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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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June 18th, 2013

The Colorado Youth Symphony
571 Galapagos Street
Denver, CO 80204

To Whom it May Concern,

Before being elected to Congress, I had the honor of serving as the Chair of the Colorado State Board of Education. During my tenure, I was troubled by our inability to ensure that access to the arts available in some Colorado school districts, such as Boulder Valley, was not uniform statewide.

Now that I am a father, I am even more passionate that my son's peers have every opportunity to expand their mind and skills in Colorado. Therefore, I wish to offer my enthusiastic support for the Colorado Youth Symphony's new initiative, Mile High Strings.

The Colorado Youth Symphony has long provided an opportunity for students to enrich their lives through music beyond what is available in many Colorado school districts. It is well documented that students with a comprehensive education in music experience an increase performance in every aspect of their lives. Organizations such as the CYSO are not designed to create a new generation of professional musicians, though many alumni have chosen that path; instead, the focus is to develop camaraderie, leadership, self esteem and most importantly for competitiveness in the new economy by promoting abstract thought and creativity. Mile High Strings will bring this opportunity to the schools and families who need it most. Beyond the obvious benefits to participants in this new program, the trans-socioeconomic interaction and building of community makes this program essential for all the members of this organization. The music instruction, peer mentorship, and involvement of the family at concerts will not only result in a love for the arts, but a spirit of empathy that is vital to ensuring the next generation of Coloradan's has greater access to these opportunities.

Mile High Strings follows a model similar to what has been extraordinarily successful in bridging economic and cultural gaps for institutions such as the Juilliard School and The New England Conservatory. The Music Advancement Program and Project STEP programs respectively are now in their second decades of service to New York and Boston; and the alumni include professional musicians, educators, bankers, attorneys and even a former member of my Congressional staff. Now is the time to make a similar investment in Colorado's future.

I anticipate the Denver community will fully embrace and support this important imitative and I look forward to my son having the opportunity to be a member of the Colorado Youth Symphony in the future.

Yours truly,

Jared Polis
Member of Congress