

**WEST SLOPE YOUTH**

**WOTE**

**WESTERN YOUTH  
ISSUES REPORT**



# ABOUT WEST SLOPE YOUTH



Our interns with West Slope Youth Vote have one goal – to harness the power of students’ voices and increase their participation in the decision-making process. That’s right, we’re talking about voting. Whether we like it or not, our generation includes future leaders and decision-makers for the West Slope, Colorado, and the country. We need to start paying attention now, so we can confidently make decisions when it’s our turn to take the lead.

We want you to vote. But we don’t want to tell you who to vote for. We’re a non-partisan group, so our agenda focuses on engagement in the process no matter what you believe, because that’s the only way we’re ever going to be the change we want to see in our country. In Colorado, you can pre-register to vote when you’re 16 years old. And that means you don’t have to wait until you are 18 to start thinking about voting. Because the truth is, there are lots of impactful ways to get involved before you vote in your first election. Voting is the last step, not the first. So we’ve compiled this report so you can better understand how our legislators are making decisions that directly impact us now, and to help us determine what the most important issues are that we want to ask our elected officials to work on, on behalf of Western Colorado youth.

Right now we’re active in three counties and in ten high schools. We are working to register and pre-register our peers to vote, as well as identify the issues that are most important to students in Western Colorado. During the 2020 Legislative Session, we’ll take these issues to our elected officials when they are working at the Capitol in Denver, so they know what to prioritize when it comes to the youth they represent. If you’re interested in getting involved, we’d love to have you. You can contact our program organizer Jeriel Clark at (970) 424-2670, or send her an email at [Jeriel@westerncoloradoalliance.org](mailto:Jeriel@westerncoloradoalliance.org).

# Priority Bills Tracked by West Slope Youth Vote

How Colorado's legislators voted on legislation that directly impacts Western Colorado youth.

**KEY**

- ★ Supported the bill
- ✗ Opposed the bill
- e Excused (did not vote)

LEGISLATOR (Party-District)		LEGISLATION (Numbers correspond to descriptions on next pages)													
		VOTER ACCESS	FAMILY			MENTAL HEALTH				ECONOMICS		EDUCATION			FOOD & AG
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
<b>SENATORS</b>	Don Coram (R-6)	✗	★	★	✗	★	★	★	★	✗	✗	★	★	★	
	Larry Crowder (R-35)	✗	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	✗	✗	✗	★	★	
	Kerry Donovan (D-5)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Bob Rankin (R-8)	✗	★	★	✗	★	✗	★	★	✗	✗	✗	✗	★	
	Ray Scott (R-7)	✗	★	★	✗	★	✗	★	e	✗	✗	✗	★	★	
<b>REPRESENTATIVES</b>	KC Becker (D-13)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Marc Catlin (R-58)	✗	★	★	✗	★	✗	★	★	✗	✗	✗	✗	★	
	Julie McCluskie (D-61)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Barbara McLachlan (D-59)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Janice Rich (R-55)	✗	★	★	✗	✗	✗	★	★	✗	✗	✗	✗	★	
	Dylan Roberts (D-26)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Matt Soper (R-54)	✗	★	★	✗	★	e	★	★	✗	✗	✗	✗	★	
	Donald Valdez (D-62)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
	Perry Will (R-57)	✗	★	★	✗	★	✗	★	★	✗	✗	✗	✗	★	



**1****SB19-235****AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION****PASSED!**

This bill requires the Department of Revenue to transfer to the Secretary of State electronic records of each eligible elector who applies for a new or renewed driver's license.

**2****HB19-1288****FOSTER YOUTH SIBLINGS BILL OF RIGHTS****PASSED!**

When youth experience the foster care system, we need as much support and stability as we can get. This bill provides rights for youth siblings in foster care. These rights include being placed together or in close proximity to each other, being placed with potentially adoptive parents together, and being promptly notified about siblings changes in living situation, or important events.

**3****HB19-1133****COLORADO CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE AND EVALUATION NETWORK****PASSED!**

Colorado must protect kids who have been victims of abuse. This bill creates the Colorado child abuse and response network (CARENnetwork) which will provide medical exams and behavioral health assessments to kids who are victims of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

**4****HB19-1120****YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND SUICIDE PREVENTION****PASSED!**

With some of the highest youth suicide rates in the country, student access to suicide prevention education as well as mental health services is vital. This bill allows for students 12 years and older to seek and obtain psychotherapy without parental consent, if the therapy is deemed necessary by a therapist. The therapist may inform the parent or legal guardian, with a child's consent about the psychotherapy unless informing the parents would be detrimental to the child's wellbeing. The bill also requires the department of education, along with the office of suicide prevention, the youth advisory council, and the suicide prevention commission, to create a mental health education literacy resource bank which will be available to the public free of charge.

