



# The Bell Policy Center

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## Opportunities for Credential Attainment (SB 22-192) Testimony to Senate Education Committee

Laura Valle Gutierrez, Senior Policy Analyst • Apr 14, 2022

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of [SB-192](#). My name is Laura Valle Gutierrez and I am the senior policy analyst at the Bell Policy Center.

Colorado faces unique challenges to building a robust workforce. We are the 2nd fastest aging state in the nation, which means that helping current adults gain credentials is critical to building up our workforce. Further, by 2050, Latinx Coloradans will make up more than 1 in 3 workers according to data from the state demographers office. And yet, that same group has a postsecondary attainment rate of only [25 percent](#). Reducing barriers to successfully gaining a credential and using that credential to gain a good job is essential for building a robust talent pipeline in our state as, according to the Colorado Workforce Development Council, 3 in 4 jobs require a postsecondary credential.

[Stackable credential pathways](#) are a critical solution to flexibly meet the demands of changing workforces and help [students increase credential completion](#). Passing SB-192 will help students quickly build skills that are industry aligned and should, therefore, be an essential tool in Colorado's talent pipeline development strategy.

Over the years, the Bell Policy Center has published multiple reports on the [design](#) and [implementation](#) of local stackable credential programs in the Denver Metro-Area, documenting the pathway created by Mi Casa Resource Center, MSU Denver, and the Community College of Aurora, in banking and financial services. Our reports have shown that these pathways are a cost-effective and time-saving way for students to quickly enter an industry with strong growth opportunities.

Additionally, we are pleased to note the bill's emphasis on convening stakeholders from industry and education is critical for the development of student-centered and industry-relevant pathways. Our report on the creation of stackable credential pathways underscores how vital strong partnerships are for successful pathway programs.

We would like to thank the committee, as well as the many stakeholders that have been instrumental and steadfast in advocating for the development of statewide stackable credential pathway programs. We strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of SB-192.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Laura