

Dear Chair Brown and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Ashley Chase and I am the staff attorney and legislative liaison at the Office of the Child's Representative (OCR). OCR is the independent state agency tasked with ensuring high quality legal representation for children and youth involved in Colorado court systems. We provide oversight and support for attorneys in every judicial district across the state. Those attorneys represent children and youth, or their best interests, in 12 different case types. OCR attorneys are appointed for every child or youth in each dependency and neglect case across the state of Colorado. **OCR is submitting this written testimony today in opposition of HB25-1251 because of its potential negative impact on children and youth in Colorado.** Not only will this bill limit youth from seeking mental health and substance abuse treatment, but it also curtails the current rights of parents in dependency and neglect cases.

In enacting laws around youth consent for very narrow purposes, the legislature has carefully balanced the interests of children, youth, parents, and the state's interest in protecting children. To come in and remove these minor consent provisions will create serious access issues for many children and youth, potentially endangering their health and safety.

I work in a world where parents are not always supportive of their child seeking help, may not be available, or may be the reason the support is needed. It is an unfortunate reality that some of the children and youth OCR's attorneys represent are victims of one or more of their parents or their parent's significant others and the parent's interests diverge from the interests of the child/youth. A parent in that scenario may seek to prevent a youth from seeking treatment in order to maintain power, control, or silence about what is happening to that child or youth. While this bill carves out an exception for dependency and neglect cases, that exception would only apply AFTER a court has gotten involved. Prior to that, and for all the youth who will not make it to court, this bill strips away important access to services and help. With this bill, there is a higher potential that a youth in an abusive situation will not make it into the system, as they are kept from mandatory reporters, and prevented from seeking help on their own.

Even when there is not abuse or neglect, there may be parental availability issues (OCR's attorneys are appointed on certain case types when parents are unavailable or simply do not show up), issues with who has legal authority to consent to care, or other reasons why a youth may need to seek services more independently.

Further, parents who are parties in dependency and neglect cases currently have residual rights to some decision making about their child(ren), including medical decisions. This bill strips parents of those residual rights.

Not all children and youth who are suffering from abuse are involved in the dependency and neglect system. This bill puts those youth at significant risk by taking away their ability to seek mental health or

other treatment on their own. This bill doesn't make exceptions for a parent who is criminally convicted of child abuse, it doesn't address situations when two parents disagree about treatment, and it makes a vulnerable population of children in Colorado even more vulnerable. Please vote no on 25-1251.

TO: HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

RE: HB25-1251 Parental Consent to Treatment of a Minor

DATE: 3/5/2025 1:30 P.M.

SPONSOR: Rep Scott Bottoms

Thank you for this opportunity to support this bill.

My name is Jody Nickeson from Jefferson County, and I represent myself.

I want to thank Representative Bottoms for bringing this bill forward. It does strike me that we now must make sure that parents have to have laws to protect their rights in regard to their own child's welfare, but for various reasons it is much needed in today's world.

There have been too many attacks on children that have been construed by outside agencies that do not take a child's best interest in communication with parents. We cannot discriminate against parents that have in the past had faith in the counselling services in our school environments. In fact, we have proven situations where a counselling service in a school had totally disregarded communication with the family resulting in the grooming of their child without their knowledge incurring legal charges and more cases against the Public School.

This bill would help support the guidelines counsellors and organizations must have to protect the parents as well as the children. This includes the protection for the counsellors, the schools and agencies involved. It would only encourage more confidence in the public schools and local support organizations when children are in need regarding emotional concerns and challenges. I think you will agree that more schools are closing or combining -- for enrollment has been suffering without counting the enrollment of immigrants to inflate the numbers falsely.

There are increased numbers of judicial cases due to cases without parental consent and insurance companies leaving due to the fact the State has no guidelines of covered coded procedures. I support insurance companies that are not covering any type of sexual changes because they are cosmetically coded and should be just as psychological therapies unless associated with a mental trauma which includes abortions and gender changing procedures. Now, who is going to pay for those procedures if a child twelve and above groomed by counsellors or organizations starts a procedure? Do constituents realize their tax dollars are? Or are parents medically responsible financially when an underage child who is not paying bills seeks services without their consent?

