

Testimony in Support of HB16-1365, Diploma Endorsements for Biliteracy House Education – March 28, 2016 – Leslie Colwell

- Good evening, Madam Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Leslie Colwell and I'm Vice President for Education Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign. I'm here today to speak in support of HB-1365.
- Students must be linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in our multilingual, multicultural world. Districts are making real progress toward graduating internationally competitive graduates, and the state can play an important role in both recognizing and rewarding that progress and establishing consistent standards behind a seal of biliteracy.
- Dozens of studies show that the mastery of two or more languages makes important contributions to a student's cognitive development, understanding of diverse cultures, and economic opportunities.
- A study that appeared in a peer-reviewed journal just last month showed that even at the earliest ages, speaking more than one language increases mental flexibility – meaning a child's ability to switch between languages in different contexts makes them better problem solvers and critical thinkers.
- The Children's Campaign supports the districts who are incentivizing the bilingualism of their students and we encourage the legislature to do the same by adopting rigorous standards for a seal of biliteracy.
- Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to speak with you today.