



INDEPENDENCE
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April 8, 2025

Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Via US Mail and email to: Governorpolis@state.co.us

Re: Veto Request for SB25-077

Dear Governor Polis:

By way of background, the Independence Institute, along with over 50 other groups and individuals, came together in 2024 to form a loose coalition to generally oppose legislative attempts to restrict public access to meetings of elected officials and public records and to craft a citizen's initiative to establish government transparency standards for 2026. The groups span the political spectrum from right to left and represent traditional media organizations as well as the growing media segment of independent citizen journalists, bloggers and commentators.

As President of the Independence Institute, along with specifically Jason Salzman of the *Colorado Times-Recorder*, and CBS News Colorado, am very concerned about SB25-077 and urge you to veto the measure. Other members of our loose coalition may very well separately contact you regarding SB25-077.

Simply stated, the Bill marks a step back from the goals of the Colorado Open Records Act to create new roadblocks for timely access to the people's records. The Bill not only arbitrarily extends the time deadlines for Colorado governments to respond to timely CORA requests but will result in increased costs to access government records. The special treatment for members of the legacy media does not save the Bill, it only makes it worse. In addition, the Bill may very well violate state and federal constitutional protections as illustrated by recently filed federal court litigation in Utah challenging similar carveouts for legacy media.

The sponsors of SB25-077 have cited the increased number of CORA requests to school districts by concerned parents and others as the "evil" that the Bill sought to correct. In our view the increased requests only underscores the need for school districts to better communicate with parents and citizens, not to shut down access to public records as much as possible.

I am heartened by your comments in reluctantly signing the student athletes Bill, and urge you to carefully examine SB25-077, especially in light of other legislative carveouts to CORA.

I, along with the *Colorado Times-Recorder* and CBS News Colorado believe that you should veto SB25-077 and urge the proponents to actively engage in a substantive discussion with

government transparency groups in the future. We certainly welcome all perspectives in our coalition meetings and would welcome their participation.

In conclusion I respectfully request a meeting with you at your earliest opportunity. If desired, we can assemble all of the members of our coalition to meet with you at the same time.

Sincerely,



Jon Caldara
President, Independence Institute
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