This bill is a simple bill making clarity and guideline for so many factors that are escalating in our children's lives. Let the parents decide with a child when medical or psychological issues arise with counsellor and organization cooperation. Please support this bill and bring more trust that our children matter to you and that parents have rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Jody Nickerson 5825 W Ellsworth Ave., Lakewood, CO 80226 (720) 219-3105

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I would like to register my support for two bills being heard on Wednesday March 5 - namely HB25-1253 and HB25-1251. As a parent and a physician, these bills are critical, common-sense, and apolitical.

We can all agree that parents are important (and their judgment must supersede a social worker's in most cases) and we can all agree that physicians must do no harm -I took an oath to do this in medical school. These bills are simply in alignment with the norms of our society as well as thousands of years of doing our best jobs as humans. Please don't let progressive ideology cloud your common sense.

Thank you

Marcia Reeder Schor MD

Hello,

I am urging you to vote in favor of these bills to protect our youth from harmful, life-changing surgeries. Young people's brains are not fully developed nor do they yet possess enough life experience to decide to change their sex. Stand in favor of families and children by supporting these bills.

Thank you,

Karen Sherrets

Hello,

I am emailing as a Colorado voter who is very concerned about the lack of appropriate environmental regulations and protection of minors in regards to abortion clinics in our state. It is critical that Colorado Health and Human Services supports these new bills to ensure that parents retain their rights to consent to medical procedures for minors and that abortion clinics are held responsible for the environmental damage they may cause by unsafely disposing of dangerous chemicals. It is also critical that Colorado does everything possible to ensure that we have "safe haven" laws so that parents are able to surrender an infant that they are unable to care for. None of these new proposals in bill HB25 should be controversial or partisan. Safe Haven laws, protecting parental rights, and requiring abortion clinics to uphold a basic standard of environmental care is not too much to ask and it is disappointing that these kinds of laws are not already on the books in Colorado. These new bills are a necessary step in making Colorado a cleaner, healthier and safer place for all.

-Sincerely,

Colleen Longua, Colorado citizen

Please pass these Bills to provide a safe environment for the most vulnerable.

Thank you!

Ellen Bonner

Sent from my iPhone



28 February 2025

Dear House Health & Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Moms for Liberty El Paso County, we encourage you to vote yes on HB25-1251. Parental consent to treatment of a minor provides for responsible medical decision-making and oversight for appropriate medical treatment. Parents and guardians are knowledgeable on their children's medical needs and want to protect their children from harmful actors. Parents and guardians serve in the best interest of the minor child. Parental consent would allow for a level of protection from minors receiving medical care not in line with their best interests, unnecessary medical services, and expand on the improvement of relations between the parent/guardian, the healthcare provider, and minor child which provides an increased healing environment.

We encourage you to honor the fundamental rights of parents including, but not limited to, the right to direct the education, medical care, and moral upbringing of their children. We ask you to advance policies that strengthen parental involvement and decision-making, increase transparency, defend against government overreach, and secure parental rights at all levels of government.

In Liberty,

Megan Schulze

Legislative Lead

Moms for Liberty - El Paso County, Colorado

House Health & Human Services

03/05/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1251 Parental Consent to Treatment of a Minor

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Claire K Against themselves	Hello, I am against HB25-1251. There is no reason why we should be rolling back the healthcare rights of individuals to decades prior. This is an attempt to push the agenda of a bigoted representative who wants to infringe on the rights and freedoms of the people of Colorado. The people deserve leadership and focus on real issues, and this isn't it.
Tracy Ortegalszler For themselves	Parents need to be included in their child health care including mental health. Not having knowledge of a child's medical treatments is dangerous. Children need parental guidance to navigate the increasing pressures of gender ideology by peers and social media.
Anna Mitchell For themselves	Parents should have complete control of their children; not the state, not the schools, not any other entity. No one has the right to deprive a parent of raising their child as they see fit and no one or entity has the right to intervene with any kind of medical decisions for their child. Parents should, and do have the right to consent or deny consent for any treatment or intervention with their child.
Brett C Against themselves	My name is Brett and I'm a resident of northern Colorado. I am here today as the proud parent of two LGBTQ+ kids to oppose HB1251. Mental healthcare is a human right, access to which should not be subject to obstruction from parents or any other caregivers. I am very proud of the home environment my wife and I have created for our kids. One of love and acceptance, that prioritizes care for each other and clear communication. One that normalizes and promotes

