

**Senate Education**

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**HB24-1216 Supports for Youth in Juv Justice System**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
<p>Dawn Fritz For Colorado Parent Teacher Association</p>	<p>Colorado PTA supports HB 1216. PTA believes that every child deserves the opportunity to grow into a happy and healthy adult, which includes mental, physical, and overall well-being. We believe that all children deserve the chance to reach their potential and thrive. PTA has long advocated for policies that would protect the rights of children and youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. In fact, beginning in 1899, PTA was one of the first associations to encourage federal and state lawmakers to create a safe and rehabilitative justice system for children by establishing separate courts and probation systems from those serving adults. While the impact of the juvenile justice system over the last 40 years has been remarkable, improvements still need to be made.</p> <p>Studies have shown that children and youth who have been pulled into the juvenile justice system are more likely to face disruptions to their learning and significant barriers to their academic success. As a result, they face higher drop-out rates, increased justice system involvement, and negative and lasting impacts on their mental health and well-being. Predominantly, these students are children of color, children with disabilities, other children from marginalized communities, and children impacted by mental health challenges, trauma, and/or adverse childhood experiences.</p> <p>PTA believes that justice-engaged students are entitled to a range of rights, including a graduation and promotion plan, appropriate credit for completed coursework, timely enrollment or re-enrollment, and participation in school activities or career readiness pathways. We know that access to a well-rounded, high-quality education will ensure that these students have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society.</p> <p>We remain deeply committed to advocating for a safe and supportive juvenile justice system. HB 1216 ensures greater equity for some of</p>

	<p>our most vulnerable youth and a long-term benefit to our society in general.</p>
<p>Lucas Rosentrater For Turning Point of the City</p>	<p>"Members of Senate Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer my testimony. My name is Lucas Rosentrater representing Turning Point of the City and I am here to support HB 24-1216 because... it is the future.</p> <p>It is the future because of the Federal Family First Act, and the future because of it is functionality. The reality is that the Federal Family First Act in pursuit of its goal of reducing the amount of youth in facilities, has changed the landscape and the helps available to Justice engaged Youth. The needs that were traditionally addressed by step down facilities, is now being put into the hands of three groups:1) Foster families2) Community organizations, and most the most significant piece,3) Schools. The learning curve that schools need to go through to address the specific needs of Justice Engaged youth can last 7 months, even when the school actively works towards understanding their needs.</p> <p>The functionality of the Bill, will cut down on the learning curve of schools, directly impact youth, and very likely begin to address the broader issue of youth violence. The issue of integrating Justice Engaged Youth into schools will only continue to grow as a result of the Family First Act, so I encourage this committee to take advantage of the grass roots work that has already been done and pass a highly functional and practical HB 24-1216, to give a future to Justice Engaged Youth.</p>
<p>Dana Flores None National Center for Youth Law</p>	<p>My name is Dana Flores and I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 24-1216. I am a parent, attorney, and policy specialist with the National Center for Youth Law. For the past two years I have helped to facilitate a youth justice policy Fellowship for Colorado students with lived experience in the juvenile justice system. Overwhelmingly, the issue that concerns directly impacted youth the most is the School to Prison Pipeline.</p> <p>This bill promotes safety, accountability and justice by ensuring that students who come in contact with law enforcement can continue to receive a public education.</p>

	<p>Over 80% of all youth entering the juvenile justice system annually in Colorado are entering by way of school. Students are experiencing school-initiated prosecution in retaliation for speaking up about injustices they have experienced at school. Students as young as elementary schoolers are confronted with metal detectors, pat-downs, seclusion rooms, and the ever-present threat of pushout. Recently, a mountain community school district announced plans to bring in drug-sniffing K9 units to search students for contraband. Decades of research prove that school hardening policies do not improve public safety or educational outcomes, and that measures like these disproportionately target Black and Brown children and children with disabilities.</p> <p>Colorado is leaning heavily on law enforcement and the courts to engage in the basic acts of behavioral response that are fundamentally the work of educators. As a result, we have made it very easy for students to penetrate the juvenile justice system and very difficult for them to return to school once they do. The National Center for Youth Law and the CO Youth Justice Collaborative endorsed HB 24-1216 because there can be no question that it is good public policy to help students stay in school after they become justice system-engaged. Continued connection to a supportive school community not only keeps a student on track to graduate, it also deeply reduces the likelihood that a student will commit another crime. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony and I urge you to vote yes on HB 24-1216.</p>
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