



Written Testimony on HB23-1003cathy gardino to: committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov
02/07/2023 12:33 PM

My only comments is this... Children belong to the Parents... Not the State!

This attempt by the state to separate kids from parental authority and inserting the state is irresponsible and dangerous..

Here is a simple example:

[NIH experiment ends with 2 suicides by trans-identified youth | Voice \(christianpost.com\)](#)

[Taking the Loco out of In Loco Parentis | Mike In The Paper \(wordpress.com\)](#)

“I suppose this would a good time to mention that Jefferson County Schools, Colorado, has lost over 6,000 students in the last three years. These aren’t just demographic shifts—these are kids that the district was expecting to have in their classrooms who have just ... disappeared. Included in that number is over a thousand new defections just this year, long after the pandemic brand of crazy has been relegated to the rear-view mirror.”

Thank you,

Cathy Gardino
Colorado Parents for Education Options

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



COLORADO
PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

February 6, 2022

Rep. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, Chair
House Public Health & Human Services Committee
200 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Rep. Michaelson Jenet,

On behalf of the Colorado Public Health Association (CPHA), we are pleased to share our support for House Bill 23-1003 to expand access to mental health screening for Colorado students in grades 6-12. Behavioral health policy remains a top priority for our 650 members of CPHA, as public health communities across Colorado continue to pursue solutions that can promote early identification of mental health needs among children, address ongoing behavioral health workforce shortages and close gaps in access to treatment.

Results from the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey found that 40 percent of Colorado youth experienced symptoms of depression in the past year, an increase from 35 percent in 2019. Schools routinely screen for physical health issues such as hearing and vision screenings to identify potential concerns. It is critical to similarly expand behavioral health screening in schools so that issues can be detected as soon as possible and children can get referrals for treatment if needed.

Policy proposals like House Bill 23-1003 have the potential to increase the proportion of children with mental health challenges who get access to treatment, which is a federal priority through Healthy People 2030, the framework that guides public health priorities across the nation. By promoting early intervention among youth in schools who need behavioral health services and supports, our state can continue to make progress in achieving better behavioral health outcomes for young people.

We appreciate your continued leadership to strengthen our youth behavioral health system in Colorado, and urge the House Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee to pass House Bill 23-1003.

Sincerely,

Wivine Ngongo, MPH
President
Colorado Public Health Association

CC: House Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee

February 7, 2023

Judy Amabile
Mary Bradfield
Brandi Bradley
Regina English
Serena Gonzalez-Gutierrez
Eliza Hamrick
Richard Holtorf
Dafna Michaelson Jenet (Sponsor)
Iman Jodeh
Tammy Story
Mary Young
Jefferson County School Board District
Via Email Only

200 E Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

RE: No on House Bill 23-1003

The *School Mental Health Assessment* bill (the “Bill”) has serious deficiencies.
https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023A/bills/2023a_1003_01.pdf

1. Is this bill necessary? Doesn't C.R.S. §12-245-203.5 already provides that kids 12 and over have access to outpatient psychotherapy services without parent's consent? Do public school's need to be involved as well? No. There is no need for Colorado School Districts to get involved in mental health screening of public-school kids.
2. No law justifies the relinquishment of parental rights in favor of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (“CDPHE”). Certainly parents cannot be divested of their rights for *failing to opt out of* a provision with two weeks' notice. Parents' rights over their children's mental health issues are inherent. They can not be waived or diminished by a public health agency, school district or school.
3. The “Mental-Health Assessment” (the “Assessment”) is *not* an evidence-based instrument. Therefore, it has no place in our schools.
4. The Qualified Providers are not licensed mental-health professionals. Based on the questions, they seem more like data collectors. Please list all the parties that receive the data collected by CDPHE.
5. Where is the list of requirements for the counselors that are qualified to provide the 6 free sessions. Who will decide which counselors are eligible? Under Colorado are they all gender affirming? Presumably so. (Under the American Academy of Pediatrics (“AAP”), gender-affirming care for adolescents is medically necessary and appropriate. Think about this for one second: the AAP isn't saying that it *might be* medically necessary and appropriate. AAP providers do not need to make a finding of medical necessity.)

<https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/aap-voices/why-we-stand-up-for-transgender-children-and-teens/>

6. Why isn't there a provision in the Bill that safeguards parents's rights to attend the 6 free counseling sessions with their children?
7. Don't all Colorado schools already have a mental crisis health plan in place and, if so, what is the deficiency of that existing policy? Perhaps, legislators should try to correct existing plans before curtailing parents' rights.
8. What are the parents' rights to disagree with the Qualified Provider's path of treatment?
9. According to your own data from 2020, almost ½ of individuals who committed suicide had previously had mental health counseling (43%) and almost ⅓ (31%) were currently getting mental health treatment. Perhaps more mental health counseling isn't the solution.

<https://cohealthviz.dphe.state.co.us/t/HealthInformaticsPublic/views/COVDRSSuicideDashboardSingleRaceandMultipleRace/Story1?%3Aembed=y&%3Aiid=1&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y>

As a parent, I am well aware that kids in Colorado are struggling. And, I'm aware that there are kids who need help who might be prevented because of their parents lack of involvement or failure to consent for various reasons. Those kids need help and I recognize that.

But, politicians need to realize that parents are losing faith in public schools, and public health agencies – minorities more than other groups and for valid historical reasons. Parents know first hand that their kids are suffering (not in a small degree thanks to CDPHE's overbroad restrictions during COVID), and most parents, rightfully, want to be involved in their childrens' mental health development. Politicians need to start drafting bills that reflect nuanced attempts to balance competing interests. This bill is not that. Please vote No on HB23-1003.