	<p>the importance of mental healthcare. I'm proud that they both knew they'd be loved and accepted for who they are.</p> <p>And yet none of this has spared my kids from needing help from a mental healthcare professional. While it is inappropriate to provide specifics here, I can say there have been times when the support of a competent and caring therapist was not only important but quite possibly lifesaving.</p> <p>But my children's access to necessary mental healthcare should not be left to the whims of fate that happened to allow them to be born into a family who is willing to ensure they get it.</p> <p>Just as we do not allow children to suffer due to medical care being withheld by their parents, neither should we allow any to suffer—and possibly die—because their caregiver doesn't "believe in" mental healthcare, or worse, doesn't care enough about their child to connect them to the care they need.</p> <p>I urge you to vote no on HB1251.</p>
<p>Dawn Fritz Against Colorado PTA</p>	<p>Colorado PTA opposes House Bill 1251.</p> <p>One of the founding purposes of PTA is to support the wellbeing and safety of all children and youth. In today's world that means ensuring access to mental health care. PTA has a long history of supporting bills and policies which provided needed access to mental health care and mental health care resources to children and youth.</p> <p>With the ongoing youth mental health crisis this is more important than ever. In fact, one of our highest priorities this year is to support policies that prevent suicide, self-harm, and substance misuse. This bill runs contrary to that goal.</p> <p>In 2019 Colorado PTA testified in support of House Bill 19-1120, Youth Mental Health Education and Suicide Prevention. I recently learned that PTA was part of the Suicide Prevention Coalition that sought the creation of that bill. We supported that bill for the same reasons I am here today opposing this bill — we believe access to mental health care is crucial to the health, wellness and safety of our</p>

	<p>youth. House Bill 1251 repeals important provisions of HB19-1120 and other bills we have supported by very broadly limiting youth access to mental health care — even in crisis situations.</p> <p>While the well - being of children is primarily the responsibility of the home, responsibility for the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health of children is shared by the whole community and of all its institutions. We believe in family engagement. We also believe in providing quick and equitable access to mental health care to our youth.</p> <p>To get a little personal here, I have a teenager. We have a pretty close knit little family. My son, his dad, and I all have great relationships with each other. We're open about the benefits of mental health care, and I hope my son would come to my husband or I if he was experiencing mental health challenges or misusing substances. It gives me peace of mind to know that he can access mental health care even if he ever doesn't feel comfortable coming to me or dad.</p> <p>Again, Colorado PTA opposes this bill. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our position.</p>
<p>Kristin Sampson Against themselves</p>	<p>To the Colorado House Health and Human Services Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to ask you to vote no on HB25-1251. I am firmly against this against this bill that limits minors ability to seek any type of health care with parent or guardian consent. This bill might seem honorable, that it gives support to minors who might need help in deciding what is best for their guardianship, that's it's a protection for a child from other humans in settings where guardians might not be available. Unfortunately, this bill is feeding minors to the wolves....more minors than I'm sure anyone would care to admit will be affected by this bill, will be harmed by their parents supposed right to choose what is best for them. In a perfect world, which we are clearly not living in right now, parents and guardians would always have a minors best interest at heart. Unfortunately, minors suffer abuse mentally, bodily, emotionally, sexually, etc., at the hands of their guardians and this bill would removed a minors ability to find safe people to help them, make decisions for themselves on things like getting an abortion, seeking counseling, going to a clinic or doctor. It would scare potentially already traumatized children into</p>

	<p>not confiding in an actual trusted human because the minor would know that guardians would be contacted and the wrath they would face at home would ensue more abuse and potentially immediate death. Minors deserve to have a voice in their healthcare. They have a right to seek treatment, to talk to medical professionals without their guardians if they feel like they are in danger and this bill would remove a minors ability to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>Colorado is "supposed" to be a safe state but this bill would remove a safeguard from an already marginalized population.</p> <p>Please vote no on bill HB25-1251.</p> <p>Kristin Sampson</p>
<p>Jeany Rush For themselves</p>	<p>TO: HOUSE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE RE: HB25-1251 ParentalConsent to Treatment of Minors Sponsor: Bottoms 3-5-25 FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs Constituent VOTE: YES</p> <p>The Meat and Potatoes of this bill is quite simple: Parents and legal guardians to have the right to determine, arrange, organize, for medical, surgical procedures, mental health services for MINORS. Other individuals, corporations, organizations, state institutions, do not have those rights, unless the parents, or legal guardians give written consent.</p> <p>Further, this bill does distinguish between medical procedures, and emergency medical needs.</p> <p>This Bill is important for a very major reason. Our State is No. 6 in the nation to have the most control of its citizens by restrictions, fees, bills. It is high time we the people are given the rights our constitution already gives us.</p> <p>This bill also addresses problems with schools, counselors, govt. institutions interfering in a minor's care for many procedures medically for the Trans & LGBTQ community. This state is now practicing illegally in regard to removal of a child from home at age 12 to place them in a more "GENDER AFFIRMING" home/foster care. The agenda to remove the rights of parents, families is at risk. Our president has made two critical executive orders, which impact how our State and Local governments interact, act upon minors and non emergency medical situations.</p>

