



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS  
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Colorado Improves Legal Protections for Children in the State Foster Care System**

**Denver, Colo.** - The Colorado legislature has passed a landmark reform that strengthens core legal protections for children in the state's foster care system. [House Bill 1017](#), sponsored by Rep. Lindsey Daugherty, Rep. Jennifer Parenti, Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, and Sen. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, clarifies the rights of children in state care, requires that youth be informed of those rights and makes it possible for courts to enforce those rights.

While Colorado [previously](#) recognized a handful of basic rights, the new reform enumerates and expands those rights and, critically, makes the rights enforceable in court. Prior to the change, a child or child's parent or guardian could make an administrative complaint. Now, under the new law, either the court, on its own, or upon a motion, can order a party "to ensure the child or youth is provided with the rights enumerated" in the bill.

These enumerated rights include:

- Written notice of rights;
- Freedom of conscience, religion, and expression;
- The right to own property and personal affects;
- The right to an accounting of how their federal social security benefits are being spent;
- Due process protections including timely court proceedings and the power to participate in legal proceedings, case planning, and setting permanency goals;
- Education, including transportation, school stability, and participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Information and training necessary to transition from care into adulthood.

Furthermore, the court cannot limit or deny a child's enumerated rights unless there is clear and convincing evidence of extraordinary circumstances that limiting a child's rights is necessary for a child's safety.

The Center for the Rights of Abused Children recognizes the hard work of partner organizations such as the [Office of the Child Representative](#) (OCR), OCR's [Lived Experts Action Panel](#), especially Maya and Maddie, for their courageous testimonies, and the [National Association of Counsel for Children](#). This collaborative effort will push Colorado forward, recognizing children's rights and ensuring those rights are [known and defensible](#).

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**About the Center for the Rights of Abused Children:** The Center for the Rights of Abused Children believes every child deserves a safe and loving home. Join our mission today, [thecenterforchildren.org](http://thecenterforchildren.org).

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