Sincerely,

Jenny Gannon - Taxpayer and Parent

Good day:

Mental health. Exactly, what is a "chemical imbalance".

Many who have volunteered to hypnosis can, only, partially recall how they felt, etc. I have seen "The Butterfly Effect".

For years I was a victim of the pseudo science: Psychiatry.

Was I, really, a victim? This I have questioned myself.

My life, and growing up, came full circle one day: I was in Denver working [scab security] at a, of all things, Marijuana exposition. In all reality? If I knew that was whirr I was going to be? I would not have signed up for the event.

There were children at the event; one struck a cord (I went to DPD with it; typical: one was understanding, the other was a friggin' idiot. "Good Cop, bad cop bit"): I saw a little girl there and realized something was very wrong with her, because she made me recall certain events in my past.

The little girl, and I knew she was a little girl, had shaded eyebrows and what looked like permanent tattoos there; the child looked a mess and she had a serious look in contrast to the little adult that was standing next to her looking all silly and happy go lucky; I got upset.

Worse? The idiots, there, were using drugs there and many in attendance were leaving their children to freely roam; again, this was a drug expo'.

I have read that shaving one's eyebrows (in Egypt) is done for dead pets. I do not know why I did it the first time (shaved my eyebrows); I remember, the second time I did it: I was an adult, living in MA, working in Chinatown-Boston, talking with an old acquaintance from the end of my junior year, while at Milton Academy for the "top juniors in MA [who got to sign up for the program]". I did not volunteer for it. I was asked to do it. I read about it, contrasted it to the alternative (working in a bank; I was a high schooler in this country, not illegally; overstayed my B-2 status, it did not mean anything, much, to me at that time, but I knew what not to do, etc.); I had a great time there at Milton Academy.

Back to the topic: mental health, drugs, psychiatry, hypnosis, etc.

How many products are derived from cows? Quite a lot, no?

Surgeon General's warnings about: cigarettes, alcohol.

Posted on a wall, back when Behavioral Health in Brooklyn, NY was called the "G Building" and on the other side (backside) of that same street in Crown Heights, down the block from Kingsborough Psychiatric; a state facility: [psychotropic, etc. are not to be administered to pregnant mothers, individuals experiencing dementia, etc.]; I was tied down and drugged up, multiple times, in those facilities.

I witnessed individuals being beaten up, etc.; I have seen bruises, etc. on others from there. I have heard stories. Sadly, some went through it because: [one was looking for that pill that makes him look younger, another wanted his leg broken because the hospital would pay to correct his legs bowed; a sign of rickets, I believe, yet another wanted his eyes to change color and, apparently, one of the psychotropic could do that; then there were the hardcore criminals who knew that they could avoid having to do time, as long as they were "compliant with treatment"; stories like those].

Most psychotropic warn: if you intend on becoming pregnant, or are pregnant notify your doctor.

What happened at events like Woodstock?

Still not coming through, clearly?

Why are most of those psychotropic on the market to begin with? Well, for one? They are not there for the reasons above. Definitely not meant as a method of controlling unruly children. Who, by the way, have unruly children (not talking about the "terrible twos" toddlers): no, not blacks, whites, asians, hispanics, etc. Past drug users, those with histories of various forms of childhood abuse, etc.

Starting to see the picture?

No? Are [you, yourself] sober, or a "responsible drug user", etc.?

Scroll back: responsible? How? When? Why do [you], seriously, believe that was responsible.

Facts. Facts can be doctored, etc. It does not alter the original fact, it just creates more variables of a fact.

Let's think about the US Constitution, the amendments to that document, its bylaws, etc.

Is the picture getting any clearer?

Okay, let's address the Bible. Oh, wait, we cannot; not really. Remember King James?

Which civilization is older? Those that use the Hebrew Language? Those that use characters, instead of these letters? Those that write from top, to bottom, and left right? Or those that right from right to left, top to bottom?

Folklore: there was a being (similar to a vampire, because they would suck your neck) in order for the being to change into a ball of fire and visit people? It had to read the Bible, in full, from end to beginning, then, if it got to your house and you had salt on the floor, etc.? It had to count every grain, before it could get to you. Insane, right?

Back to drugs: I read Faustus in school, I saw the movie years before; connected it and saw the drug element.

A quote from a rapper: [smoke this joint, forget that].

Clearer, now?

Oh, look, a baby happened. Or...ever heard stories about (mainly, I have heard it about females) people who woke up in strange places, did not know how they got there, did not know who the people were, but they remembered their life and the new life was better, or worse, than the life they had and they reacted accordingly.

Hmm, that sounds like that movie: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe.

Case for Xfiles?

Clearly the justification for a paranormal unit is because "you cannot fix stupid", does not mean you should "live and let it live". Reality about coexistence: give them half the chance, or less, to eradicate you? They'll find a way.

I believe in God; I have seen and experienced enough to know that there is a God and that's why, when I write a will? My last request would be to be cremated. Nevermind what my driver's license says now about "organ donor"; that will be changed, soon enough.

Point is: I read, some time back, that a food supplier to the United States of America was planting their products where they buried humans who died from covid, etc.

Think about that. Is it sinking in? That was a foreign country. Certain ppl that have been incarcerated for certain crimes are not allowed to work in the food industry, here in the USA. How is the government to regulate contracted workers working under unethical individuals with legitimate licenses, etc.

All of a sudden homelessness comes into question.

I have seen both sides. I know what an addict, with money, power, etc. can do.

Legalize shrooms now? Seriously, Colorado, are all of congress high?

Well, this bill will give a good clue who is, is not, etc., right?

[Contact high]

[Getting bi?] Good day:

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[Getting bi?]

