

Submitted Testimony and Exhibits in Support of HB26-1309

May 7, 2026

3. Exhibit A – [HuffPost Article Regarding Family Court Harm and Child Safety Concerns](#)

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins
Founder, Lydia Philippi House of Justice
rachel@msmchurch.org
www.msmchurch.org

docket-search-results 24CR808

Date	Time	Duration	Name	Case Number	Hearing Type	Location	Appearance Type	Courtroom
2026-05-20	1:30 PM	2 Hour(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Motions Hearing	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-06-18	8:30 AM	1 Hour(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	PreTrial Readiness Conference	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-06-30	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-01	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-02	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-07	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-08	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-09	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-10	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C
2026-07-14	8:30 AM	1 Day(s)	MICHAEL HAWKINS	2024CR808	Jury Trial	Douglas County	IN PERSON	DIV C

Status: RSTD MROG District Court, Douglas County
Case #: 2024 CR 000808 Div/Room: C Type: Sex Offenses
The People of the State of Colorado vs. HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT

Case File Date: 7/29/2024 Case Close Date: DV STATUS:
Appealed: N
Confidential Intermediary.....:

Bar # Name
Judicial Off...: 046194 DANIEL WILSON WARHOLA
Alt Jud Officer: 023114 LAWRENCE RAYMOND BOWLING
Description Stat Date Time Appear Rm/D
Next Schd Event: Motions Hearing 10/23/2025 1:30 P
Last Schd Event: Case Management Conference HELD 8/15/2025 9:00 A
Last Event.....: Order n/a 10/09/2025

Attorney(s)....: Y +

Agency: Castle Rock Police Dept Agency Case #: 2022-00039728
Ticket/Summons Number(s): Arrest#:

Warrant.....: WCAN Warrant Date: 8/02/2024 Expired Date:
Party on Warrant: HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT
Change of Venue.: Agency:

Bond(s).....: Y +

Sentence Date.....:
Detention Location.....:
Supervising Agency.....:
Probation Officer.....:

----- PARTIES -----

PARTY ROL STS NAME ATTORNEY ROL
DEF 1 RST HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT BRESEE, M COLIN et al PRV

Date of Birth.....: 1/04/1969
Sex.....: Male
Race.....: Caucasian
Cell Phone.....: (970) [REDACTED]
Height.....: 600
Weight.....: 175
Hair Color.....: Brown
Eye Color.....: Blue
Home Address.....: 1201 [REDACTED] APT 3
: FORT COLLINS, CO 80526

PPL 1 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF C JARAMILLO, DANIELLE DAWN HE DDA

----- OTHER PEOPLE -----

ROLE NAME
VIC 2 PRM *** Victim ***
VIC 3 PRM *** Victim ***
VIC 4 PRM *** Victim ***
VIC 5 PRM *** Victim ***
VIC 6 PRM *** Victim ***

ROLE NAME

VIC 7 PRM *** Victim ***
VIC 8 PRA *** Victim ***
SRT 2 SRT Bankers Insurance Company,
SRT 1 SRT Gignac, Jeffery

CNT	STS	STATUTE NUMBER	CHARGE DESCRIPTION	CLASS
1	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
2	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
3	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
4	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
5	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
6	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
7	()	18-3-405.3(1),(2)	(b) SEX ASSAULT/CHILD/POSITION TRUST-PATTERN F3	F3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	
8	()	18-6-401(1),(7)	(b) (I CHILD ABUSE-NEGLIGENCE-NO INJURY M3	M3
			Offense Date: From: 7/04/2002 To: Time: 08:00 AM BAC: .000	
			Arrest Date.....: Time: Ticket #:	
			Plea.....: Plea Not Guilty Date: 6/06/2025	

FILE DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	Event ID	E-Filed
7/29/2024	Felony Complaint Filed	000001	N
7/29/2024	Felony Complaint Filed	000002	J
	PPL/ THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO		
	Complaint and Information 46B5347E17F09		
	Related Event ORWX Order for Warrant		8/01/2024
7/29/2024	Affidavit	000003	J
	PPL/ THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO		
	Affidavit for Arrest Warrant 46B5347E17F09		
8/01/2024	Order for Warrant	000004	J
	Ruling: PROBABLE CAUSE FOUND, Document Title: Order for Warrant: Complaint and Information		
	Related Event FCMP Felony Complaint Filed		7/29/2024
8/01/2024	Warrant Upon Affidavit	000005	N
	DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT		
	NO BOND HOLD 48 YES		/SSW
	BOND TYPE: No Bond		

