

Colorado Student Leaders Institute
2019 Essay Topics

- Education Policy
- Racial Disparity in STEM
- Homelessness
- Drug Addiction/Opioid Crisis
- Suicide
- Mental Health
- Immigration
- Sustainability
- Overpopulation
- Racism
- Health Care Availability
- Gender Inequality
- Police In the Community
- Social Media
- Gang Violence
- Wrongful Convictions
- Marijuana
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Nationalism
- Diversity/Inclusion
- Vaping and Underage Smoking
- Student Loan Debt
- Gun Control/School Shootings/Second Amendment
- Air Pollution
- DACA
- Automobile Deaths
- Gentrification
- Sexualization of Women in Music
- Cultural Appropriation
- LGBTQ Issues
- Religious Tolerance
- Voter Suppression
- Oil Industry

Macha – Mike Tuguven (How are you and Hello my friends)

Good Day to the Committee, our Senate and Representative sponsors, our terrific students and my fellow Board members.

It is my honor to give testimony before the Colorado Senate Education Committee regarding SB 19-137 – Extend The Colorado Student Leaders Institute – Todd, Crowder, Wilson, Hansen. Your time is valuable so I will try to be brief.

My wife Wendy Valdez and I (Johnny T. Valdez) are the proud parents of John C. Valdez (2017-2018 COSLI Student Board President – COSLI graduate 2016) and Elizabeth W. Valdez (2018-Present Student Board Secretary – COSLI graduate 2017). We are from the far reaches of Colorado in the small town of Ignacio. Our children attend/ attended Ignacio High School, the only high school in Colorado within the boundaries of a reservation. Our children are descendants of the original inhabitants of Colorado – the Southern Utes and in particular; the great great grandchildren of (Jack) John Taylor – a freed slave and Buffalo Soldier and his wife Kitty Cloud who was the daughter of Chief Black and Pink Cloud. Our rich tribal history is not lost on our children. They spent many days with their Grandfather, Sylvia T. Valdez who was Chairman Emeritus of the Committee of Elders and their Grandmother, Barbara A. Valdez the granddaughter of one of the first advanced degree Native teachers west of the Mississippi, Hipolita Padilla Silva. They learned about leadership, education and the price paid to earn each.

Fortune smiles upon us all some days. I was lucky enough to be introduced to Celeste Archer, the Founding Executive Director of COSLI. I hoped she would be stuck reading this to the Committee so she could be embarrassed by the nice things I have to say about her, her staff and the great people she has gathered together to support our young adults. Her personal efforts have brought a passion to all the fine students who attend the summer program. It must be said that her personal sacrifice and persistence has helped create a truly extraordinary organization. I am humbled to know her and call her and her family my friends.

Personally, I have been lucky enough to serve on several State Boards to include COSLI, National History Day Colorado and previously the Colorado State Science Fair. I have also had the privilege of serving as the Executive Officer of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Coach basketball at Ignacio Junior and Senior High Schools for 25 years, and travel the world speaking about Native culture, business and finance. In all those meetings, trips and valued interactions, there is nothing more that I treasure than speaking to the COSLI students and their families on Parents day. It is so exciting to speak to young leaders who will go well beyond where we will ever go. I am so glad that Mrs. Archer and her team allow me that honor whenever I am available.

Meeting her changed my life, the lives of my children and so many others. The program she helped create sparked something truly special in our kids. John attended first. He loved the experience at CU Denver so much so that he encouraged his sister to attend as well.

Our son John is very academically inclined and learns easily. He has a passion for sports and academics. He was a first team All-State Basketball player and the Valedictorian of his class. He now plays basketball and attends Willamette University in Salem, Oregon where he is on the Dean's List.

Our daughter Elizabeth is socially adept. She makes friends easily and loves working with others. She is an 'A' student but grades don't come as easy to her. She is severely dyslexic but her listening and cognitive thinking skills help her achieve great things. She is the Student Body President of IHS as a Junior, loves sports and is the lead in every play. COSLI has opened up an entirely new world of possibilities to her.