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
02/07/2023 01:30 PM
HB23-1003 School Mental Health Assessment
Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Kyle Traff Against themselves</p>	<p>To the House Public and Behavior Health and Human Services Committee members:</p> <p>I'm writing to submit my concerns around bill HB23-1003. As I'm sure you're aware, this bill contains language which undermines the authority of parents in their role as caregivers in the lives of their children.</p> <p>This line is particularly concerning to me:</p> <p>> The bill specifies that a student 12 years of age or older may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out.</p> <p>As the father of three children I have spent more time, energy, and finances working to provide for the well-being of my children than anyone else in this world. I know them well, oftentimes better than they do themselves, and certainly more than a collective body of medical professionals and government policy-makers. This kind of language not only undermines my ability to do what's best for my children, it places an unwise and unfair burden upon my children to make decisions that they are not properly equipped to handle at 12 years old. It undermines the institution of family and by extension the social fabric that underlies our society. It encourages our kids to lie to others, to deceive their own parents.</p> <p>There are a small number of cases in which outside parties must intervene in the lives of children at times, but sweeping one-size-fits-all legislation like this is not the right approach to handle them. Transparency and cooperation with parents should always be the first step when there are concerns about a child's well-being. Only after careful, individualized scrutiny and strictly-defined standards should the rights of the parents be removed.</p> <p>I would strongly urge you to reconsider this legislation in light of these concerns.</p> <p>Thank you for your public service and consideration,</p> <p>Kyle Traff</p>
<p>Carrie Boudette Against</p>	<p>To Whom it concerns,</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>As a local resistant I am against this bill that is giving too much authority to the school district to get involved with matters that need to be handled at home. Children are minors until age 18 and should not be able to opt back into something their parents have not wanted them involved in. Schools need to focus on teaching our future leaders reading, writing and arithmetic. And stay out of matters that are not their place to be involved in. Thank you for your time Carrie</p>
<p>April Carroll Against themselves</p>	<p>I am against this bill. Children are minors until age 18. This is giving schools and children authority on matters that should be addressed at home or a licensed professional. The school needs to focus on teaching future leaders reading, writing, math ect. So much is being focused on other areas that the core foundations of school are being neglected. Kids are behind in education. Public education enrollments will fall even further of the focus continues to not be related on actual education</p>
<p>Devin Traff Against themselves</p>	<p>To the House Public and Behavior Health and Human Services Committee:</p> <p>Thank you for your service and dedication to the people of Colorado.</p> <p>I am writing to express my concern regarding Bill HB23-1003 and the consequences it will have on the rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children.</p> <p>As a father of three, there is little that I value more than my children and their wellbeing. I invest my life to ensure that they are loved, protected, provided for, and educated so that they can one day become valuable members of society. There is no one who loves our children more than my wife and I, and we strive each day to ensure that they are set up for success. I am sure that this is true as well for those of you on this committee who have raised children.</p> <p>Although most parents share this same sentiment, Bill HB23-1003 is yet another bill that will rob parents like myself of our ability to direct the care for our children. It assumes that the state, and not the parents, know and care more for children than the parents who invest their lives in the well-being of their children.</p> <p>No loving parent would want to find him/herself in a position where they are unable to give direction or input into the care of their children during critical periods of their lives. While some circumstances may warrant state intervention (e.g. child abuse), strict standards and careful assesement of abusive conditions must be completed before such intervention is warranted and the rights of parents are removed.</p>

	<p>I ask that you would thoughtfully consider the implications of this bill, and future bills, on the rights of parents in this state. Would you be ok with the implications of this bill for your own children, grandchildren, etc.? Would you desire to find yourself in a position where you are unable to give direction or input into the care of your children during critical periods of their lives?</p> <p>Please uphold the rights of parents to care for our children in the times when it is most needed. Remember your own children and grandchildren. Resist the pressure to give in to partisan politics. Your voice on our behalf is crucially important to us.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Devin Traff</p>
<p>Kurt Boudette Against themselves</p>	<p>I would like to voice my staunch opposition to HB23-1003. Quoted directly from leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb23-1003 “The bill specifies that a student 12 years of age or older may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out.” is nothing short of an egregious violation of parental rights. Furthermore, also quoted directly from leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb23-1003 “The bill authorizes the department to promulgate rules as necessary to implement and administer the program.” This allows the department to develop rules in a vacuum without legislative oversight that have the potential to serve the interests of certain political sections of our society, again bypassing parental rights and leaving them little recourse. My fear is that this proposed legislation, should it be enacted, will become another law that is weaponized in favor of pursuing a specific ideology-based outcome, and cause irreversible damage to the children it claims it will help. As a registered voter in House District 51, I would urge you to oppose this legislation with all means at your disposal.</p>
<p>Daniel Falk Against themselves</p>	<p>Dear Representatives,</p> <p>As an educator and a parent, I am opposed to HB23-1003. It not only undermines the relationship between parents and teachers, it also violates a parent’s right to be consulted about the welfare of a minor child, per Colorado law. This bill puts that right into the hands of strangers and the government who do not know what is best for our children.</p> <p>HB23-1003 is in violation of Colorado laws (2-4-401(6)) and (19-4-103). The first defines a minor as a person who has not attained the age of 21. It states that parents are liable for their child’s action until they reach the age of majority. This includes decisions about his or her body and mental health. The second law defines a "parent and child relationship" as a legal relationship existing between a child and his/her natural or adoptive parents. Within this relationship there are rights, privileges, duties, and obligations specified by law. Parents have the legal right to be consulted about their child’s mental health.</p>

