



Common Cause testimony re: SB 210

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Rep. Marshall and Rep. May.

My name is Jenny Flanagan; I am executive director of Colorado Common Cause. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working for open, honest and accountable government. We are the proponents for Amendment 41, the ethics in government initiative.

The goal of Amendment 41 was to increase public confidence in government by establishing strong ethical standards. With the passage of Amendment 41, Coloradans spoke loud and clear in favor of strong ethics guidelines for those in public service.

With the amendments offered in committee today, we are pleased to support Senate Bill 210. We appreciate the bi-partisan leadership demonstrated to move the ethics law forward and believe the compromise does a good job of establishing the ethics commission and giving it guidance for its operations.

In the months since voters approved Amendment 41, there have been numerous questions about how it should be interpreted and applied. We believe that many of these interpretations have been contrary to Amendment 41's stated purpose, which is to prevent violations of the public trust that occur when one uses their public office for private gain. Senate Bill 210 provides good guidance to the Commission by defining private gain and establishing it as a necessary criterion to consider a complaint.

The independent ethics commission is an important tool to make Amendment 41 work. With the commission in place, it can serve as a resource to those covered by Amendment 41. We believe that the rules established by SB 210 will allow it to function effectively. We support the amendments offered today to extend the length of time for the Commission to issue an advisory opinion; by extending this time frame the Commission will be better able to do its job and act as a resource.

We recognize the challenges that the Legislature has faced in grappling with how to move forward and implement Amendment 41. We support Senate Bill 210 and believe that it honors the voters' desire for meaningful ethics reform. We commend Representative Marshall, Representative May, and Speaker Romanoff for working with Senate leadership to develop this proposal.

We encourage you to support Senate Bill 210 and implement ethics. Thank you for your time; I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.