



June 11, 2025

Dear Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper,

On behalf of AAUW--American Association of University Women of Colorado, we are writing to urge you to **oppose the budget reconciliation bill**. The bill proposes sweeping changes that would make higher education and economic prosperity dramatically less affordable and accessible.

- **Weakening Public Schools:** Students under-resourced, historically marginalized communities would be hardest hit if \$5 billion is redirected annually to private charter and religious schools as part of a national voucher program. This diversion strips public schools of the resources they need to educate these students. Private charters and religious institutions aren't bound by civil rights, accountability, or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) protections. As public schools lose funding, they become further under-resourced, further widening achievement gaps.
- **Barriers to Women's Higher Education:** Women—especially student parents and families of color—would face steeper education costs, accruing interest while still enrolled and delaying degree completion. Eliminating subsidized loans forces interest to accumulate, and capping Parent PLUS while ending Grad PLUS limits critical funding. Tightening Pell eligibility further raises out-of-pocket costs, making college less affordable for those already balancing caregiving, work, and study.
- **Erosion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC):** Hardworking parents—many single heads of household—would lose critical support for childcare, rent, and basic living expenses. Even with the credit set at \$2,500 per child, one in four eligible children wouldn't receive full benefits because their families earn too little. By capping refundability and narrowing eligibility, the bill would erode a proven anti-poverty tool that improves children's health, education, and long-term earning potential.
- **Threat to Preventive Health Care Access:** Over two million women—many low-income and rural—would lose affordable contraception, cancer screenings, and STI testing due to a Medicaid ban on providers offering abortion, effectively defunding Planned Parenthood. Banning gender-affirming care as an essential health benefit would also deny coverage to transgender adults under Medicaid and ACA Marketplace plans. Together, these measures would restrict access to vital services and undermine individuals' ability to manage their own health.

- **Harmful Medicaid Coverage Provisions and Funding Cuts:** Enrollment hurdles, cost-sharing up to \$35 per service, and work requirements may force many—particularly women and seniors—off Medicaid, disrupting preventive, prenatal, and long-term care. The bill also blocks the 2024 rule designed to simplify eligibility and enrollment, making it harder for children, seniors, and people with disabilities to gain and retain coverage. These combined barriers and cost burdens alone put essential health services at risk for our most vulnerable neighbors.

As a nation, we should be creating pathways to opportunity and prosperity, not barriers that exacerbate inequity. For these reasons, we urge you to **reject the budget reconciliation bill**.

Sincerely,

Jill Smith, Littleton/South Metro, Co-President, AAUW of Colorado
Carolyn Cooley, Littleton, Co-President, AAUW of Colorado
Su Ryden, Aurora, Public Policy Co-Director, AAUW of Colorado
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American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. More than 700 community leaders are members of AAUW branches around Colorado.