	<p>The laws are clear. A child 12 to 18 years old is a minor and their parents are liable for their actions. Therefore, the government, qualified providers, and school administrators do not have the right to obstruct that parental obligation. Because of this legal obligation and relationship to their child, a parent should not need to opt-out of a mental health assessment. It should be assumed that they are already opted-out. No minor should ever be told by a school administrator or qualified provider that they, “may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out.” That would be breaking the law and obstructing a parent’s legal right and obligation to their child.</p> <p>Do the right thing and kill this bill in committee.</p>
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<p>Daniel Falk Against themselves</p>	<p>Dear Representatives,</p> <p>As an educator and a parent, I am opposed to HB23-1003. It not only undermines the relationship between parents and teachers, it also violates a parent’s right to be consulted about the welfare of a minor child, per Colorado law. This bill puts that right into the hands of strangers and the government who do not know what is best for our children.</p> <p>HB23-1003 is in violation of Colorado laws (2-4-401(6)) and (19-4-103). The first defines a minor as a person who has not attained the age of 21. It states that parents are liable for their child’s action until they reach the age of majority. This includes decisions about his or her body and mental health. The second law defines a "parent and child relationship" as a legal relationship existing between a child and his/her natural or adoptive parents. Within this relationship there are rights, privileges, duties, and obligations specified by law. Parents have the legal right to be consulted about their child’s mental health.</p> <p>The laws are clear. A child 12 to 18 years old is a minor and their parents are liable for their actions. Therefore, the government, qualified providers, and school administrators do not have the right to obstruct that parental obligation. Because of this legal obligation and</p>

	<p>relationship to their child, a parent should not need to opt-out of a mental health assessment. It should be assumed that they are already opted-out. No minor should ever be told by a school administrator or qualified provider that they, “may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out.” That would be breaking the law and obstructing a parent’s legal right and obligation to their child.</p> <p>Do the right thing and kill this bill in committee.</p>
<p>Jennifer Churchfield Against themselves</p>	<p>Dear Chair Michaelson-Jenet and Public and Behavioral Health and Human Services Committee members-</p> <p>Thank you for serving in the House and on this committee. I am submitting written testimony to you today with concerns regarding HB23-1003 - School Mental Health Assessment.</p> <p>I served on the Cherry Creek School District Board of Education from 2005-2013, the last two years as President. I fully understand the critical need for mental health services for our students and am proud of the work our school districts continue to do everyday to meet those needs, it's an overwhelming task!</p> <p>However, this bill as written, raises several concerns for me:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The bill requires participating schools to provide written notice to the parents of students within the first 2 weeks of the start of the school year in order to allow parents to opt their child out of participating in the mental health assessment. Against - 2 weeks does not allow enough time for parents to understand what this assessment is and decide if they want to opt out. As a parent of 3 grown adults, I vividly remember the 3 sets of paperwork coming home at the start of the school year - it's consuming. This "opt out" might go unnoticed or be set aside considering all the other forms needing signatures, etc. 2. The bill specifies that a student 12 years of age or older may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out. Against - this provision completely takes the parent out of the decision and contradicts the above notice of 2 weeks. <p>Lastly, the bill requires a qualified provider to notify the student's parent under certain circumstances, if the qualified provider finds that additional treatment is needed after reviewing the student's mental health assessment results. - this allows the qualified provider to make the judgement first, before or if ever, notifying the parent. What might be very concerning to a parent, might not be to the provider. This is a flawed and subjective method of assessment.</p> <p>The focus on mental health is imperative, I agree, but excluding parents of 6th-12 graders is not the proper role of this bill. School</p>

	<p>districts are tirelessly working to address the mental health issues, but eliminating a parent from this conversation is not the answer.</p> <p>Respectively, Jennifer Churchfield Past President, Cherry Creek School District Board of Education</p>
<p>Diana Bara Against themselves</p>	<p>As an educator and a parent, I am opposed to HB23-1003. It not only undermines the relationship between parents and teachers, it also violates a parent's right to be consulted about the welfare of a minor child, per Colorado law. This bill puts that right into the hands of strangers and the government who do not know what is best for our children.</p> <p>HB23-1003 conflicts with Colorado laws (2-4-401(6)) and (19-4-103). The first defines a minor as a person who has not attained the age of 21. It states that parents are liable for their child's action until they reach the age of majority. This includes decisions about his or her body and mental health. The second law defines a "parent and child relationship" as a legal relationship existing between a child and his/her natural or adoptive parents. Within this relationship there are rights, privileges, duties, and obligations specified by law. Parents have the legal right to be consulted about their child's mental health. The laws are clear. A child 12 to 18 years old is a minor and their parents are liable for their actions. Therefore, the government, qualified providers, and school administrators do not have the right to obstruct that parental obligation. Because of this legal obligation and relationship to their child, a parent should not need to opt-out of a mental health assessment. It should be assumed that they are already opted-out. No minor should ever be told by a school administrator or qualified provider that they, "may consent to participate in the mental health assessment even if the student's parent opts out." That would be breaking the law and obstructing a parent's legal right and obligation to their child.</p>
<p>Adrian Ramirez Against themselves</p>	<p>Vote no on the school mental health assessment. This bill takes away the rights of parents to make informed decisions about their own children and tasks schools with mental health activities that they are not equipped to handle. Psychological health is the responsibility of parents and their psychologists, not the public school system. Parents are innocent until proven guilty, don't take rights away from all parents out of fear that some don't have their children's best interest at heart. Vote no on HB23-1003.</p>
<p>Tara Geffre Against themselves</p>	<p>I am against bill HB23-1003 for the following reasons. One, a parent/guardian should be able to opt into the program versus having to opt out. Secondly, a minor should not be able to consent to mental health assessments without parental consent. There is a reason we as parents have not only the right but the sole responsibility to consent for our children to have medical interventions. This is just another step in government overreach. If this bill is passed it will open the door for minors to consent to medical interventions without parental</p>

