



# The Bell Policy Center

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## **Continue the Statewide Teen Pregnancy and Dropout Prevention Program**

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### **Testimony to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee March 30, 2006**

My name is Robin Baker and I am a Senior Policy Analyst for the Bell Policy Center. The Bell is a non-partisan, research and public policy organization committed to making Colorado a state of opportunity for all. The Bell seeks to reinvigorate the debate on issues affecting the well-being of families and working adults.

The Bell Policy Center supports House Bill 06-1351 to continue the statewide program for teen pregnancy and dropout prevention.

Attached is an Opportunity Note the Bell Policy Center prepared on this bill. Modeled after the fiscal notes prepared by the Legislative Council Staff, these notes briefly describe the legislation, summarize research findings on the issues addressed and provide the Bell's assessment of whether the bill promotes or impedes opportunity.

Based on our analysis, the Bell finds that House Bill 06-1351 promotes opportunity by reducing the incidence of teen pregnancy which reduces costs to the state by decreasing the number of children dependent on Medicaid or other public services.

Research shows that the most successful pregnancy prevention programs are community-based, provide continuity and consistency with long-term follow-up, focus on both boys and girls sexual behavior and take into consideration the socioeconomic and culture-specific needs of teens. Preventing teen pregnancy gives boys and girls an opportunity to complete their education and increase their chances of being self-sufficient.

Evaluation data from HCPF show that Colorado's two pregnancy prevention pilot programs have been highly successful in reducing teen pregnancies. HCPF data show that at-risk teens enrolled in the Hilltop Community Resources, Inc. Teen Companion Program in Mesa County and the Montrose Memorial Hospital Teaching Prevention-Promoting Involvement Teen Companion Program in Montrose and Delta counties have about a 1 percent pregnancy rate compared to a 23 percent pregnancy rate for at-risk teens not enrolled in the program.

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Teen pregnancy prevention saves the state money. The Colorado Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program targets Medicaid eligible youth at-risk for early parenting. By reducing the incidence of early pregnancy, fewer low birth weight or developmentally delayed children in need of public subsidizes will be born.

Further, teens who do not become early parents have greater opportunity to complete their education, become self-sufficient and provide for children they may have as older parents.

The state will be better served by extending the Teen Pregnancy and Dropout Prevention Program in the long-run. Helping at-risk youth make better choices now is an investment in our children's future that will reap rewards for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you today. If you have any questions or if I can provide further information, please call me at 303.297.0456 or e-mail me at [baker@thebell.org](mailto:baker@thebell.org)



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