

### Linsi Bowers Testimony

Hello, I would like to thank you all for sharing your time with me and giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Linsi Bowers and I am a senior at the University of Colorado Boulder. I am a first generation student and a native Coloradan from the Northeastern plains of the state--from a small town called Sterling. I'm here today because I hope that you will support Senate Bill 45 and help future Colorado students have the support and access to financial knowledge that I wish I had before taking out loans.

I come from a working-class family who has been struggling to make ends meet since my mother was permanently injured in her workplace. None of my older siblings graduated high school but I have always believed education is the one key to success and now, I am the first person in my immediate family to attend college.

When I was a freshman in highschool I set my eyes upon studying at the University of Colorado Boulder. When I was a senior, I began navigating the process of financial aid and student loans on my own. It wasn't until my freshman year at CU that I had to take a class about what it meant to take out student loans, however this was after I had already taken out loans and enrolled in school. I am now nearing the end of my senior year with a degree in Sociology and will begin to repay my loans.

Since no one in my family had taken out student loans before, it was up to me to navigate the confusing bureaucracy of financial aid and student loans. Much of my senior year of high school was spent in uncharted territory, filling out college and housing applications all while trying to pass all of my classes. At this point in time I was overwhelmed with new information but even then I knew that I would have to go into debt to complete my degree. The effects of this decision are coming into strong focus, and in 2017 I will begin to pay back the \$50,000 worth of debt my education has accumulated. I'm from Colorado, I am going to an in-state school, I work hard in school, have a job, and still, the deck has been stacked against me and my generation. I've never regretted the decision to go to my dream school. I've only ever wished I could be so lucky as to leave without any debt, and even more so, had someone to help prepare me for the long process of repaying my loans.

I ask that the playing field be leveled by starting to address barriers that stand in the way of my generation attending college. There is still so much more to be done, but institutionalizing and systematizing a plan to make sure high school students have financial literacy is a step in the right direction. Please do the right thing and vote yes on Senate Bill 16-45. Thank you.