

***The People Spoke: Fund Our Schools
Resolution on Amendment 23***

Whereas, in 2000, the people of Colorado duly enacted Amendment 23, an amendment to the State Constitution requiring the General Assembly to annually increase education spending by a factor of "inflation plus one percent" for 10 years; and

Whereas, the voters intended to protect school funding in bad economic times as well as good, having passed the measure over the well-publicized objections of opponents who warned of dire consequences in the event of an economic downturn; and

Whereas, the voters enacted Amendment 23 in response to 10 years of declining per pupil funding in inflation-adjusted dollars, which placed Colorado 47th in the nation for support of public education; and

Whereas, declining per pupil funding affected our public schools and students in deleterious ways, including, increased class sizes, lack and obsolescence of textbooks, teacher shortages due to low salaries, and loss of art, music and gifted and talented programs; and

Whereas, these harmful trends have reversed since Amendment 23's passage, and Colorado has moved from 47th to 41st in the nation for per pupil funding, and stands to gain more ground as Colorado continues to increase education funding while other states are forced by economic hardship to cut; and

Whereas, Colorado will attract more businesses and improve its economy as our schools improve and become more competitive with the school systems of other states; and

Whereas, Amendment 23 has inspired a new confidence in parents and employers who understand that progress in reducing class sizes, attracting and retaining the best teachers, and providing well-rounded curricula with updated textbooks will continue with predictable spending growth; and

Whereas, Colorado's public schools are improving because of Amendment 23, with more than 70% improving their CSAP results from last year; and

Whereas, even with two years of increased per pupil spending under Amendment 23, Colorado's average per pupil spending is more than \$1,300 less than the national average; and

Whereas, the Amendment 23 State Education Fund should only be used for its intended purpose: funding a quality K-12 education for our children; and

Whereas, Amendment 23, as a constitutional amendment, requires the same amount of deference, respect and allegiance by the General Assembly as that enjoyed by the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, which passed with 70,000 fewer votes than Amendment 23; and

Whereas, citizen initiatives reflect the unique, western culture of Colorado and should not be ignored by the General Assembly; and

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the General Assembly fund Colorado K-12 public schools in full compliance with the unambiguous mandates of Amendment 23, keeping faith with the voters' intent.

Signed this _____ of _____ 2003 by _____

~ Original Resolution authored by State Rep. Jennifer Veiga and introduced in the State House and Senate ~