

**Senate Education**

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**SB26-034 Auraria Board Student & Faculty Participation**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Nicole Mendoza  For  themselves	<p>Good morning Chair and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>My name is Nicole Mendoza, and I am a proud first-generation graduate of Metropolitan State University of Denver. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB26-034.</p> <p>The Auraria Campus exists to serve students, yet students currently do not have a meaningful voting voice on the Auraria Board. Every decision made by the Board directly impacts our learning environment, safety, affordability, and ability to succeed. SB26-034 helps ensure that those most affected by these decisions are included in making them.</p> <p>This bill is about fairness, accountability, and shared governance. Students bring lived experience and real-time understanding of challenges such as transportation, housing costs, food insecurity, mental health, and balancing school with work and family responsibilities. Including student voting representation strengthens decision-making and leads to policies that are more responsive, equitable, and effective for the entire campus community.</p> <p>As someone who relied on campus resources, mentorship, and community support to reach graduation, I know how important it is for leadership to hear directly from the students they serve. Representation is not about special treatment, it is about meaningful participation and partnership in higher education.</p> <p>Colorado has long valued access, inclusion, and student success. Passing SB26-034 is a meaningful step toward aligning campus governance with those values and ensuring students have a true voice at the table.</p> <p>For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support SB26-034.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>

"Thank you Chair and members of the committee. My name is Isaias Salazar. I am a student at the Community College of Denver (CCD), where I earned my paralegal certificate. I currently serve as the Vice President of our Student Government Association. Last semester I was a member of the Auraria Student Advisory Committee (SACAB). I am here today to strongly support SB26-034, the Auraria Board Student & Faculty Participation Act.

Being on SACAB showed me how dedicated our students and faculty are as campus leaders. Every day we work together on student success and campus issues. However, under current law our SACAB representative can only advise the Auraria Board and cannot vote. SB26-034 changes that. It makes the student and faculty representatives full voting members of the Auraria Board. This change is essential because students are key stakeholders in our campus community. When we students and faculty work side-by-side with administrators, we bring valuable perspectives to these decisions.

Auraria is a unique shared campus for CCD, MSU Denver, and CU Denver, serving over 46,000 of us every day. The Auraria Higher Education Center manages our shared buildings, parking, and daily services. SB26-034 means that students can vote on decisions about our campus – decisions that affect our everyday experience here.

The bill also removes barriers to participation. It repeals the full-time enrollment requirement and shortens the Colorado residency requirement to one year. This opens the door for students who work or attend part-time, so our student board member can truly represent today's diverse student body. SB26-034 also expands the faculty committee from 6 to 9 members, adding one representative from each institution. These changes strengthen our collaboration across campus.

I have worked with many students and faculty – especially Skipper Spear – to turn this idea into reality. Through challenges and hard work, I never gave up on this vision. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak today. As a student who has been involved in Auraria campus life for years, I am excited to see our community continue to grow. I hope you will support SB26-034 so that future students can have a meaningful voice in shaping our shared campus.

**Thank you once again for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.**"