



TESTIMONY ON HB 23-1290  
PROPOSITION EE FUNDING RETENTION RATE REDUCTION

Colorado PTA supports House Bill 1290. PTA supports laws providing the necessary services, policies, and requirements for the well-being of all Colorado children. We know that the period of child development which has the most impact on children's future success is early childhood, and we have been long-time supporters of quality early childhood programs, including preschool.

Because of that, we supported the passage of Proposition EE. Another reason we supported it is that we seek to reduce tobacco use among children and youth. Quality early childhood education has been demonstrated to prevent future substance misuse.

PTA would like the surplus funds from Proposition EE put toward the Universal Preschool Program, which we believe was the reason that voters strongly supported the passage of Proposition EE. We are certain that they had no intention of having any more money going to tobacco companies, which PTA strongly opposes. We are sad to see that the nicotine tax revenue has increased, indicating that tobacco use has not declined, but HB 1290 gives us the opportunity to "make lemonade" out of the situation, so to speak.

Finally, PTA has concerns about how the TABOR Amendment limits the provision of adequate services promoting the well-being of children and youth and how it restricts spending of revenue generated by ballot issues based on predictions that are often wrong. At least we should give the voters the chance to voice their continued support for universal preschool.



1705 17th Street  
Suite 200  
Denver, CO 80202

P 303.454.3757  
E [info@garycommunity.org](mailto:info@garycommunity.org)  
W [garycommunity.org](http://garycommunity.org)

April 17, 2023

### **Support HB 23-1290**

Submitted to the Colorado House Finance Committee  
Steffanie Clothier, Director, School Readiness, Gary Ventures

### **Gary Ventures is excited to support HB23-1290 to refer a measure to the ballot to retain tobacco and nicotine funding and tax rates that support universal preschool.**

Gary Ventures has been actively involved in supporting early care and efforts in Colorado for decades. In 2020, Gary supported the proposal to refer Proposition EE to the ballot through HB 20-1427 followed by legislation to establish the transition process (HB21-1304) and the creation of the new Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) (HB22-1295).

HB 23-1290 is needed to retain the revenue that has come in over projection. The calculations for the 2020 Blue Book were made based on the best information available but more revenue has come in than expected. Coloradans voted unequivocally to fund universal preschool and the revenue that is over the initial estimate is very much needed to support Colorado's expansion of preschool. Those funds and the tax rate should remain with preschool rather than be refunded to cigarette, tobacco and nicotine product wholesalers and distributors and other taxpayers. TABOR requires voters to make this decision.

Following the 2020 voter approval of the measure, thousands of stakeholders have been engaged in the design of the new Department of Early Childhood and the features of the Colorado Universal Preschool Program. We are committed to success and are working alongside the new team at the Department to bring that vision to life.

What we also know is that Colorado needs to adequately fund preschool in order to ensure it meets the needs of families and fairly pays providers for the cost of operating preschool classrooms. Addressing the historic underfunding of early care and education programs and supporting providers coming out of the COVID pandemic has meant establishing higher rates than the previous Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) and offering both part day hours and school day hours for families that qualify which allows working families to take advantage of the offering. Given these realities, retaining the added revenue is critical.

Legislators have been critical to this work all along the way and we look forward to your support of HB23-1290.

**House Finance**

**04/17/2023 01:30 PM**

**HB23-1290 Proposition EE Funding Retention Rate Reduction**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Lydia Waligorski  For  Clayton Early Learning	<p>Clayton Early Learning strongly supports HB-1290. As one of the largest head start providers in the State. Clayton has served as a stakeholder and supporter of UPK for the past several years. We also acknowledge the current funding and availability of a limited amount of hours for families is less than what many families and providers need to be fully sustainable and we support the eventual expansions of UPK so that every child and family are able to have their needs met from birth to age five.</p> <p>Allowing the program to retain EE dollars is allowing the program to explore it's full and promised potential growth. We ask for your support of this measure. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>



Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Jillian Fabricius, and I am Deputy Director with Illuminate Colorado, a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. I am submitting written testimony **to ask you for a yes vote on HB23-1290 Proposition EE Funding Retention Rate Reduction.**

When we enable voters to retain funding for high quality early childhood education, we strengthen the foundation for families and communities to thrive.