	<p>On January 28, President Trump signed 2 Executive Orders:</p> <p>The First: Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism & Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, he affirms TWO DISTINCT biological sexes: male and female.</p> <p>The Second: TO Protect children with gender dysphoria while Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation, hospitals across the country will be required to suspend any gender interventions on individuals under the age of 19. This Order states it will neither fund, sponsor, promote, assist, nor support medical interventions such as puberty blockers or surgeries meant to “so – called transition” a child to the opposite sex.</p> <p>This Bill makes it clear that Minors need protection from its own Society in its present Environment! Thanks for this Bill to spell out what is Right!</p>
<p>Nancy Eason For themselves</p>	<p>Testimony on HB25-1251, Parental Consent for Minor's Medical Procedures</p> <p>This bill makes sense.</p> <p>Parents are responsible for minor's medical bills & thus need to oversee their child's medical care.</p> <p>Parents know their child's medical history, allergies, and contra-indications.</p> <p>Whether it's physical or mental healthcare, parents are responsible for their child's well-being and need to be involved.</p> <p>This bill helps ensure the safety of minors who may not understand the complexities of their situation or even their full personal medical history.</p> <p>This bill is respectful of the parent child relationship and serves to support family cohesion.</p> <p>This bill provides exemptions for unusual situations like emancipated minors, medical emergencies when parents can't be reached, and children in the care of our social services agencies.</p> <p>We already have protections in place for children who are in abusive situations. In all other situations, our laws should work to encourage family cohesion rather than putting adult responsibilities on minors who aren't ready to deal with them all by themselves. Our healthcare system is complex and intimidating to most adults; surely, children should have input and consent from their parents or guardians when dealing with medical issues.</p>

	Please vote yes on HB25-1251.
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To: Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee
From: Khoa Nguyen | Young Invincibles | MD/MBA Candidate at the University of Colorado
Re: HB25-1251 - Parental Consent to Treatment of a Minor

Dear Mr. Chair, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you. My name is Khoa Nguyen. I am representing Young Invincibles as one of their Youth Advocates. For my background, I am currently completing my MD at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and my MBA at the University of Colorado Denver Business School. Short of applying to residency and obtaining my MD, I have fulfilled all curricular and licensure requirements expected thus far for the MD. I am here today to encourage you to **reject** HB25-1251.

I would like to begin this testimony with a request for the committee members. Think back to when you were a young adult. How often did certain events and experiences that you chose to keep secret from your parents happen in your life? ? Maybe it was sneaking out or hosting a party? Perhaps it was something that you did that you knew you would have been grounded for? Or questions about your changing body parts? Some committee members may have felt comfortable sharing this type of information with their parents. Others may have not.

This emphasis on privacy is especially important **and essential** when young adults seek healthcare. A 2022 survey by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Ipsos revealed that 63% of teens aged 12-17 felt comfortable discussing their mental health with their parents or guardians. However, only 48% reported engaging in such conversations regularly [1]. Factors for this reluctance may include fear of judgment, concerns about confidentiality, or the desire for autonomy. While the intent to involve parents in their children's healthcare decisions is understandable, this bill concerns me for the potential negative impact on minors' access to essential healthcare services.

Every healthcare adolescent visit gives every teenager the space and opportunity for privacy. Whenever I worked with pediatric patients emerging into young adulthood, I asked them if they wanted their parents to leave the room. For a very sensitive matter, this offer evolved into a mandatory request so that every patient felt comfortable to share details and ask their questions. This was also crucial when I was growing up. I had questions that I knew my parents were biased towards or against. I wanted answers and options that could be decided without external pressure. And I was especially grateful to the physicians that afforded that privacy to me during visits.