**5****SB19-195****CHILD AND YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS****PASSED!**

The bill creates a statewide office for children and youth behavioral health policy coordination. It also creates a children and youth behavioral health policy coordination commission and a children and youth behavioral health advisory council. This council and commission will work to increase behavioral health services available to children and youth as well as increase awareness of their needs.

**6****HB19-1017****KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH GRADE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH ACT****PASSED!**

Mental health is just as important as physical health and should be available to students at every age. This bill implements a test program in up to 10 pilot schools, in which, during kindergarten through fifth grade, it is ensured that there is a school mental health official available to students. This mental health professional, to the fullest extent possible, will follow students from kindergarten to fifth grade. This program will be first implemented in schools with high poverty rates, ethnic diversity and a high population of students in the foster care system.

**7****HB19-1160****MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY PILOT PROGRAM****PASSED!**

Considering Colorado's high youth suicide rate, Colorado should take every action available to address our lack of available mental health programs across the state. This bill establishes a 3-year mental health facility pilot program to provide treatment, residential care, and services to persons with either a physical or mental health diagnosis. The department of public health will select one or two locations to implement this program from a pool of applicants.

# THE BILLS WE TRACKED

## as summarized by students

8

**SB19-009**

**FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR RURAL EDUCATORS**



**PASSED!**

Rural youth deserve a good education, and that requires talented educators. But the pay for rural teaching opportunities can't always compete with positions in more densely populated areas. This bill removes limitations on how many educators can be given stipends if they agree to teach in rural communities and increases the amount of these annual stipends from \$2,800 to \$4,000.

9

**HB19-1210**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINIMUM WAGE**



**PASSED!**

The cost of living varies drastically from town to town in Colorado. This bill allows local governments to raise the minimum wage for workers in their communities above that of the state and federal government's minimum wage. Currently, Colorado's minimum wage in 2019 is \$11.10, and the federal minimum wage is \$7.25.

10

**HB19-1222**

**IB EXAM FEE GRANT**



**PASSED!**

Family wealth doesn't determine how dedicated a student is, and access to advanced placement programs shouldn't be determined by a student's ability to pay. This bill makes funds available to high schools to reduce or eliminate the international baccalaureate exam fee for low-income students.

11

**HB19-1032**

**COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION**



**PASSED!**

This bill funds a grant program for schools that want to teach sex education but lack the resources to do so. It requires public schools that include comprehensive human sexuality education to teach students about consent and prohibits instruction from mentioning religious ideals, or religious ideology, or using shame-based or stigmatizing language. It also prohibits employing gender norms or gender stereotypes, or excluding the relational or sexual experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals.

12

**HB19-1192**

**INCLUSION OF AMERICAN MINORITIES IN TEACHING CIVIL GOVERNMENT**



**PASSED!**

All students deserve the opportunity to receive a whole education in history and government. This bill requires public schools to teach history and civil government of the US and Colorado while including historical, cultural, and social contributions of American Indians, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals within these minority groups; the intersectionality of significant social and cultural features within these communities; and the contributions and persecution of religious minorities.

13

**HB19-1132**

**INCENTIVE FOR SCHOOLS TO USE COLORADO GROWN FOOD**



**PASSED!**

We live in a state that values our local food growers and students deserve to be connected to Colorado food. This bill incentivises schools and other providers that are entitled to federal money for student lunches to purchase food from Colorado growers and producers. The grant program reimburses schools for the money spent on food during the school year.



# Top Issues that Impact Youth

1. Academic pressure
2. Mental health access & awareness
3. Substance abuse
4. Personal body image
5. Family conflict
6. Bullying
7. Financial security & job opportunities
8. Affordable higher education
9. Discrimination
10. Crime & personal safety

## HOW DO WEST SLOPE STUDENTS COMPARE?



**8%** of people reported wanting to seek help, and being unable to access it.

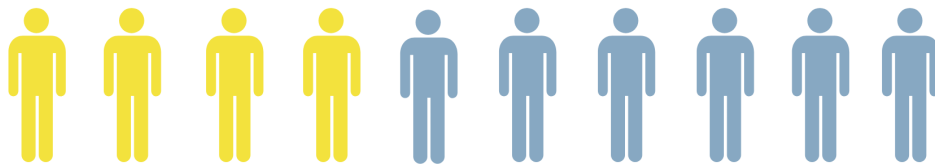
In 2017, more than 32,000 people in Western Colorado were unable to obtain mental health services when they needed it.



