Written Testimony as prepared for delivery in a neutral position to HB21-1161 – Suspend Statewide Assessments for Select Grades (Rep. Sirota & McLachlan/Sen. Zenzinger & Coram) to the Senate Education Committee by Stephanie Perez-Carrillo, Policy and Partnerships Manager at the Children's Campaign

March 10, 2021

- Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee. My name is Stephanie Perez-Carrillo and I currently serve as Policy and Partnerships Manager at the Colorado Children's Campaign. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on HB 1161.
- In the fall of 2020, I served as a member of the COVID Implications Stakeholder Workgroup, along with 19 other diverse stakeholders, convened by the Department of Education. Together, we were charged with making recommendations for state assessments, accountability, accreditation, and educator evaluations during the 2020-21 school year. This group met for several months and had more than 25 hours of discussions. We were proud to come to consensus on several compromises.
- The introduced bill does align with several of the COVID stakeholder workgroup recommendations – to pause accountability, to pause the use of student growth measures in educator evaluations, and to not administer the CMAS social studies and science assessments for this school year.
- The Children's Campaign supports administering assessments and we appreciate the focus on the ELA and Math portions in this bill.
- We believe comparable information about the learning progress of students is vital. As the pandemic continues to deepen existing educational inequities, we know very little about the academic content being delivered, how online learning engagement is measured, and the extent of learning that may be happening. kids are learning in a new way, and we don't know how they are doing. Without this vital information inequitable outcomes that existed before the pandemic will continue to persist and worsen.
- This is an unprecedented time for students and parents, and the impact will be felt differently by families and school communities. The guidance issued by the Biden administration and the provisions in this bill make it possible to focus on educational census, which is imperative, rather than educational assessment as we have always done it.
- One year without crucial and actionable data on student performance is enough. A second lost year of information about the learning progress of students would be unacceptable. Particularly now, during this time of national crisis, states and school districts have a duty to serve all of our kids and provide additional resources and supports to the students that need them the most. We cannot improve what we do not measure, and metrics do not have to be perfect in order for us to learn from them. Comparable assessments represent one important tool for measuring student performance and growth. They help us understand how all students, including students

with varying racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, are progressing in their learning.

- As a former teacher and an advocate for all Colorado kids, thank you for your consideration of HB1161 and the recommendations of the COVID Implications Work Group. Thank you for your time. We appreciate the opportunity to testify.