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**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE VOTES TO ADVANCE BILL TO EXPAND THE
REACH OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN COLORADO**

**ADVOCATES SAY CURRENT ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM FALLS SHORT &
SB20-009 WILL BETTER SUPPORT TWO-GENERATIONAL FAMILY LITERACY**

Denver, CO— The Senate Education Committee today unanimously approved [SB20-009](#). This is the first legislative hurdle for this bipartisan bill that would expand the reach of adult education to better support the needs of Colorado’s adult learners. Under current law, adult education grants are available to post-secondary employment and job placement programs, largely overlooking the needs of adult learners seeking basic literacy training and high school equivalency (GED). SB20-009 would fund grants to adult education providers who partner with K-12 schools, bridging literacy attainment and workforce goals. It is sponsored by Sen. Rachel Zenzinger (D-District 19), Sen. Bob Rankin (R-District 8), and Rep. Barbara McLachlan (D-District 59).

Advocates commend this bill as a long-needed step that will create critical opportunities for more adult learners in Colorado’s currently limited program. In 2014, Colorado became the 50th state in the country to provide state-level funding for adult education, creating a program focused primarily on workforce readiness that only serves about 950 learners annually statewide. Meanwhile, more than 300,000 Coloradans lack a high school diploma with 41% of those community members having less than even a 9th grade education. SB20-009 has the potential to increase the number of adult learners served by Colorado’s adult education programs by 50% and takes a two-generational, family literacy approach that will better assist adult learners in acquiring the range of skills they need to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in Colorado.

“This bill will continue to help us build the skills of today’s workforce, but it will also help us build a stronger workforce for tomorrow,” says Paula Schriefer, President & CEO of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. “Of the roughly 500 adult learners that Spring Institute serves every year, nearly half do not have immediate workforce or post-secondary education goals, typically because they are still focused on developing basic literacy or English language skills, often while parenting small children. Extensive research shows that education levels of parents are a leading indicator of childrens’ success in school. This bill will support those adult learners whose workforce goals may be further down the road, especially

parents whose main priority is helping their kids learn.”

"Basic education should be a right for all citizens, no matter their age," says bill sponsor Senator Zenzinger. "We need strong, supportive programs that equip our residents for a rapidly changing workforce and also give them the tools necessary to be active partners in their children's education and participants in our democracy."

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning has convened a broad coalition of more than 20 stakeholders in support of SB20-009, including Bell Policy Center, Skills2Compete Colorado, the Women’s Foundation of Colorado, and the Denver Indian Center.

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Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures. To find out more, visit our website at <http://www.springinstitute.org/> and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).