	<p>consent such as medication distribution. We as parents should get the final say in our child’s well being. Parents would still be able to have their child participate in the program if they would like.</p>
<p>JEANY RUSH Against themselves</p>	<p>Honorable Members:</p> <p>It is a TOTAL NO for me on this bill. This is such an overreach of our constitutional rights, and most important for the parents, and children. While I in no way want to put down teachers, counselors, etc., Our systems are full of programs, misuses by SEL and CRT and other authority given to often, strangers. The Parents, and the children should be involved in this process. It should be the exception not the rule, and certainly not the rule of law, for the STATE or FEDERAL government to be so so terribly involved in Family matters. This is a Horrible Misjustice of America. A complete NO Confidence in this type of activity. As a grandmother, mother, great grandmother, I think our elected folks have gone way to to far. Thank You Jeany Rush 2-7-23</p>
<p>Richard Mack Against themselves</p>	<p>I am against this bill, no one knows their children better than the parents. Especially after the past 2-3 years of covid restrictions, the government needs to stay out of the personal matters of families and student.</p>
<p>Ann McCarty Questions Only themselves</p>	<p>This written testimony is AGAINST HB 423-1003. The education system needs to get back to just that, education: reading, writing, math, science, civics ect! The schools have no parental rights over our children. Every human is different how can a “universal” mental health assessment support unique human characteristics and personalities. There is no way a parent of a child under the age of 18 can or should be allowed to go against the parental consent. I believe enough damage has been down to our children the in past three years. Now you want to create mental health issues based on universal qualifiers. No way. Parents will pull their children out of public schools. This is a violation of the 14th Amendment and has no constitutional basis. Thank you for your time.</p>
<p>Ashley Gronlie Against themselves</p>	<p>A 12-year-old child is a minor, they do not have the mental capacity to decide whether to "opt in or out" of anything without parental consent. Especially regarding a mental health assessment that will be administered by a "qualified provider". Who decides what "qualifies" these "providers"? In the event that there are concerns for any MINOR, the parents need to be notified every time, not "under certain circumstances". Schools are there to educate our children, not indoctrinate them or alienate them from their parents.</p>
<p>Heather Van Benthem Against themselves</p>	<p>I am against the previously passed House Bill 19-1120, as it provides the means for children to access psychiatric treatment without the knowledge or consent of their parents. There is nothing in that previous bill that mentions medications, so that omission seems to indicate that these children may be getting psychiatric medications without their families knowledge. This new House Bill 23-1003 continues that theme, with children being able to override their</p>

	<p>parents and keep secrets from them, all while sharing who knows what information with strangers. And that is who these so-called "qualified providers" are: strangers. There is no parental oversight or assistance to navigate the therapy process. While providing mental health for our students is an important goal, this continued erosion of the bonds between parents and children is an unacceptable means to an end. Further, allowing children as young as twelve to make their own medical decisions is a tremendous weight for such young shoulders. I am against this bill, just as I am against my tax dollars going toward the iMatter system. It appears that this was set up with the careful wording of being "temporary," presumably to appear to be more palatable. Yet, it has already been extended, with the redlines seeming to indicate that now it is viewed as a permanent installation. This is misleading. Therapy must be treated with the utmost care, as it can so easily badly damage the very person it purports to assist. HB23-1003 lacks this care and opens children up to a process that they lack maturity to manage. Stop inserting the government between family members, and stop wasting our tax dollars. Thank you.</p>
<p>Samantha Wild Against Moms For Liberty El Paso County</p>	<p>My Name is Samantha Wild and I am the Vice-Chair of Moms for Liberty El Paso County.</p> <p>Today I am writing on behalf of many in my community when we ask you to stop HB23-1003 from passing. Passing this bill takes away Parental Rights. Parental Rights are fundamental rights and are not limited to education, medical care, and moral upbringing.</p> <p>Children aged 12-18 do not have fully developed brains to consent to what is going on with their own medical care, and mental health assessments is a form of medical care. Education and Medical Care should never mix. Nurses at schools aren't allowed to give children ibuprofen for headaches, yet we should allow mental health assessments to take place on school grounds, and even without parental consent?</p> <p>The only place mental health assessments should take place is in a licensed facility, with licensed individuals who have years of training.</p> <p>What happens when this mental health assessment takes a wrong turn and a child hurts himself or others, and that child did not give consent for their parents to know what was going on? That sounds like a lawsuit waiting to happen to hold school districts accountable for withholding information.</p> <p>Stop this government overreach, as we the parents of Colorado do not co-parent with the government on any level.</p>



409 7th St Northwest, Suite 305
Washington, D.C. 20004
February 7, 2023

House Committee on Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
Colorado General Assembly
200 E Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Via electronic submission

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB23-1003, the creation of the "Sixth Through Twelfth Grade Mental Health Assessment Act"

Dear Chairwoman Michaelson Jenet and Members of the Committee:

Thank you, Chairwoman, for hearing HB23-1003 in Committee today and for sponsoring this important legislation. On behalf of Inseparable, a growing movement of people working to advance policy solutions that reflect the belief that the health of our minds cannot be separate from the health of our bodies, I am writing to urge you to pass HB23-1003 today.

Inseparable is focused on closing the treatment gap for the millions of Americans with mental health conditions who are not getting the help they need, improving crisis response services, and getting youth help early, especially through school mental health services.

