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 Department of Higher Education

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OPPOSE SB 15-117

CDHE urges you to **OPPOSE** SB 15-117 as unnecessary legislation that could have unknown unintended consequences.

BACKGROUND

The genesis of this bill stems from proxy calculations included in the original higher education funding formula - proxies intended to provide funding to institutions of higher education for student populations that data demonstrates are not achieving higher education completion. These proxy calculations sought to provide funding for (1) student success programs and (2) reward institutions for being successful with the populations most in need of increasing post-secondary attainment.

However, the Joint Budget Committee, due to certain pressures, amended the model. Instead of making a calculation based on the number of underrepresented minorities served and who are successful, the proxy for the number of Pell-eligible students served and who are successful was increased. While imperfect at truly capturing the breadth of the at-risk populations, CDHE understood that this change protected the needed funding levels to our institutions to continue to serve their students.

WHY SHOULD THIS BILL BE OPPOSED?

- This change to the funding formula eliminated the need for this bill.
- It is unknown how the passage of this bill may adversely impact any other existing programs.

WHY WERE THESE PROXIES IMPORTANT - WHAT DOES OUR DATA TELL US?

A recent Georgetown University study told us that by 2020, Colorado's business community demands will need 70% of Coloradoans to have some level of post-secondary degree. This does not only mean baccalaureate or associate degrees, it also includes certificates and technical training.

Data demonstrates that the student populations not reaching attainment are students of color, low income and first generation students - more specifically, Hispanic, African American, and Native American. Currently, 52% of white adults have a college degree while only 19% of Hispanic adults do. This is a 33% gap - known as the "Attainment Gap".

Further, our data shows that these populations are less likely go graduate high school, enroll into college, are less academically prepared and therefore have higher remediation needs, and are less likely to persist and earn a college degree. Even for the students from these populations who are successful, it typically takes them longer to earn the degree and they leave college with more debt.

- Addressing only low income students is not enough - for every 100 white students on free and reduced lunch, 45 of them will enroll into college, while of 100 Hispanic students only 35 of them will enroll in college.
- It is not only a matter of academic preparation for every 100 equally academically prepared white students and Hispanic students - students with the same high GPAs and test scores, 70 of the white students will earn a degree while only 49 of the Hispanic students will do so.



If you should have any questions please contact Kachina Weaver, Chief Policy Officer for CDHE, at kachina.weaver@dhe.state.co.us or (303) 883-7076.