Both of our children have had the privilege of testifying before this committee and have spoken across the state to encourage others to attend and support COSLI. Their efforts and the efforts of so many other fine students of our state, have broadened the horizons and expanded the world for so many potential future leaders. The program is not for the rich or the privileged. It serves; by statute, a minimum of diverse children from a variety of backgrounds.

Our children and their histories are the future of the great state of Colorado. This program helps a wide range of learners and leaders, no matter their individual circumstance. All our children in this state are vastly different and that is what makes bringing them together such an incredible experience. They are provided the opportunity to learn from great leaders and each other.

Both of our children have returned each year to attend the summer program as Resident Assistants and will hopefully do so again this year. They are amazed at the growth and friendships created by attending COSLI. As a parent, I am overwhelmed that our family has been able to be a small part of something so much greater than us. We hope that you will join us in making these experience resonate in others well into the future of our beautiful state.

Thank you for your consideration. (To'owiak)

Respectfully,

Johnny T. Valdez
COSLI Advisory Board Member

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,
Alma Wolf
(970) 799-6228
a.wolf19@animashighschool.com

February 20, 2019

Dear Colorado Legislature Members,

My name is Prashasth Satish, and I am an 11th grader at Peak to Peak Charter School in Lafayette. I am a graduate of the Colorado Student Leaders Institute (COSLI), and I graduated in the summer of 2018. This past summer, COSLI finished its pilot year, and you all are being asked to vote on its renewal. My experience with COSLI was a wonderful one, and I would definitely do it again if given the chance. When I first got accepted, I did not know what to expect. I was unsure about how I would feel about leaving my friends and my parents for nearly half of my summer vacation. As I was packing my bags near the beginning of July, I thought to myself: Is this all going to be worth it? I did not know it at the time, but the answer would be a resounding yes. The first couple of days of COSLI were a little frantic because we received all of the work that we would have due throughout the month at once. It was starting to look like I had made a huge mistake, and that I was going to be extremely overwhelmed. However, upon closer inspection, I realized that the homework load was not actually that bad, and it was much less than what I was used to from my school. In addition, the homework did not take up as much of my time as I had expected, meaning I still had plenty of time to socialize and make new friends. As the month went along, I started to get used to the feeling of not living with my parents, and I got used to the college lifestyle, where there was no one to tell me to get my work done. The final day arrived too soon, and I came to the realization that I may not see some of these people again since they lived many hours away. I also realized that I had not thought about my friends back home once. I was too busy enjoying my time with my new friends. I am glad that my relationship with COSLI did not end for good at the end of the program. I was elected to be a member of the student board, so I will be able to help to make sure that COSLI keeps getting better and better.

It was incredible to see just how diverse the COSLI Class of 2018 was, with people from urban places like Denver and Boulder sitting right alongside people from the far outskirts of Colorado, such as Trinidad or Dolores. COSLI was an incredible learning experience, and not just in the classroom. It taught me what it is like to live on a college campus with a roommate rather than my parents. It taught me what being in a large class feels like. My high school has just 600 people, so I had never been in a classroom with more than 30 people until COSLI. The things that we learned in the classroom were quite useful as well. I learned a lot of things that will be vastly important for the rest of my life, such as how to build a resume and cover letter. These are the things that are not taught in the average high school classroom, and as such, they have helped me go further than just my high school career. The resume that I started in COSLI is the one that I continue to use and update and is the resume that got me my first job in January of this year. My manager specifically complimented me on the fact that I had a resume at all, which was rare to see in someone at such a young age. A high school will always teach a student things like math and science and English, but programs like COSLI teach a student so much more. COSLI helps students such as myself make lifelong connections and network with people in the fields in which we are interested. This program has been very meaningful to me, and I hope to see it help many other bright and passionate Colorado students in the future. The students of today will be the leaders of the future, and with COSLI, the future of Colorado will look brighter than ever. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,
Prashasth Satish

Dear Legislative Member,

My name is Greta Cahill and I was a part of the 2018 class of Colorado Student Leaders Institute. During the summer of 2018, I learned and grew so much in leadership, collaboration, and most of all as a engaged individual in our state. I would like to share my experience as well as thank COSLI for what it has provided me.