The mental health challenges facing youth and young adults today are so alarming that the Children's Hospital Colorado declared an emergency in 2021, which was followed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association issuing a joint statement of a national emergency in mental health.¹ Over one in six youth ages 12-17 (17.05%) in Colorado experienced a major depressive episode in the prior year.² As has been widely reported, the youth mental health crisis has continued even as youth have returned to school. Even before the pandemic, nearly four in ten (36.7%) high school students reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless in the past year, and nearly one in ten (8.9%) had made at least one suicide attempt.³ For youth ages 10–14 years old, suicide is the second leading cause of death.⁴

¹ AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Adolescent Mental Health. (10/19/2021). Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/childand-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>.

² Mental Health America. "The State of Mental Health of America". (2023). <https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2023-State-of-Mental-Health-in-America-Report.pdf>

³ Bitsko RH, Claussen AH, Lichstein J, et al. Mental Health Surveillance Among Children — United States, 2013–2019. *MMWR Suppl* 2022;71(Suppl-2):1–42. DOI. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7102a1>.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Access at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>.

When youth experience mental health challenges, it can affect their academic performance, their relationships with their teachers, parents, friends and family, and even their health and safety. Without treatment, children with behavioral health conditions often face challenges that persist in adulthood.⁵ Fortunately, prevention and early intervention work. Research shows that the earlier a person gets effective mental health treatment, the better the outcomes. Yet, in Colorado, over one in three youth ages 12-17 (34.4%) with depression did not receive any care within the prior year.⁶

Colorado can make a difference by passing HB23-1003 to provide mental health assessments in grades 6-12. Screening of youth for suicide, major depressive disorder, and anxiety is so important it is now formally recommended by the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force.^{7,8} Checks of mental wellness can help identify students who may need extra support as well as provide an invaluable opportunity to engage parents and teachers of students who may be struggling.

It is important to note that an assessment is not a diagnosis, but an opportunity to spot students who may be at risk. This is particularly important because half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14, and 75% begin by age 24.⁹ Like many other health conditions, when signs and symptoms are identified early and addressed appropriately, it's possible to get young lives back on track.

This bill takes a critical step in supporting our youth and allows for maximum impact by reaching them where they are—in schools. **We respectfully request that the Committee pass this important legislation, HB23-1003, and provide hope and support to students, teachers, and parents across Colorado.**

Respectfully,



Angela Kimball

Sr Vice-President of Advocacy & Public Policy

⁵ Neufeld SAS, Jones PB, Goodyer IM. Child and adolescent mental health services: longitudinal data sheds light on current policy for psychological interventions in the community. *J Public Ment Health*. 2017;16(3):96-99. Access at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5868550/>.

⁶ Mental Health America. "The State of Mental Health of America". (2023). <https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2023-State-of-Mental-Health-in-America-Report.pdf>

⁷ "Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Screening." U.S. Preventative Services Task Force Final Recommendation (2022) <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/screening-anxiety-children-adolescents>

⁸ "Depression and Suicide Risk in Children and Adolescents: Screening." U.S. Preventative Services Task Force Final Recommendation (2022) <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/screening-depression-suicide-risk-children-adolescents>

⁹ Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jun;62(6):593-602. doi: 10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593. Erratum in: *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jul;62(7):768. Merikangas, Kathleen R [added]. PMID: 15939837.



POLICY STATEMENT

LGBTQ+ youth in Colorado are at greater risk of mental health concerns than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts and often experience disparities in accessing mental services as well. House Bill 23-1003 would allow initial access to mental health assessment services for LGBTQ+ youth that they may not otherwise receive. Additionally, this bill will improve access to additional mental health resources for the instances they are necessary. Envision:You strongly supports HB23-1003.

HB23-1003: School Mental Health Assessment

Colorado House Bill 23-1003 would allow public schools that offer any grades six through twelve to opt in to a mental health assessment program provided by the Department of Public Health and Environment. While parents would need to be notified within the first two weeks of the school year to either opt their child in or out, children 12 years and older would have the ability to consent despite their parents' dissent. The mental health assessment will be conducted by a qualified provider selected by the Department. Once assessments are completed, the qualified provider will analyze the assessments and then proceed to the next steps accordingly for each student. If students showed signs of suicidality, homicidality, physical self-harm, or are in need of attention from a mental health professional, the qualified professional will immediately notify the student's school. If a student is in need of other mental health services due to a different mental health concern, then the qualified provider will issue information on resources and services provided through iMatter Colorado, a temporary behavioral health services program established by HB21-1258.

Why it Matters

Data shows that LGBTQ+ youth are at greater risk for mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicidality. According to the 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health conducted by the Trevor Project, 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide and 14% attempted suicide. For transgender youth, these statistics increased

significantly to 53% for considered suicide and 19% for attempted. Rates of experiencing anxiety and depression have increased as well, with 73% of LGBTQ+ youth reporting in the US experiencing symptoms of anxiety and 58% reporting experiencing symptoms of depression. These statistics, depending on the state and region, range anywhere from two to four times higher than heterosexual/cisgender youth counterparts. Additionally, most LGBTQ youth reported that they wanted help for their mental health concerns, but did not receive it.

These statistics are similar in Colorado as reflected in a [State of the State Survey](#) by Envision:You which surveyed over nearly 600 LGBTQ+ Coloradans, including 192 youth. The Survey showed that 40 % of LGBTQ+ youth stated they were concerned about a mental health issue including anxiety and depression. The Survey showed that LGBTQ+ youth were more likely to have considered or attempted suicide, especially transgender youth. Lastly, the Survey showed that a significant amount of LGBTQ+ youth wanted to access care but were unable to. The reasons listed as barriers were similar to the National Survey conducted by the Trevor Project, including concerns about parental permission, lack of affordability, lack of transportation, and concerns with obtaining parental permission.