Colorado has the **10th** highest number of deaths by suicide in the country and is the leading cause of death in Colorado for people between the ages of 10 and 24.

### HB19-1120

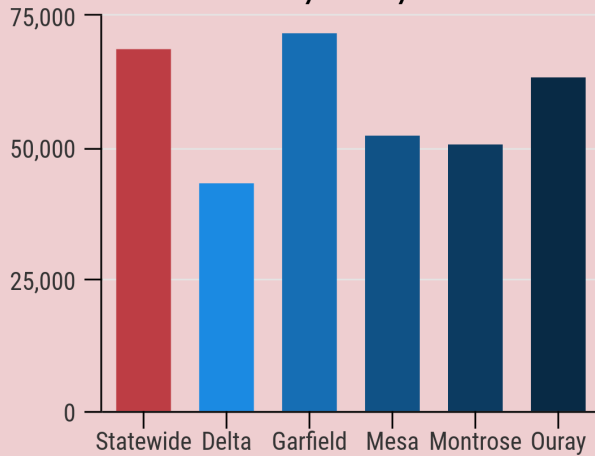
Now law, this bill mandates the state to include youth input when determining how to lower the rate of youth suicide deaths in Colorado.



**4/10**

eligible 18-29 year olds voted in Colorado's 2018 election

### Median Household Income by county



The high school graduation rate in Western Colorado averages

**84%**

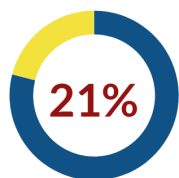


**69%**

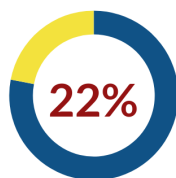
of high school students in Colorado report getting less than 8 hours of sleep on school nights

**21%**

of youth in Western Colorado receive public assistance



of Western Colorado youth report being victims of bullying compared to 19% statewide



of teens report substance abuse in Western Colorado compared to 16% statewide

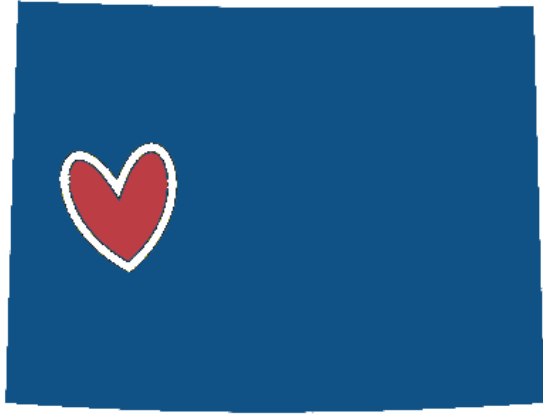


Colorado is 17th highest in the nation for youth incarceration

SOURCES:  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Colorado Health Institute  
2017 Colorado Health Access Survey  
Colorado County Data Workbook

2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey  
Colorado Department of Education



## “My vote won’t count...”

Your vote *will* count for everything if you **stay involved, pay attention** and **understand your power**.

Even before we are old enough to vote, we are old enough to hold our elected leaders accountable and work on issues that make a difference for us and our families.

**How can we make a difference?** Elect strong leaders, tell them what’s important to us, and hold them accountable.

### Leaders we elect include:

**Rural Electric  
Association Board  
Members**

**School Board  
Members**

**City Council Members  
County Commissioners**

**Clerk & Recorder**

**Treasurer**

**Sheriff**

**Surveyor**

**Coroner**

**Judges**

**Governor**

**State Representatives**

**State Senators**

**State Attorney General**

**Secretary of State**

**State Treasurer**

**U.S. Senator**

**U.S. Congressman**

**President**

**Note:** The font size above indicates how big your vote’s impact can be. Generally speaking, **the more local the race, the more impact your vote has in making change happen.** To learn more about what these elected officials do, scan this QR code!

