



The Bell Policy Center

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Higher Ed Performance Funding Resident Students

House Bill 15-1156

Testimony to the House Education Committee
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My name is Frank Waterous, and I am a senior policy analyst with the Bell Policy Center. The Bell is a non-partisan, non-profit research and policy organization founded on progressive values and dedicated to making Colorado a state of opportunity for all.

The Bell Policy Center opposes House Bill 15-1156. The bill would alter the new higher education funding allocation model approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and unanimously supported by all of the governing boards of affected public post-secondary institutions in our state. Any change to the elements contained in that model will fundamentally undo the careful balance on which it is built and jeopardize the important outcomes that it achieves.

We believe that the model, as approved by CCHE and supported by the governing boards, is a real step forward for Colorado higher education in terms of increased transparency, accountability and predictability in the funding allocation process. The model also provides flexibility for any needed adjustments in the future to help it work better for students, institutions and the state – and as our policy goals or funding considerations evolve. Additionally, the model serves as a solid foundation for the ongoing discussions of cost-drivers and tuition policy that are currently under way as part of the next phase in the process laid out in House Bill 14-1319.

The new funding allocation model is the result of an open, inclusive and exhaustive six-month process undertaken based on the passage of HB 14-1319, which had bipartisan sponsorship and support. That process included the work of numerous subject-matter experts and advisory teams that thoroughly discussed, vetted and agreed on each of the elements that comprise the new model – including the issue of resident/non-resident student outcomes that would be changed by the current bill. It also incorporated an extensive public outreach effort with meetings across the state and afforded opportunities both in-person and online for interested parties to provide input and feedback on the specifics of the model.

The Bell Policy Center engaged in this process as a key non-institutional stakeholder, offering public comment to the expert and advisory teams at numerous stages of model development. In addition, our president, Wade Buchanan, served as the non-profit organization representative on the Public Outreach and Education Team, which provided advice and direction for that component of the overall effort.

Throughout the process, we were impressed with how diligently the representatives of the various institutions worked together to ensure that the model aligns with Colorado's post-secondary education Master Plan goals, meets the statutory requirements of HB 14-1319 and supports increased student success throughout the system. **The result is a carefully balanced whole that would be unbalanced and undone if any of its individual elements were removed or altered.**

In conclusion, because we strongly believe that the higher education funding allocation model approved by CCHE and supported by the governing boards should be implemented as designed without alteration, **the Bell Policy Center opposes HB 15-1156. We urge you to oppose it, as well.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you. If you have any questions, or if I can provide further information, please contact me at 303-297-0456 or waterous@bellpolicy.org.