Before coming to COSLI, I had some experience with leading groups and working together to solve issues we saw in the past as well as issues we are faced with presently, but these skills were never really refined. I felt stuck in what I was doing, and didn't know exactly what I wanted to do to help my community or solve issues we see. COLSI was brought to my attention through a fellow Advisory Board Member, and I quickly began working on my application. As I submitted it, I was really hoping to get into this program. I was so excited to hear that I was accepted and would be heading to Denver for a month to learn, explore, and create. Little did I know, that this would be one of the best and influential months of my life.

One of the most important things COLSI has taught me is that everyone has their own perspective on everything and that is beautiful because we can use those differences to challenge our ideas, refine our work, and mostly open our eyes to new and different perspectives. This is something that is so important in the world right now and COSLI does an amazing job teaching us to use this effectively. Throughout the program, we had discussions about the issues we see in Colorado and the U.S, like homelessness and undocumented immigration. I found that in the room of 96 students, there were 96 perspectives on those issues and because of this, we were able to discuss topics and open our eyes.

In the month we spent in Denver, we got the opportunity to work with the CU Business School in order to create our own business. This is one of my favorite parts of COSLI because of the personalization you could have with creating your business. My group and I decided to tie our business into an issue that is faced every year in Colorado, wildfires. While working, I learned vital skills in entrepreneurship and the ever changing business world. We learned how to effectively calculate profits, present business ideas, outline ideas for future promotional ideas, and work together with 21st century technology to create high quality products for our consumer. These skills were well taught through lessons we had through CU Denver Business School as well as our own mentor we had throughout the four weeks.

Due to these skills I have learned, I have found tremendous success in my own fundraising endeavors back in my community. As president of my Interact club, we found that the waste of single use plastic in our community could be decreased and so we started selling reusable metal straws around town to fundraise our international trip we are planning. With the skills I learned from COSLI's business project, I feel like I can contribute more thoughtful wisdom when it comes to marketing our fundraiser. After implementing these skills, we have gained a lot more business!

One of the things that I hold most dearly to my heart about COSLI was the friendship I built with the other students at this camp. I remember on the first day, we were all having orientation and I was scared. Being in a big city with people who I wasn't friends with yet was kind of intimidating to me, but one of the RA's stood up and said, "This is the COSLI family!" At first, I thought that the month was going to be too short to

make great friends, but I made some of the closest friends I have had during this program. Being able to spend a month having genuine conversations and working through projects was irreplaceable. I grew so much in the collaborative skills I was missing and learned to work with others to refine and present projects that we were proud of. While doing this, I became so close with my fellow students, who impact me daily. I would not replace the friendships I created in this program for anything and the people who I got to spend so much time with are people that I will always stay in contact with.

Along with this, Celeste and Kayla are such an inspiration to me. I have learned that in order to be a leader, you need to be motivated, hard working, and above all, kind to those around you; traits that they encompass everyday. The opportunities that they give students during and after the program has ended are incredible; in addition to this, they are always ready to support you in whatever you need.

Colorado Student Leaders Institute has provided unique learning experiences for me, where I have gotten to tour the Denver Arts Museum or learn about the building of Red Rocks. These are something that I would have never saw if it weren't for COSLI. One of the most unforgettable field trips we went on was the American Furniture Warehouse, where we met Jake Jabs. This was one of the first field trips we went on and I learned a lot about the way he created a name for himself in Colorado. Being a leader in furniture design and manufacturing, Jake Jabs took us through the *39 Keys of Business Success*, which gave us a lot of insight on the business' we were creating. It was so much fun to see how a huge business such as American Furniture Warehouse worked as well.