Illuminate supports HB23-1290 for two main reasons:

1. **HB23-1290 would enable voters to decide to retain funding for the preschool programs fund, which promotes protective factors for child maltreatment.** Research has shown that building concrete supports in times of need, a protective factor, has the power to prevent and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.<sup>1</sup> When families have access to high quality childcare, it reduces chronic stress and other mental health concerns, preventing child maltreatment. States that meet childcare needs and have quality licensed childcare settings that meet the childcare demand have decreased rates of child abuse and neglect.<sup>2</sup> This bill would enable voters to make informed decisions about whether to retain excess funds for early childhood education and fund this evidence-based protective factor to prevent child maltreatment.
2. **HB23-1290 would enable voters to decide to retain funding for the preschool programs fund, which enhances economic security for families.** When families have the opportunity to participate in high quality early childhood education and childcare, parents have increased opportunities to participate in the workforce. Parent workforce participation enhances economic security, reducing chronic stress and enabling parents to meet their children's needs.<sup>3</sup> This bill would give voters the opportunity to decide to retain funds that would promote parent workforce participation and enhance economic security.

In closing, when we enable voters to retain funds and further support early childhood education, we strengthen the foundations of families and communities to thrive. **We urge you to support referring a ballot issue for Proposition EE funds retention by voting 'yes' on HB23-1290.**

Sincerely,

Jillian Adams Fabricius, Deputy Director

[jfabricius@illuminatecolorado.org](mailto:jfabricius@illuminatecolorado.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy. (n.d.) About Strengthening Families and the protective factors framework. Retrieved From: <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2016). Preventing child abuse and neglect: A technical package for policy, norm, and programmatic activities. Retrieved From: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CAN-Prevention-Technical-Package.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. (2023). Policy levers for preventing child maltreatment. Retrieved From: <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/policy-levers-for-preventing-child-maltreatment>



April 17, 2023

Dear Chair Snyder and members of the Colorado House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, the patients and families, and communities we serve, I am writing to respectfully ask for your **vote in support of HB23-1290, Proposition EE Funding Retention Rate Reduction**, to retain the funds intended to help ensure kids grow strong and healthy by helping to fund vital early childhood programs.

Based on a comprehensive review of evidence, the Surgeon General has called raising prices on tobacco products “one of the most effective tobacco control interventions” because increasing price is proven to reduce smoking and vaping, especially among kids. Nearly 68% of Colorado voters approved Proposition EE during the election in 2020.

Despite only a short implementation of Proposition EE, we can see improvements in Colorado's youth tobacco use rates that could be attributed to the recent increase in price. According to the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey there was an overall decrease in youth tobacco use with 3.3% using cigarettes (down from 5.7% in 2019) and 16.1% vape use (down from 25.9% in 2019). Notably, there was also a decrease in youth who cite using vapor products because they are cheaper than other tobacco products.

While progress has been made, the same survey illustrates the importance of youth tobacco prevention strategies like Proposition EE. The percent of youth trying vaping before the age of 13 increased from 13.2% in 2019 to 22.3% in 2021. Further, tobacco and nicotine use continues to be a racial and social justice issue because tobacco-related illness and death disproportionately impact the health of minority groups across the lifespan, with an emphasis on youth. By retaining the funds for preschool programs associated with the tobacco tax, Colorado will continue reversing the trends in youth tobacco use and support a healthier future for kids.

Early childhood education is a building block of child health, learning and development. By using the funds as voters intended with Proposition EE, universal preschool for Colorado kids provides the opportunity for children to have an equitable start and a foundation for a successful and healthy future.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and wellbeing of Colorado kids. In this effort I encourage you to vote in favor of HB23-1290 and give Colorado voters the opportunity to continue supporting youth tobacco prevention efforts and early childhood education access for all Colorado kids.

Sincerely,

Ellen Stern  
Interim Director of Government Affairs  
Children's Hospital Colorado

Cc: Speaker McCluskie and Representative Sirota