

## **Teachers may now submit a written pledge to uphold the state and federal constitutions**

State law has long required licensed teachers to take a teacher's oath or affirmation, swearing or affirming to uphold the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Colorado, and to "faithfully perform the duties of the position upon which I am about to enter." C.R.S. 22-61-103(1). This statutory obligation has been upheld by the courts as constitutional. *Ohlson v. Phillips*, 304 F.Supp. 1152 (D. Colo. 1969), *aff'd mem.*, 397 U.S. 317, *reh'g denied*, 397 U.S. 1081 (1970).

Senate Bill 17-296 amended this statutory requirement to allow teachers to sign a written pledge instead of taking an oath. This revision was made to decrease the costs and hassle involved with taking an oath administered by "a person authorized to administer oaths in Colorado" (e.g., notary public). C.R.S. 22-61-103(2).

According to the Colorado Department of Education, the oath or pledge may be completed by each teacher at the time of hiring or signing of the teacher's employment contract.