After coming home from COSLI, I realized how much I have changed and grew. I felt like I had a new, fresh way of looking at problems in my community and how to go about solving them. COSLI is a program that is truly a once in a lifetime experience and I would give anything to go back and hang out at the dorms having a dance party, or having a discussion about the homelessness laws we have in Colorado. I have learned the freedom and the responsibility of independence and college life and have gained new friends and skills in all kinds of areas intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. I have found new ways to handle the stress that comes with high school and how to deal with challenging projects in a group setting. And I have COSLI to thank for all of it. Without this program, I would be lost in what to do to spark change in the world we live in today. I found my voice at COSLI that I will use for the rest of my life, whether that be standing up for what I believe in or using it to help others. I found a new spark this summer and can not wait to see where my new found skills take me in life.

COSLI is essential to the state's youth engagement, which is so important in today's world. The experience and exposure to business, current issues and the policies being implemented for them, and the interpersonal and intellectual skills gained at Colorado Student Leaders Institute is incomparable to those found in a typical classroom. The state of Colorado and the world needs young leaders who are trained and willing to take on the big issues we face as we embark on the journey to greatness, and I can confidently say that COSLI creates and supports those leaders.\

Thank you,
Greta Cahill

Dear Colorado Legislature,

My name is Hagan Archer. I am a sophomore at East High School in Denver. Celeste Archer is my mother. It is demanding position. When I was born, she put me in a Snugly and I became part of civic work with her students – my first campaign when I was 2 months old. When she started Women For Education, leading to Clayton Early Learning Center, I attended the meetings in a stroller. When she took her kids to Northern Ireland and Ireland, I was five and she held my hand tight. At 8, I joined her kids on a trip to Israel and carried the backpack with snacks – spilling the M&M's at The Western Wall. When her kids worked to keep a playground in a neighborhood close to her school, I testified. I've shared my mom since I was born, so I was thrilled to be one of "her kids" last summer, as a member of the COSLI Class of 2018.

It was eye-opening. Hearing multiple sides of issues, learning about responsible and good use of oil and gas resources, creating a small business, diving into research. It was a month of working hard and playing hard. I was "called to the principal's office" one time – just like any other kid – and it was hard. I totally get how my mom becomes mom to so many and why she works so hard to make sure this program succeeds. It's important. We are building Colorado's future, really.

When my mom emptied her teacher retirement account and started working to create COSLI, it was a little scary and we tightened our belts at home. She'd seen the difference it could make and was determined that CO students would be able to have the same experience, so my Dad and I buckled up. I'm sure there were a lot of people who thought it would never happen. I didn't. My whole life has been filled with defiance after defiance of "no ways." But this one is "THE" one. She works 2 jobs to make sure she can keep this budget light and lean – she is also the director of our state's National History Day program. It's been 5 years since the first group of COSLI kids. It hope it becomes 50.

Sincerely,

Hagan Archer

Colorado Senate Education Committee Members:

My name is Veniece Miller and I am currently a freshman at the University of Colorado Boulder. I am double majoring in Political Science and International Relations with a concentration in Middle Eastern Studies. I am honored to express to you how Colorado Student Leaders Institute changed my life.

I attended COSLI two summers ago in 2017 and became the financial officer for the student board. COSLI taught me how to be independent, how to think critically, how to problem solve, and how to be a leader. These are skills that one cannot learn from a textbook, rather they are worked on, refined, and challenged through life experience. COSLI provides a hands-on educational experience to students like me, who would not have an opportunity to learn and live college life otherwise. After now completing one semester of college and being more than a third of the way into my second, I can proudly say COSLI provided me with the skills I needed to excel in college (I might add with a 4.0 GPA!) I was able to go into college with 27 credits, three of those from COSLI, putting me ahead of the curve as almost a sophomore! Overall, accruing less student debt.

Public education is woefully underfunded, I witnessed this in my hometown in rural Colorado, where students are less likely to be prepared for college or go to college at all; a place where prospects for driven students like me are scarce. COSLI gave me the opportunity to think bigger than myself and where I'm from. It gave me a broadened perspective and opened my vision to see the role I could play in changing the world.