House Bill 23-1003 would help address the barriers to care mentioned by LGBTQ+ youth in Colorado. For students twelve years and older, they can opt into the mental health assessment even if their guardian does not consent. This will reduce concerns around obtaining parental consent and parent consent in general. The issue of transportation would be alleviated as the mental health assessments would be conducted in the school, and the assessment would not be a charge the student would need to consider. Lastly, if any student were to need further mental health resources, the referral would go through iMatter, which provides up to six sessions for free. This bill would help provide mental health services to students across Colorado that may not otherwise have access.

Envision:You strongly supports House Bill 23-1003 knowing this legislation will allow any Colorado public school that supports grade six through twelve to have a qualified provider conduct mental health assessments with any student who opts in. This bill can help alleviate the mental health concerns that many students, especially those with LGBTQ+ identities, experience, that often go untreated.

Envision:You

Envision:You seeks to close gaps in behavioral health outcomes for LGBTQ+ individuals through co-created community programming, advocacy engagement, public awareness campaigns, and evidence-based training. To learn more please visit: www.envision-you.org.

Please support HB23-1003 School Mental Health Assessment

By: Amelia Federico, Young Invincibles Policy Fellow

Hello, and good afternoon members of the committee thank you for letting me speak before you today. My name is Amelia Federico I was born and raised in Denver, I attend MSU Denver and I am a policy fellow with young invincibles. I am excited to talk to you today about HB23-1003.

This is a necessary bill that would create a mental health assessment for students in k-12 public education. I was once a student in k-12 education here in Denver. I remember taking mental health screeners at the beginning of the year but never after that. Even when I noted that I needed help on the screener I, unfortunately, did not experience any follow-up. This made me feel sad, and anxious and did not make me feel seen as a student but rather just pushed under the rug in terms of my mental health. I believe that mental health screenings are an excellent first step at working to improve mental health in Colorado. This bill adds to that by reporting student data to school administrators so they can track students' emotions throughout the year, and so that school administrators are aware of student mental health.

I believe these mental health screeners and data transparency give schools the opportunity to take the first step at discussing student mental health. I believe this bill is very needed and important because I used to be one of those students taking the assessments and never hearing follow up. Thank you to the sponsors for bringing this bill forward. Today I ask you to please vote yes on HB23-1003 School Mental Health Assessment, to give young people the chance to address their mental health early, and with support.

Thank you Representative Young and committee members for having me.

My name is Lorelei Jackson and I am the Student Services Coordinator of a charter middle school in Denver Public Schools. As a special educator, I serve exceptional learners with a range of diversity from English Language Learners, students with disabilities and those who need extra support.

I am here in support of HB23-1003.

This school year I have seen an increase in students facing challenges. Students have shown gaps in academic achievement, but they are also being referred for special services and mental health support at an alarming rate. This year, one of my coworkers referred a young lady to me for support due to her struggles in math.

At my first check in, the student was pleasant and recognized that she was not doing well in math. We reviewed her grades; She was failing 4 of her 6 classes! We began to develop a plan for success. A week later I checked in with her again. She was happy. She had completed most of the assignments and was well on her way to improving many of her grades. I could see she was working hard and was beginning to have more faith in her academic ability.

I could not find her during our final check-in, however. When I found her, she was laying out-stretched on the bathroom floor, sobbing. I was unable to console her and called for the school social worker. Grades had come out and she still had one F. She later shared how much of a failure she believed she was. She called herself worthless and dumb. I expressed how proud and impressed I was with her effort, but she was unable to hear it. All she focused on was the failing grade. Although upset, she left for winter break with a smile.

Not a week after we returned to school, I was approached by a group of middle school students who feared for the student. Although smiling, when we began to talk about the concern, she broke down. She shared that for over a year she had been hurting herself and had serious thoughts of dying. Based on the extreme nature, I again had to seek out my school social worker, and we spent the following 2 hours completing a safety protocol for the student.

While teachers are given some training on spotting mental health issues, we have been conditioned to respond to students when they are struggling academically. Screeners, as they are referred to in this bill, can be another resource to waive a "red flag" for struggling students. This bill would not only provide universal screening to help identify students who are struggling, but through the Imatters program would provide the therapeutic interventions that many children need, but are not receiving.

By voting in support of this bill, you will be providing support for the students who go unseen. Universal screening would have provided tangible data for the young lady in 6th grade. For my struggling math student we would have been able to develop a plan earlier, before she began to take action against herself, before she developed the intense feelings of doubt and lack of self worth, before she began to harm herself and wished herself dead. This support could help save the lives of students like my 6th grader. This bill could be the difference that our students need to feel seen, heard, and worthy.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.



HB23-1003 - Statementnicole uebel to: committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov 02/07/2023 12:34 PM

My statement is going to be simple and straight forward! I am a parent of two amazing girls and against this bill!

The proposed bill is in direct violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of our country's constitution. The Due Process Clause of the amendment protects the fundamental right of parents to direct the care, upbringing, and education of their children.

I ask all of you to think of your own children when making a decision regarding this bill! Do not pass HB23-1003 and put parents in a position to sue also using taxpayers' dollars to defend what is unlawful! There are court cases on the books upholding these rights.

God bless,
Nicole

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

February 7, 2023

House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
State of Colorado
State Capitol

Dear House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee:

My name is Bradley Jackson and I am here in support of the amended position on HB 23-1003. As a licensed clinical social worker, the Director of Counseling at Kent Denver School in Englewood, Colorado, and a member of the Mental Health Consortium, I can attest first hand to the critical need to connect Colorado youth to mental healthcare in the community.

