



**This is a legislative proposal that would sustain the rights of youth in the Division of Youth Services (DYS) by specifically outlining these rights in statute.**

**Background:**

The current DYS Youth Handbook acknowledges that “[e]ntering a secure youth center is difficult” and states DYS is “committed to nonviolence, emotional intelligence, social learning, democracy, open communication, social responsibility, and growth and change.”<sup>1</sup>

The current DYS Youth Handbook also lays out basic rights and responsibilities of youth while they are in the custody of DYS.<sup>2</sup>

**The Problem:**

These rights are in the DYS Handbook, which is subject to change based on many factors, including leadership within DYS and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).

The rights laid out in the DYS Handbook need to be expanded upon in areas such as disability, gender and gender identity, educational services, medical and mental health care, and access to legal services and outside grievance options. While these areas may be addressed in other policies or practices within DYS, they should all be compiled into one central bill of rights.

**The Solution:**

This bill proposes to codify a Bill of Rights for youth in the custody of DYS to ensure continuity and enforcement of rights that are vital to the success and dignity of those in DYS’s custody regardless of who makes up the leadership within DYS or CDHS at any point in time.

<sup>1</sup> DYS Youth Handbook.  
<sup>2</sup> DYS Youth Handbook.