I'm a freshman college student, and I have a lot to learn. My plans to continue achieving in college and life are in full swing. I credit the Colorado Legislature and educational champions like Celeste who were advocating and working on a program like this before I even knew what it was or the significant role it would play in my life. Colorado Student Leaders Institute shows students Colorado *does* care, and Colorado is seeing a return on its investment. Students like me are scattered throughout Colorado, working on world changing projects and making their impact. Thank you for your continued support in mine and my peer's success.

Veniece Miller

Dear Colorado State Legislature,

The Colorado Student Leadership Institute was an experience that impacted my life for the better, and one that I hope many other kids will get to experience as well. I went last summer in July of 2018, and my sister went in the summer of 2016. When I was applying for COSLI, I was nervous because I was committing to a month away from my family. However, this experience that started out with my nervousness turned into an amazing adventure that I created a new family in. This camp helped me grow as a student, as a leader, and also as an individual in so many ways, and I am immensely grateful for that.

The town that I live, Crested Butte, is not very diverse. COSLI gave me a chance to connect with wonderful people that I might not have otherwise met. Each one gave me a new insight and perspective towards life, and it was amazing to experience so many ways of thinking and viewing the world. My roommate was someone with completely different experiences, ethnicity, and religion than me, and she became one of my best friends at COSLI. She still inspires me every day, and I have learned so much from her. We've kept in touch and try to call or text as often as possible, and I know that without COSLI there is no way I would have met this amazing human that I am privileged to call my friend.

COSLI gave us the opportunity to respect different opinions through discussing hard topics that don't come up in daily life, such as racial slurs and oppression, why some say the pledge of allegiance and why others do not, and homelessness. I met people with extremely diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and political views, and I grew in respect for all of those people. COSLI allowed me to connect with these people, expand my views of other cultures, and see the views of others in a safe and wonderful environment.

Additionally I learned extremely valuable educational lessons and skills through the work and lectures I witnessed during my time at COSLI. This year I am taking a workload that is much harder than my freshman year, and I believe that COSLI helped me build study skills that have impacted me positively and have helped me in my AP and honors classes. I learned how to take better notes during the lectures, how to manage my time better, and how to do things such as create my resume that will help me senior year and this summer while I am searching for jobs.

This opportunity allowed me to grow as a leader as well through the complicated and self directed tasks that we were assigned, and it helped us work together and know when to ask for help and when to work something out ourselves. We got to create a business, ours called Tied Up, and we each had different tasks that we were strong at. We learned to work together and how to all step up as leaders, and COSLI was the fuel for this fire of creativity.

Overall, COSLI has impacted many aspects of my life for the better, and I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity. I hope that future students will be able to experience this as well, because it helps create the intelligent, independent, and confident youth that we need. Thank you for reading my letter and I hope COSLI will be a program that lasts to impact other kids as it has impacted me.

Sophia Truex

To Whomever it May Concern,

There are moments where we are given a chance and an opportunity to change our lives and do something larger than ourselves. An opportunity given to students within Colorado is the Colorado Student Leaders Institute (COSLI).

My name is Katherine Gillman and I am a student of the Colorado Student Leaders Institute (COSLI). This program is a month-long course where students stay at the University of Denver while studying diverse problems and topics within Colorado. COSLI chooses Colorado's best and brightest students to learn from people of all different backgrounds and opinions to get a variety of information, and they work to build upon their leadership, independence, innovativeness, initiative, critical thinking, and creativity with the other students.

COSLI is a state-legislated, summer residential program at the University of Colorado Denver where 100 of Colorado's best and brightest students are chosen from a competitive pool of applicants. Students stay within the dorms of the university while attending classes and doing other activities, which gives students a trial-run for their future college lives, expands their knowledge about their communities, and builds upon their character. Along with the amazing events awaiting the future students at COSLI, they will earn 3 college credits to put towards their future successes.

