

Testimony in Opposition to SB17-101, 9th and 10th Grade Assessments in Public Schools
Senate Education – February 16, 2017 – Leslie Colwell

- Mr. 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. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about Senate Bill 101 – unfortunately, the Children's Campaign opposes this bill.
- When I have traveled around the state and talked to teachers, I have heard that one of their biggest frustrations related to high school testing is around the lack of timely results. These issues are addressed in House Bill 1181, which we think is worth careful consideration. We appreciate Sen. Todd's work to make high school assessments meaningful to students, but don't believe making the assessments optional or allowing different assessments across districts is the right solution.
- We know that ninth grade is a pivotal year in student development. Research indicates that as students transition from middle to high school, there is an opportunity for learning loss to occur. We believe a comparable assessment in 9th grade, which aligns well to the standards students learn that year, establishes a baseline for growth in the high school years and is an important tool to ensure students are on track.
- We also believe that parents deserve to know if their child is on track to master standards at the end of each year – and we see value in parents receiving timely, objective information about their child's performance at the end of 9th and 10th grade. Senate Bill 101 leaves it up to districts to decide whether those assessments would be administered, meaning parents potentially wouldn't have access to that information for their child until more than halfway through high school.
- For these and other reasons, we urge a no vote on SB 101. Thank you for your time.