



SB25-043 | Deflection Supports Justice-Involved Youth

STATUS: Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee referred the amended bill to the Appropriations Committee on February 24, 2025. The next committee hearing has not yet been scheduled.

SPONSORS: Rep. Mary Bradfield (R), Rep. Regina English, Sen. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, Sen. Judy Amabile

SUMMARY: This bill would make several changes to the process for determining whether a juvenile is competent to stand trial in an adult court and would require courts to drop charges for low-level offenses if a juvenile is found incompetent to proceed.

The bill also makes several revisions to the Youthful Offender System (YOS). It mandates rehabilitative treatment and life skills programming, with provisions for individual and family therapy and substance use disorder treatment, as needed.

The bill also creates the Deflection and Community Investment Grant Program in the Department of Public Safety to implement trauma-informed health and development deflection programs beginning in 2026.

FISCAL NOTES: The bill is projected to impact the following areas on an ongoing basis: state revenue, state expenditures, and local government. The bill requires an appropriation of at least \$3.9 million to multiple state agencies for FY 2025-2026.

SUPPORT: ACLU of Colorado, Colorado Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, Colorado Criminal Defense Bar, Disability Law Colorado, Healthier Colorado, League of Women Voters of Colorado, Mental Health Colorado, National Center for Youth Law

OPPOSITION: There are no organizations registered in opposition to this bill.

PROS

- Deflection programs aimed at redirecting youth away from the justice system can prevent the escalation of minor offenses into more serious criminal behavior. Increasing these supports can promote more positive outcomes.
- Many justice-involved youth face challenges such as trauma, poverty, or family instability. Deflection programs connect youth with community-based services, mental health counseling, educational support, and mentorship, addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior and reducing recidivism.

CONS

- Some have argued that funds used for deflection programs could be better spent on other areas such as improving the traditional justice system or investing in community safety measures.