

Written Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in Support of HB17-1186, Health Coverage Prescription Contraceptives Supply – Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee – April 5, 2017 – Sarah Barnes, Senior Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign

- Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee for having me here today.
- My name is Sarah Barnes. I’m a Senior Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign. The Children’s Campaign is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization committed since 1985 to realizing every chance for every child.
- As a data-driven organization, we are supportive of House Bill 1186 because evidence shows that this policy can help prevent unintended pregnancies, and we know that *intended* pregnancies lead to the best outcomes for kids.
- Data (from randomized controlled trials (the gold standard in determining evidence-based programming) as well as cohort studies) show that providing access to additional months of contraceptive coverage is associated with increased continuation of use, fewer pregnancies and abortions, and lower costs.
- Preventing unintended pregnancy can impact two generations of Colorado kids – 80% of pregnancies to women under age 19 are unintended, which creates a number of additional challenges for teenagers. Nationally, 30% of all teenage girls who drop out of school cite pregnancy and parenthood as key reasons, and research shows that children born to parents who did not graduate from high school are significantly more likely to live in poverty for at least half of their childhoods.
- Largely due to a shortage of support and resources for teen parents and their children, only about two-thirds of children born to teen mothers earn a high school diploma, compared to 81% of their peers with older parents.
- Reducing unintended pregnancies, through policies like those in HB 1186, improves the lives of women and families by allowing women to finish their educations, chart their own futures, and become financially secure before starting their families, which can eliminate the devastating impacts of poverty on kids. We urge your support for this bill.