



To: Colorado State Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs
Committee

From: Beth Hendrix, Executive Director, Denver Sister Cities
International

Date: 2 May 2016

To the members of the Colorado State Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs
Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to describe the positive impact of Sister City
relationships and why I support the creation of a home for Colorado's Sister State
relationships.

Denver has ten Sister Cities; the first was established in 1948 and is the second-oldest
sister city relationship in the US. Until 2013, Denver Sister Cities was volunteer run,
with each sister city relationship and its associated programs operating in a segregated
and somewhat haphazard manner. In 2013, these ten connections were given a
dedicated home, and the impact has been tremendous. In 2015, Denver Sister Cities
produced just under \$5 in programs for every dollar spent; this equates to an
approximate return to the general economy of \$29.63 in programming for each dollar
invested in DSCI by the City & County of Denver. The direct return to the City -- money
back into the City Treasury through sales and use taxes -- is almost 2:1.

Sister City and State relationships offer direct connections for governmental and
business cooperation and partnership. These direct connections spur business
expansion and increased import/export activities. Some examples include the
catalyzation of the Tokyo nonstop flight due to our Sister City relationship with
Takayama, Japan; strong business expansion into Mongolia by Denver-based Wagner
Equipment due to Denver's Sister City relationship with Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; and a
local business is importing Takayama sake and hopes to soon import hida beef.

Sister City and State relationships can impact international student recruitment at the
university level. The financial impact of international students in Colorado for the
2014-15 academic year was \$352M and supports more than 5K jobs. That's almost
\$132M and 2K jobs here in District 1, where DSCI is based. Metro State University has
created Sister School relationships with universities in two of Denver's Sister Cities;

these relationships allow for easy faculty and student exchange, increasing campus programming and diversity.

Sister City and Sister State programs add cultural diversity to a city or region through increased visitation and exchange. They're a foot in the door to global regions and entire countries. They also prove a cultural respect and commitment on the state's behalf to area immigrants and diaspora - when an immigrant hears that Denver has a Sister City in her home country, the impact of that information is evident.

Sister City relationships impact tourism. Denver Sister Cities is responsible for hundreds of flights each year and hundreds of thousands of dollars to hotels, shops, restaurants, attractions, and events.

This legislation is timely. In May, inaugural nonstop flight to Munich is an ideal time to re-establish ties with our Sister State of Bavaria - this opportunity is dropped in our laps.

Anyone who's married knows that a relationship is only as successful as the attention that's given to it. Colorado's Sister State relationships can add to our state's cultural diversity and bottom line if they're given a home.

Thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

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