

STATE OF COLORADO

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John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

June 5, 2015

The Honorable Colorado Senate
State Capitol
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Members of the Colorado Senate:

We are filing today with the Secretary of State Senate Bill 15-290, "Concerning Creation of the Colorado Student Leaders Institute, And, In Connection Therewith, Making an Appropriation."

I will neither sign nor veto Senate Bill 15-290. Therefore, this bill will become law at 12:01 a.m. on June 6, 2015. This letter sets forth my reasons for allowing this bill to come law without my signature.

While Colorado is among the best educated states in the nation, we are increasingly aware that too many of the students who come through our K-12 education system are failing to continue beyond their high school education and into our post-secondary institutions. To close this attainment gap, our State must continue its investment in a broad spectrum of programs that help students successfully chart and complete a pathway to a degree or credential. SB 15-290 adds a new program to Colorado's existing student-success infrastructure by creating a summer residential pre-collegiate experience for qualified students from around our State.

As we invest in programs that help students succeed beyond high school, we must also be careful stewards of the limited dollars available for education spending. The State's upcoming budget challenges have been long discussed and we must be particularly watchful over our spending from the diminishing State Education Fund balance. Because SB 15-290 funds the Colorado Student Leaders Institute from this precious and struggling resource, I am reluctant to embrace the funding source for this program. Meanwhile, as we struggle to manage the conflicting spending and revenue conflicts in our state constitution, it is imperative that we do not create new programs when existing programs could achieve the same or better results.

SB 15-290 sets forth a number of legally required administrative steps that can not be completed for implementation of this program by summer 2015. In order to meet the

accountability requirements in our state procurement code, and ensure the best possible program, the soonest possible start date for the Colorado Leaders Institute will be in the summer of 2016. Therefore, we are unable to and will not spend the \$218,825 that the bill appropriates for FY 2015-16.

For these reasons, I am allowing SB 15-290 to become law without my signature. Our administration looks forward to ensuring that the Colorado Student Leaders Institute becomes a program that follows known best practices and has an indelibly positive impact on Colorado students. We also look forward to identifying a more sustainable funding stream for this program in the future, while still preserving the health of the State Education Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Hickenlooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor