollment. Results show decreases of 9 percent for physical health care, 34 percent for behavioral health care, 80 percent for the judicial system (i.e., incarceration, probation, and jail), and 65 percent for shelters and vouchers." In considering the ongoing operational costs of the proposed Ridge View Supportive Residential Community, it is important to consider the broad potential cost savings and the societal benefits.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on SB22-211. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Respectfully,
Kathy Smith, Volunteer Lobbyist
League of Women Voters of Colorado Legislative Action Committee
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