



FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

April 3, 2023

Education Committee  
Colorado House of Representatives

**RE: Support SB23-085 Sunset Continue Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee**

Dear Chair McLachlan and esteemed members of the committee:

The Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA) submits this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 085 to continue the Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee (SMAC) within the Colorado Department of Higher Education. SB23-085 is critical to maintain the important work of addressing the high prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses and ensure students across our state are treated with fairness and dignity in responding to sexual harassment, including sexual assault.

Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972 to ensure no person be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities. It has been transformative for gender equity in sports and admissions. As our understanding of sex-based discrimination has evolved and the high prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses has gained increased attention, the federal government made explicit that Title IX covers sexual harassment, including sexual assault, because such misconduct impairs equal educational access. Over the last two decades, we have seen this space become increasingly controversial and changes in federal administrations led to updated and new rules and regulations for schools.

The SMAC was created by the General Assembly's legislative efforts to address and prevent sexual misconduct on college campuses with the passage of SB19-007. The body exists to convene diverse perspectives, discuss issues and best practices, and provide guidance and recommendations related to Title IX regulations and sexual violence on college campuses to the General Assembly and Colorado institutes of higher education (IHEs). Earlier this year, the SMAC issued its 4<sup>th</sup> report representing a total of 26 recommendations.

As shifts continue in the Title IX landscape and best practices for addressing campus sexual assault, CCASA and its members believe that the SMAC should continue as it serves the interests of survivors and our state. Further, the diverse perspectives and practical experience of members of the SMAC are a significant asset to Colorado IHEs, the General Assembly, and all students on Colorado campuses. Therefore, we urge a yes vote on Senate Bill 085. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please email me at [elizabeth@ccasa.org](mailto:elizabeth@ccasa.org).

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Newman  
Public Policy Director