



COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

Please **SUPPORT** HB 16-1307

"CONCERNING THREATS AGAINST PERSONS AT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS"

Bill Sponsors: Representative Jovan Melton and Senator John Cooke

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) **urges your SUPPORT** for HB 16-1307, which seeks to **promote safety and deter acts of violence** at postsecondary educational institutions by **increasing the penalty** for threats of death or serious bodily harm against a person at an educational institution from a class 1 misdemeanor to a class 6 felony.

BACKGROUND

Ensuring all Coloradans have access to high-quality, affordable education that is student-centered, quality driven, and performance-based is DHE's priority. A powerful deterrent to student success is the threat of violence against a student, school official, employee or guest at an institution of higher education. Threats of serious violence against post-secondary institutions frequently require lockouts, lockdowns, evacuations, additional local law enforcement resources devoted to the campus, and engagement of additional security forces to protect the campus. These threats and the resulting campus disruptions derail learning, create a culture of fear, and drain resources intended to educate students.

Current law allows for a class 1 misdemeanor charge against persons who threaten the safety of a person at an IHE (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-1.3-501). However, research supports that a felony charge is likely to have greater deterrent potential than a misdemeanor charge. HB 16-1307 would accordingly increase the penalty to a class 6 felony to provide the necessary time and opportunities to investigate threats and respond in the most appropriate manner.

In the interest of promoting school safety and an enriching, safe learning environment for all 400,000 Coloradan postsecondary students, CDHE urges your support for HB 16-1307.

HB 16-1307 is supported by:

Colorado Department of Higher Education
Colorado Community College System
Adams State University
Aims Community College
Arapahoe Community College
Auraria Higher Education Center
Colorado Mesa University
Colorado Northwestern Community College
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Community College of Aurora
Community College of Denver
Front Range Community College

Fort Lewis College
Lamar Community College
Metropolitan State University
Morgan Community College
Northeastern Junior College
Otero Junior College
Pikes Peak Community College
Pueblo Community College
Red Rocks Community College
Trinidad State Junior College
University of Colorado
University of Northern Colorado
Western State Colorado University



For more information, please contact Kachina Weaver, Chief Policy Officer for the Colorado Department of Higher Education, at (303) 883-7076 or vial email kachina.weaver@dhe.state.co.us.

