

Initiative 2025-2026 #278: Expanding Public School Options – Original Draft

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO HEREBY FIND AND DECLARE THAT:

(a) THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE WAS ESTABLISHED AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE AGENCY TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL MODELS TO SERVE COLORADO’S SCHOOLCHILDREN, INCLUDING AT-RISK STUDENTS.

(b) THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PROVIDES AN ALTERNATIVE MODE FOR AUTHORIZING CHARTER SCHOOLS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS NOT WANTING TO OVERSEE THOSE SCHOOLS; HOWEVER, ACCESS TO THE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE IS LIMITED UNDER CURRENT LAW.

(c) BECAUSE THE DEMAND FOR INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL MODELS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER, THE STATE MUST EXPAND ACCESS TO THE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE AND ITS ALTERNATIVE MODE FOR AUTHORIZING CHARTER SCHOOLS.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 22-1-151** as follows:

22-1-151. Expanding public school options. (1) NOTWITHSTANDING THE “CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT,” PART 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF THIS TITLE, IF A CHARTER SCHOOL’S APPLICATION OR RENEWAL IS DENIED BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE LOCAL BOARD’S DECISION IS FINAL, AND THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MUST NOT BE FORCED TO ACCEPT THE APPLICATION OR RENEWAL. ANY SUCH DENIAL MUST RESULT IN THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RELEASING THE CHARTER SCHOOL TO THE COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE, AN INDEPENDENT STATE AGENCY CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-30.5-503, WHICH MAY DENY OR APPROVE THE SCHOOL’S APPLICATION.

SECTION 3. Effective date. This act takes effect on the date of the proclamation of the Governor announcing the approval, by the registered electors of the state, of the proposed initiative and shall apply as of the effective date regardless of prior existing law.