I think that COSLI is an extremely unique and amazing opportunity that I was lucky to have. I want as many people as possible to also have this experience. All the students there learn so many amazing things, have terrific experiences, get to lead and learn to lead with other amazing people, and get to attend a program that will last for a lifetime. I know I, among with many others, will cherish our experience here.

We were given opportunities to work by ourselves and with others to do things most high schoolers don't do until later in their lives. We learned these valuable skills earlier than most, but I believe more people should be learning the things COSLI taught me. I hope that this program continues to do these wonderful things and for more people.

Thank you so much for taking your time to read my letter and for supporting this valuable program. Have a wonderful day, and I hope you continue to try to make a difference with COSLI.

Sincerely,

Katherine Gillman

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jessica Kern, and I am currently a freshman at the Colorado School of Mines, studying chemical engineering with an emphasis on biological engineering. I attended the Colorado Student Leaders Institute (COSLI) in its pilot year, the summer of 2016. I also had the opportunity to work as a Resident Assistant for the program this past summer. I firmly believe that the two months that I spent with COSLI developed skills and connections that I will be able to utilize now in college and beyond. The COSLI program instilled in me an intense desire to form my own opinion on divisive political topics, while not forcing me to conform to any one opinion. I was also taught that my voice mattered, and given the type of confidence that it takes to become politically engaged as a young adult. Lastly, COSLI helped me develop professional and communicative skills that assisted me in receiving a full ride scholarship to the Colorado School of Mines. I strongly encourage any and all students that have the opportunity to attend COSLI. I believe that I would not have had as much success in my post-secondary education if I had not attended programs such as COSLI. Please take these thoughts into consideration, and vote to renew the COSLI program for another 5 years.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Kern

Dear Colorado Legislature Members,

My name is Rebekah Jensen, and I was a part of COSLI in the summer of 2018. I am writing this letter, to bring my thoughts on COSLI, Colorado Student Leaders Institute, and why it should be renewed. To bring some background on how I became a part of it, this program had been recommended to me by a teacher at my school, Glenwood Springs High School, who is unfortunately no longer working with the school. I had some doubts about the program, mainly, if I would fit in. I am a child with ADHD, and I usually have a hard time getting along with people, as well as being a confident leader. The teacher who had recommended this saw that I was indeed a leader, and that I have attributes of one, which I do not disagree with. So I started working on the applications, my school was generous enough to donate the money I needed for sponsorship, as my other attempts at reaching out had resulted in no answers back. I had learned how to write a letter to ask for sponsorship money, and I have reached out to I loved having the ability to be creative and thoughtful in my essays about Colorado and the world.

On February 26, 2018, I had received an email congratulating my parents for having their child accepted into this program. I was thrilled, because this would be such a new opportunity for me, and it was a great one. Myself, along with everyone else, had been given documents to finalize the position in COSLI, and later on, we had been given schedules, room number, and even a list of all the students, which included their emails and roommates. I was able to email my roommate, and even speak with her on video chat before we even officially met. We had texted so much up to the day, and I still have her in my contacts.

On the first day of COSLI, we had a meeting after everyone was settled, where we met the people of the board, and then went with our RA's, and played some games. I had been one of the people who signed up for music, and so the other people who had, met with the music teacher and we discussed some schedule times and I ended up having a great time with the music portion of the program. Throughout COSLI, I had been able to learn a lot about the History of Colorado, met many great and inspiring speakers, and even read an interesting book which I made a report on. I was given so many opportunities to experience Denver and Colorado itself. Having gone out camping and been on a rope course, participated in many group activities, created a connection with students from all over Colorado, who I still keep in touch with, and just overall, I learned how to have fun and utilize my time with homework more. Our homework consisted of writing Journal entries about the day, which is really helpful because I still have them, and can look back at them to remember all I had learned, and I have looked back at them.

COSLI has been a great experience for me, and many others who took part in it. I really wished I could go back and experience the magic this place presented, experience the fun and all the teachings brought into my life. I was able to form bonds with people all over Colorado, learned a lot about who they are, and was able to really be myself. This program, it was an experience that makes my High School life seem like middle school. I really miss the program, and I know that if 80+ people enjoyed this program, and the students that joined it before me enjoyed this program, that people in the future will as well. There was not much I did not enjoy, and I even brought some knowledge back home with me and to school. I thank Celeste Archer and Kayla Gabehart for this incredible program and bringing me so much experience, and I hope I can thank you for renewing the program.