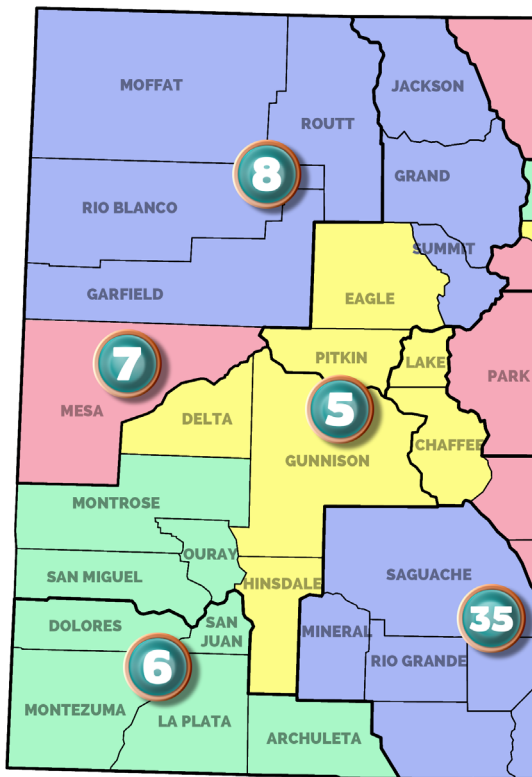


# Who represents you in Denver?

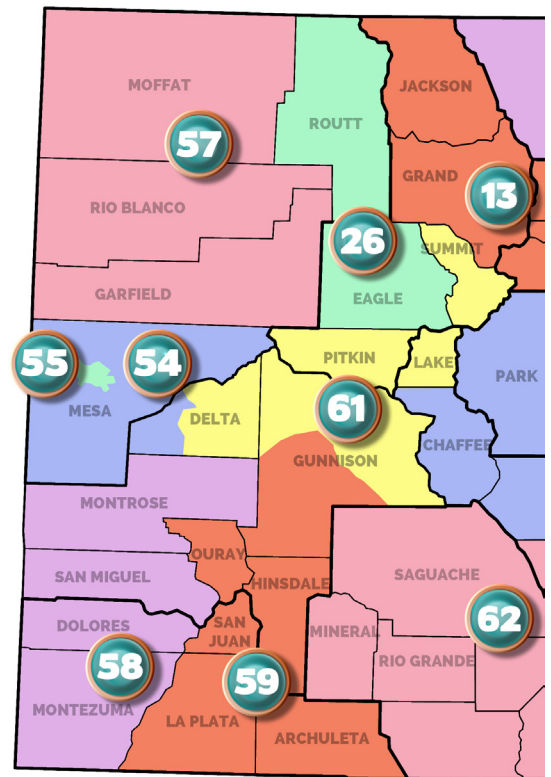
COUNTY	SENATOR	REP.	COUNTY	SENATOR	REP.
Archuleta.....	Coram (SD6).....	McLachlan (D59)	Mesa .....	Scott (SD7) .....	Soper (D54)
Delta.....	Donovan (SD5).....	McCluskie (D61)	Mesa .....	Scott (SD7) .....	Rich (D55)
Delta.....	Donovan (SD5).....	Willett (D54)	Mineral.....	Crowder (SD35).....	Valdez (D62)
Dolores.....	Coram (SD6).....	Catlin (D58)	Moffat .....	Rankin (SD8).....	Wilson (D57)
Eagle .....	Donovan (SD5).....	Roberts (D26)	Montezuma.....	Coram (SD6).....	Catlin (D58)
Garfield .....	Rankin (SD8).....	Wilson (D57)	Montrose.....	Coram (SD6).....	Catlin (D58)
Grand .....	Rankin (SD8).....	Becker (D13)	Ouray .....	Coram (SD6).....	McLachlan (D59)
Gunnison .....	Donovan (SD5).....	McLachlan (D59)	Pitkin .....	Donovan (SD5).....	McCluskie (D61)
Gunnison .....	Donovan (SD5).....	McCluskie (D61)	Rio Blanco.....	Rankin (SD8).....	Wilson (D57)
Hinsdale.....	Donovan (SD5).....	McLachlan (D59)	Routt .....	Rankin (SD8).....	Roberts (D26)
Jackson.....	Rankin (SD8).....	Becker (D13)	Saguache.....	Crowder (SD35).....	Valdez (D62)
Lake .....	Donovan (SD5).....	McCluskie (D61)	San Juan .....	Coram (SD6).....	McLachlan (D59)
La Plata.....	Coram (SD6).....	McLachlan (D59)	San Miguel.....	Coram (SD6).....	Catlin (D58)

## Western Colorado Legislative Districts

SENATE



HOUSE



**For more information on Western Colorado Alliance's West Slope Youth Vote program, contact:**

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