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Duran-Winter Bill to Address Sexual Assault on Campus Headed to the House Floor

(April 16) – The House Education Committee approved a bill sponsored by Speaker Cristana Duran and Rep. Faith Winter to address sexual misconduct in higher education by a vote of 7-6.

Last year, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos rescinded Obama-era guidance for institutions of higher education on how they should address sexual assaults under the federal law, Title IX. The lack of federal direction means that states like Colorado have to step up to develop policies to promote and ensure the safety of students on campuses around the state.

“This bill creates a fair, equitable, transparent and consistent response to sexual assault and harassment in Colorado’s higher education institutions,” said Rep. Winter, D-Westminster. “We must ensure that all of our students know how to report and understand that the administrative process will be fair to both parties.”

Multiple studies show that approximately 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted during their college years. The number of women who are sexually harassed is even higher. Much of this goes unreported.

“Colorado students, parents and institutions of higher education want to ensure that the state’s campuses are safe places to learn, and that if there are incidents of sexual misconduct, there are policies in place to ensure a fair process for everyone involved,” said Speaker Duran, D-Denver. “Today we heard from survivors who cope with the trauma of their assault every day that is why these processes need to be fair and recognize that perspective.”

In partnership with the institutions, HB-1391 creates a fair and consistent response to sexual misconduct in higher education settings to ensure that all students know how to report and know that the administrative process will be fair for both parties. The bill now goes to the House floor.