Sincerely,
Rebekah Jensen

Archer, Celeste

From: Ewan Wummel <ewanjwummel@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 9:04 PM
To: Archer, Celeste
Subject: Here is My Letter

Dear Colorado Legislature Members:

My name is Ewan Wummel and I am an Alumni of Colorado Student Leaders Institute. I was led to this program through another college preparation program and this has been one of the best experiences in my life. Though COSLI, I was able to meet many wonderful people. From the students, to the coordinators, to the RA's, and to the guests we met throughout the entire duration of the program. I was able to learn so much about college itself and learn about many pressing issues throughout the presentations of guest speakers. This program provides a wonderful chance to have a proper college experience by living in dorms and taking classes. I believe that every student who is seeking a bigger challenge and an extraordinary experience should go through COSLI. And the only way for that to happen is to have the program renewed and continued. COSLI has provided for the betterment of education and leadership characteristics better than any other program I have experienced. Please allow for this program to be renewed, so that future students can experience the wonder that is COSLI.

Sincerely,

Ewan Wummel

To Whom it May Concern:

I can recount few things in my life thus far that were as transformative an experience as the Colorado Student Leadership Institute was. COSLI connected me with leaders, thinkers, and visionaries who would become some of my lifelong friends. Beyond that, it exposed me to a wealth of experiences that helped me refine my perspectives, thoughts, positions, and opinions. Being from a rural part of the state, such opportunities and connections were scarce, making them all the more valuable and meaningful, as well as making me ever more determined to take the lessons I learned and affect change in my community.

COSLI was an inspiring and thought-provoking experience. It was far from easy, but the challenge was a healthy one, teaching me how to balance my time and work hard. The work was never meaningless, and I felt that every essay I wrote, every note I took, and every lecture I listened to was getting me somewhere. Now, three years later, I can say with full confidence that it has. As I prepare to graduate from High School and enter the next chapter of my life, the insights and connections I gained from COSLI have opened a multitude of doors through which lay so many opportunities that would have been unthinkable at the beginning of my burgeoning high school career. Since COSLI, I have become active politically, active with volunteer organizations within my community, and my proudest achievement, founded the first Gay-Straight Alliance my school district has ever seen. These building blocks afford me a structure to construct a bright future for myself, my friends, my family, and my community.

Students and youth across the state deserve the same opportunity to learn and grow, to experience, and to lead. Empowering Colorado's youth to become the next generation of movers and shakers can only create good for this state. So I ask you to renew COSLI, so that leaders across Colorado can build bright futures for all of us for years to come.

Sincerely,

Anthony Swenk

COSLI Class of 2016

Dear Senate Education Committee:

The Colorado Student Leadership Institute provided me with an experience unlike any other. The institute placed me into an environment that I'm not too familiar with. It also introduced topics and opinions that I have never deeply thought about.

I have never spent a prolonged period of time in a big city so spending a month in Denver was a new experience for me. My family is primarily republican and the county that I live in has been republican since its founding and COSLI showed me situations that are continuously shut down by the people that surround me. We had to read and do a report on Just Like Us: The True Story of Four Mexican Girls Coming of Age in America by Helen Thorpe. This book opened my eyes to the individuals that are here illegally that were brought here at a young age. This book and lectures on immigration, homeless people, and other topics taught me to have empathy for people that are not like me.

All in all, COSLI presented many worlds, religions, and ways of life that are entirely new to me. COSLI showed me the processes of entrepreneurship and allowed me to test my abilities by creating a business. Real world tasks were taught extensively from writing a resume, cover letter to even writing a professional email.

I am and always will be proud and grateful to be a 2018 COSLI graduate and board member.

Thank you for your time,
Jacee Lawrence