Ethically, we as healthcare professionals are bound by beneficence - providing care that is in the patient's best interest. Mandating parental consent in all situations impedes my ethical obligations as a future physician, mainly when a minor is competent to make informed decisions about their own health. I urge the committee to **vote no on** HB25-1251 so our young adults can access the essential,

sometimes lifesaving care they need without unnecessary barriers. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

To: Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee
From: Khoa Nguyen | Young Invincibles | MD/MBA Candidate at the University of Colorado
Re: HB25-1251 - Parental Consent to Treatment of a Minor

Sincerely,
Khoa Nguyen | MD/MBA Candidate
University of Colorado School of Medicine | University of Colorado Denver Business School
Youth Advocate | Young Invincibles
Junior Fellow | Global Council on Science and the Environment

References

1. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/NAMI-teen-poll-2022>

March 4, 2025
House Health and Human Services
Testimony in Support of HB25-1251

Chair and members of the Committee, I am Dr. Karen Pennington, nurse, educator, and resident of Parker Colorado-testifying in support of HB25-1251.

The family unit is still considered the most basic socialization and political unit for the flourishing of society. Children are in a state of development that requires being taken care of, protecting themselves from their own actions.¹ Our founding fathers, such as John Locke and John Stuart Mills, understood the rights of parents to direct and control their children's upbringing.² Laws exist that protect children from parents that would knowingly harm a child, however; as ruled in the case of *Pierce v. Society of Sisters and Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the primary role of parenting belongs to the parents or guardians and not the state.³

Colorado legislators must consider the extreme nature of opposing this Bill. Our state is not in a position financially or in terms of human resources to manage decisions that parents should be making. Opposition to this Bill undermines the nature of family. Parental rights strengthen the family unit and without family, a society disintegrates. Colorado needs children protected through parents' involvement in their medical decisions. We gain nothing by destroying family units and encouraging a child to place trust in the state and not their parents.

For these reasons, HB25-1251 is good for Colorado. Vote "YES" on HB25-1251.

Thank You.

Karen Pennington, PhD, RN
kspenning@gmail.com
303-903-5283

¹ <https://research-ebSCO-com.dml.regis.edu/c/han64f/viewer/pdf/zekdaairtb>

² <https://research-ebSCO-com.dml.regis.edu/c/han64f/viewer/pdf/gxjpvcyedb>

³ <https://concernedwomen.org/time-to-protect-parents-god-given-right-to-direct-the-upbringing-of-their-children/>

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA OF COLORADO

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Testimony for HB25-1251
Parental Consent to Treatment of a Minor
Provided by Nathalie Breland, CEO & Founder of Direct Pay Healthcare LLC

BILL: The bill prohibits an individual, corporation, association, organization, state-supported institution, or individual employed by any of these entities from procuring, soliciting to perform, arranging for the performance of, or performing a surgical procedure, or providing other medical or mental health services to a minor without written or verbal consent from the minor's parent. Parental consent is not required if the minor is in the custody of a county department of human or social services or the division of youth services, in a medical emergency situation, or there is a valid court order directing the provision of the medical service.

TESTIMONY: Agree! I support this bill with fervor.

1. As a parent of two young children, I agree with this bill. Please stop taking away our rights as parents simply because our better judgment goes against the democratic political narrative. The procedures that most parents are concerned with are gender affirming care and abortions. Until these procedures were being done, it was completely unheard of to go behind the legal guardians back to perform any procedure. Parents need to know what is happening to their children for their children's safety as well as mental and physical health.
2. By removing parental consent of medical procedures, the government has created an extreme distrust between society and the medical community. The more you remove parents, the more they will simply not take their children to the doctor at all. This can pose a large threat to public health.
3. If I am financially responsible for my child until 18 years of age, and they are taking away medical parental consent at the age of 12 in Colorado, who then is financially responsible for the healthcare costs when the state will not allow a child to work in a legitimate job until 16 years of age? Are parents legally responsible for funding medical procedures that we do not approve of because our children cannot work, but the state has removed our consent?
4. In the vast majority of cases, parents love their children and want what is best for them. How is it possible for a teacher, board of education member, or the state to make an informed decision about any child when they lack knowledge of the child's medical

history? They would be making uninformed decisions, which could be life threatening in nature compared to a parent who knows the child's entire medical history. Performing any medical procedures on our children without consent is not only unethical, it should be considered criminal.

I am grateful to those who have sponsored this bill and stand beside you in asking for it to be accepted into law.