HB23-1003 is a preventative measure that would take the state of Colorado one step further in pioneering creative systems to address the current youth mental health crisis, thereby improving community well-being and also reducing violence in our schools, communities, and our future.

This bill, foremost, enables early intervention for symptoms of distress in our youth. Early intervention significantly reduces the chances of lifelong complications and is more economically efficient. Early intervention also mitigates school violence, community violence, and substance abuse, all of which are symptomatic of untreated mental distress.

The use of the word “screening” more accurately reflects the intention of this legislation to provide brief screenings that inform the need for further assessment. HB23-1003 seeks not to transform schools into mental health clinics that provide comprehensive psychiatric assessments, but strives instead to innovatively use schools as a bridge to mental health providers. Amending the legislation more accurately represents the specific kind of tools to be used in school settings, and it honors the bill’s intention to refer individuals to an appropriate level of care. Given that current school counseling structures do not have the resources nor the capacity to sustain providing mental health treatment to all students, it is critical that this legislation creates a system in which schools can refer out.

In addition, the use of the word screening mirrors best practices used in pediatric medical offices as well as in the hearing and vision screenings often provided by school nurses. The use of the word “screening” goes a long way in destigmatizing mental health, rendering this kind of practice to be just as normal as any other health related issue. Furthermore, “screening” advances the mission of this legislation to reach *more* students and families because of reduced stigma.

Normalizing mental health is of critical importance particularly for communities of color, athletes, and other groups in which people have historically suffered in silence.

I also support the inclusion of a provision to notify parents if the need for further assessment arises. Some presentations of mental illness in youth appear behaviorally, and notifying caregivers of the need for further assessment may assist them in better understanding their individual child's needs both at home and at school. Many other presentations of mental distress remain invisible in youth, leaving some caregivers in the dark about their child's struggles. Every family deserves the opportunity to secure whatever resources are needed to enhance the mental and physical well-being of their child. Notifying families of the need for further assessment greatly increases a child's ability to access treatment, and given the role that environment plays in mental well-being, a family member's support in the treatment process aids in overall growth and treatment success.

Connecting more adolescents to community care also empowers schools to focus on prevention solutions such as social emotional learning programs and curriculum. Data from screenings can speak to the individual needs of a school community, thereby allowing culturally responsive practice and targeting social emotional education on the part of school mental health teams.

The U.S. Surgeon General's research points to the neurobiological nature of human connection as key to alleviating much of the mental distress in our communities. Providing screenings and notifying families of the need for care, as is the case in the amended version of HB23-1003, takes us one step further in the direction of connection - between adolescents and schools, between schools and families, and between caregivers and their children. Thank you for your time today and for supporting the well-being of our state's next generation.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bradley P. Jackson, MSW, LCSW". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bradley P. Jackson, MSW, LCSW

Testimony on HB23-1003

Pretrial Diversion For Person With Behavioral Health

[House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services](#)

Feb 7, 2023

Ray Merenstein

Executive Director

NAMI Colorado

executivedirector@namicolorado.org

Mme. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Ray Merenstein and I have the honor of representing the Colorado chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness as its Executive Director. NAMI's mission is to build communities of recovery and hope. On behalf of NAMI Colorado's public policy committee, our board, and our 15 affiliates from across the state, I offer NAMI Colorado's support of House Bill 23-1003 with special thanks to the bill's sponsors.

NAMI envisions a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares. To that end, in Colorado, we are building a lively, robust network of programs and services to support local communities to effectively provide advocacy, education, support, and public awareness. It is partnerships and resources like our NAMI Ending the Silence and evidence based NAMI Basics that work with schools and parents to maximize resources for schools and early intervention and prevention.

True prevention works best when those at greatest risk have options, choices, and safe spaces to get the care, attention, and the treatment, intervention, and community supports needed to steer them on the road to safety, recovery and stability. Right now, for too many the "Road less taken," seems the route rather than a warm embrace of all the possible resources that the school screening process would add on top of iMatter, new day treatment centers, 988, Safe2Tell and more. Don't wait until the student becomes a statistic. Let this be the road we choose first.

Imagine the costs savings, the health implications, and the human dignity with the expansion of the education-based resources. Every early intervention can save money, and more importantly save a life.

As author Arundhati Roy says in a 2020 *Financial Times* article, “the pandemic is a portal, offering the opportunity to rebuild for the future. There is a viable pathway for turning around the economics of mental health care. Given the severity of the crisis, can we afford not to seize this opportunity for real change?”¹

Continue your leadership this session with solutions to the mental health crisis like HB-1003. Do it for tomorrow’s generation. They aren’t worried about cost implications. They are worried about tomorrow. I thank you for your commitment to the cause and for the attention to this testimony.

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

TESTIMONY FOR HB23-1003—Student Mental Health Assessments

Thank you Madam Chair and Committee...

My name is Su Ryden, and I volunteer as Public Policy Co-Director for the American Association of University Women –AAUW of Colorado. AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization. Our mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. AAUW is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881.

I am here today to ask for your support of House Bill 1003, to provide mental health assessments to students in grades 6 through 12. AAUW supports a strong system of public

education that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity and inclusivity, and to address the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls.

HB-1003 will bring much needed mental health services to students in grades 6 through 12. This is an age where our young people are undergoing the transition from child to adult, a period of time that is fraught with challenges, especially for our young women. We have all read the news stories about the adverse effects of social media, not to mention the mental health toll from the pandemic. With so many of our youth in crisis, HB-1003 is needed now.

AAUW of Colorado strongly supports this bill and requests your YES vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming a law.

Thank you for your consideration, I'm happy to take questions.