



# Student Government

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

## University of Colorado Student Government Legislative Council

October 24, 2013

79 LCR 09 Support Amendment 66

**Sponsored by:**

<b>School of Education Student Board (SESB)</b>	
<b>Marco Dorado</b>	<b>President of External Affairs</b>
<b>Chris Schaeftbauer</b>	<b>President of Student Affairs</b>
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**Authored By:**

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<b>Eileen Sherman</b>	<b>Representative at Large</b>

## A Resolution to support Amendment 66 on the November 2013 Colorado State Ballot

### Resolution History

Colorado Amendment 66 is a proposal on the November 5, 2013 ballot in Colorado as an initiated constitutional amendment. According to Great Education Colorado, Colorado's public education is 40th out of 50 for K-12 funding per student and 49th out of 50 for higher education funding. Colorado is \$2,518 below the national average spending per pupil (regional cost adjusted). Currently, more affluent districts receive higher funding from the state than the economically under-funded districts. Under the current structure of education funding in

Colorado, districts that have higher tax revenue from property taxes receive more funding for their school districts. This means that the communities that have lower property taxes (i.e. rural and poorer communities) do not receive as much funding for education. This bill would target those under-served districts while not taking anything away from the allocation any districts in Colorado receive now. Every district will receive an increase in funding if Amendment 66 passes.

### **What is Amendment 66?**

If approved, Amendment 66 will increase the state income tax in order to raise the amount spent on funding public school districts in Colorado. Currently the Colorado personal income tax rate is at 4.63%. For those with an income of up to \$75,000, income taxes would increase to a rate of 5%. For those with an income of greater than \$75,000, income taxes would increase to a rate of 5.9%. The median family income in Colorado is \$57,000 per year, meaning a \$133 per year tax increase, or \$11.08 per month. Students typically do not fall into either of these income brackets, and therefore would likely not be paying this tax if the amendment passes. All of the money that is raised through the tax will be put into the State Education Achievement Fund that can only be used for education reforms and enhancements to existing educational programs.

Colorado state leaders, such as Governor Hickenlooper argue that "if it passes, it will make us a national model for public education". The Amendment has also been endorsed by a bipartisan group of current and former political leaders, business leaders, educators, as well as 25 school districts from all over the state including Denver Public Schools and Boulder Valley School District . The amendment would not be raising salaries for existing teachers, but it would give districts more money to hire more teachers to make classroom sizes smaller. Currently Colorado is ranked 40th in median student-teacher ratio in primary level schools.

CU Boulder's Leeds School of Business found that Amendment 66, if passed, will yield at least \$4 billion in annual economic gains once gains from reduced drop-out rates and increased high school and college graduations were factored in. A study called "The Economic Gains to Colorado of Amendment 66" by Professor Jack Strauss at the University of Denver "calculated the economic gains to Colorado to be \$3.3 billion annually. In total, the benefits of Amendment 66 are predicted to exceed the \$950 million price tag for taxpayers by about \$3.6 billion." His model includes benefits from reduced crime, health care savings, lower unemployment and welfare costs, increased property values and increased business retention and attraction.

### **Why is Amendment 66 important to CU students?**

If Amendment 66 passes it will have positive impacts on CU Boulder. Countless past, current, and future CU students have gone and will go through the Colorado public school system, and the quality of their education during K-12 directly affects the academic achievement and culture of CU. The quality of their K-12 education will not only be reflected in their undergraduate performance, but will also reflect on the university as a whole. It is time we forge

a path which gains strength over time, so we can ensure that future students receive a high quality education. This bill is important both for the state of Colorado and the University of Colorado because of the impact it will have on faculty, staff, current and future students of our institution.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano stated in his State of the Campus Address that, "tuition is reaching its breaking point at University of Colorado Boulder." It is important for us to pass this bill because it will allow us to call on the state to give more funding to the Colorado public education system, which includes K-12 as well as higher education. Colorado lawmakers are focusing on K-12 as well as higher education to create a school environment in which students have smaller class sizes and greater support. Amendment 66 will put a stop to the consistent decline in state funding for education and will be a vital first step in the discussion of funding creation for higher education. Sparking this necessary and crucial conversation will lead to greater funding, which will impact CU's academics, faculty, staff, culture, resources and students. With more state funding, CU will have the potential to be one of the top public universities in the nation. In addition, increasing funding in this manner will increase socio economic diversification in our public school systems, and as it better equips schools to teach, it can draw in more prestigious faculty members to the CU campus and other higher education institutions in the state.

This resolution advances the interests of all University of Colorado students by calling on the state to give more funding to Colorado's public education system, which includes both K-12 and higher education, by passage of amendment 66 in the upcoming election.

## **Resolution Summary**

University of Colorado Student Government is expressing support for Amendment 66 and encourages students to vote on November 5th, 2013 in support of this legislation. We want this bill to be a launching point for CUSG to start fighting for higher education funding.

Should this resolution pass, its authors, sponsors, and the members of CUSG pledge to publicize its benefits and support to the CU Board of Regents, our elected officials, and the public at large in their decision to vote for Amendment 66.

Because the 2013 election is not a presidential election, it is not well-publicized and commonly results in low voter participation. Passage of this resolution will serve as a way to promote the November election. As students, we have a responsibility to fight for what will benefit our university, and funding for public education in Colorado is a pressing issue that our voting community should involve themselves in.

**Whereas**, CU Boulder students and CU Student Government are in support of funding for K-12 as well as higher education in Colorado;

**Whereas**, The University of Colorado outlines in the Flagship 2030 plan that “we believe equal access to educational opportunities will become increasingly important to Colorado’s future—and will require statewide commitment at all levels, with more attention given to preparing all of the state’s primary and secondary students for higher education”;

**Whereas**, Amendment 66 creates a \$950 million increase for public school funding in the state of Colorado;

**Whereas**, Amendment 66 will strengthen Colorado's K-12 education system;

**Whereas**, significant efforts to create a program to allow transparency about the use of the proposed tax revenue are underway;

**Whereas**, the passage of this amendment has the potential to spark a conversation about ways to fund higher education in the future;

**Whereas**, the passage of the amendment has the potential to solidify the state of Colorado as a national leader in funding for education;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the University of Colorado Student Government that:

**Section 1:** It is the view of Legislative Council that the benefits of Amendment 66 will impact the University of Colorado as well as Colorado’s public education system in a positive way.

**Section 2:** Legislative Council shows its support for the passage of Amendment 66 in the election on November 5, 2013 and will encourage our peers to vote in favor of the funding increase for education in Colorado.

**Section 3:** Upon passage, this resolution will be distributed to the student body, Inter-Campus Student Forum, Board of Regents, CU Boulder administration, and media.

**Section 4:** This resolution shall take effect upon passage by the legislative council and upon either obtaining the signature of two Tri-Executives or the lapse of six days without action by the Tri-Executives.

### **Vote Count**

<b>10/24/2013</b>	<b>Consider resolution on special order</b>	<b>Acclamation</b>
<b>10/24/2013</b>	<b>Failed motion to amend Section 2</b>	<b>0-16-2</b>
<b>10/24/2013</b>	<b>Passed special order</b>	<b>15-0-3</b>

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Chris Schaeftbauer  
President of Student Affairs




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Wesley Montag  
Legislative Council President



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