

Alma Wolf
Animas High School
Durango

(3 nominations
to Military Academies)

February 18, 2019

Dear Colorado Legislature Members,

My name is Alma Wolf, and I am a senior at Animas High School in Durango, Colorado. I know you are considering a bill to renew the Colorado Student Leaders Institute; I was a member of the COSLI Class of 2016 and I am writing to share the marked impact that COSLI has had on my life and urge you to continue this rewarding program.

When I learned of the Colorado Student Leaders Institute in the fall of 2015, I had just begun my freshman year of high school. It was my dream to become an astronaut, to study math and science and push the boundaries of human knowledge. This led me to work hard in school, but I wasn't particularly involved in my community. I've always been a natural leader, but I hadn't taken up any formal leadership roles nor sought out any service opportunities. COSLI seemed like the perfect program for me to gain independence, develop leadership skills, and explore opportunities within Colorado, but I wasn't quite sure what to expect.

Setting foot on the campus of the University of Colorado-Denver that day in July began a journey of self-realization and empowerment. Every day of COSLI, I was challenged to collaborate with people from different backgrounds and ideology than my own. I was pushed to meet rigorous academic standards. I learned about problems facing Colorado, and how to solve them. I met some of my best friends, and I grew as a student and citizen through enriching discussions with peers. Every day of COSLI helped me grow, yet one day of COSLI will be forever lodged in my mind as a major turning point in my life. We had been studying political science concepts for weeks, and a woman came to our group to speak about homelessness. Her presentation caused something to click in my mind: involvement in government has the potential to create large-scale positive change. Yes, astronauts have an important job, but if I truly want to improve human lives, I can do so by diving head-first into public service.

After my time at COSLI, I had a new sense of purpose and a new desire to serve those around me. When school started again, I ran for Student Council, hoping to enhance school culture and give back to the community that I love. I applied for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission and began serving as a Youth Representative in our local government. I helped shape our school's newly-created Restorative Justice program, bringing ideas of social justice reform to the classroom level. I began volunteering regularly at my church. I organized my town's *March For Our Lives* to protest gun violence and provide a platform for social change. Because of the programming and support I received through COSLI, I realized my role as a community leader and I've been able to positively impact the people around me.

In May of 2018, I lived in Washington DC and interned at the US House of Representatives, with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. My internship provided even more experience in government and solidified my goals of working in public service. I'm still deciding where I'd like to go to college, but I've been nominated by Representative Scott Tipton to the United States Naval Academy, and by Senator Cory Gardner to the United States Air Force Academy. Wherever I end up, I plan to study political science and international relations.

COSLI set me on a path to realize my leadership potential and my interest in politics and government. It provided me with the opportunity to explore outside of a traditional classroom setting, connect with peers across the state, and learn the tools of a successful leader. Simply put, I'm not sure where I'd be without COSLI, and I'm forever grateful to Celeste Archer, Kayla Gabehart, and the other people that make COSLI a reality.

As the Legislature considers renewing funding for COSLI, I'd like to remind you all that COSLI is an investment. By investing in COSLI, we're teaching promising students how to access their potential and become the leaders of the next generation. COSLI is an extremely valuable program for Colorado students, and I strongly suggest that you continue to support it into the future.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
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