FILE DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	Event ID	E-Filed
	Related Event WCAN Warrant Cancelled		8/02/2024
8/01/2024	WARANT CANCELED BY LAW ENFORCE	000006	N
	Date of Arrest: 08/01/2024 Arrest #: 156234275		Bond Amt: \$.00
	Arresting Agency: WARRANT CANCELED DUE TO ARREST ON 20240801 BY DOUGLAS COUNTY		

SHERIFF OFFICE

Person Arrested: MICHAEL SCOTT HAWKINS Msg From: ROGERS,FAI

Related Event WAFF Warrant Upon Affidavit 8/01/2024

8/01/2024 Entry of Appearance Event ID: 000011 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT

Entry of Appearance and Discovery Demand 4C0FD328F93C4

Related Event ORDR Order 8/02/2024

8/01/2024 Brief Filed Event ID: 000012 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT

Brief in Support of Argument for Personal Recognizance Bond DA2695CA30292

Related Event ORDR Order 8/02/2024

FILE DATE SCHEDULED EVENT DESCRIPTION SCHD DATE TIME ROOM APPEAR

8/01/2024 Review 9/05/2024 06:00 AM D
Officer: LAWRENCE RAYMOND BOWLING Length: 1.00 Hour(s)
Status.: HELD-Hearing Held Note..: BW?

8/02/2024 Appearance on Arrest Warrant 8/02/2024 08:55 AM FAC V
Officer: ALISHA TAIBO COOMBE Length: 1.00 Hour(s)
Status.: HELD-Hearing Held Note..: I/C

8/02/2024 Warrant Cancelled Event ID: 000007 E-Filed: N
Related Event WAFF Warrant Upon Affidavit 8/01/2024

8/02/2024 Filing Other Event ID: 000008 E-Filed: J
IMP/ NON-PARTY

Warrant Arrest Form

8/02/2024 Pre-Trial Report Event ID: 000009 E-Filed: J
IMP/ NON-PARTY

Pretrial Bond Report

8/02/2024 Proposed Order Event ID: 000010 E-Filed: J
PPL/ THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

Mandatory Protection Order BE088BA5CAEA2

Related Event ORDR Order 8/02/2024

8/02/2024 Minute Order (print) Event ID: 000013 E-Filed: N

APPEARANCE ON ARREST WARRANT

MAGISTRATE COOMBE CLERK RO FTR FAC 952 AM

DDA D. JARAMILLO FOR THE PEOPLE

PRV ATTY C. ESTOLL FOR DEFT

DEFT APPEARS IN CUSTODY

PARTIES ARGUE BOND

COURT SETS BOND AT 50000 C/S

CONDITIONS OF BOND: MAY NOT LEAVE STATE, NO NEW OFFENSES, APPEAR FOR ALL

COURT DATES, WAIVER OF EXTRADITION, COMPLY W/ MPO,

COMPLY WITH PRETRIAL SUPERVISION, PLACED ON GPS MONITORING UPON BONDING OUT.

MPO: STANDARD NO HARASSMENT.NO CONTACT WITH VICTIMS. NO CONTACT WITH ANYONE

UNDER THE AGE OF 18. NO NEW OFFENSES. COMPLY W/

MPO AS CONDITION OF BOND

SET FOR PREL 8/22/24 130 DIV D /RO

8/02/2024 Order Event ID: 000014 E-Filed: J

Ruling: GRANTED, Document Title: Conditions of Bond

8/02/2024 Order Event ID: 000015 E-Filed: J

Ruling: SO ORDERED, Document Title: Order:Mandatory Protection Order

Related Event PORD Proposed Order 8/02/2024

FILE DATE SCHEDULED EVENT DESCRIPTION SCHD DATE TIME ROOM APPEAR

8/02/2024 Mandatory Protection Ord Grant Event ID: 000016 E-Filed: N

DEF/RST HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT

VIC/PRM *** Victim ***

VIC/PRA *** Victim ***

VIC/PRA *** Victim ***

VIC/PRA *** Victim ***

VIC/PRM *** Victim ***

VIC/PRM *** Victim ***

VIC/PRA *** Victim ***

Expiration Date: 08/02/2026

The Court finds that the defendant is not governed by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, 18 U.S.C. 922(D)(8) and (g)(8) Shall not harrass, injure, molest, intimidate, threaten, retaliate against or tamper with any witness to or victim of the acts you are charged with committing.

Shall vacate the home of the victim(s) and stay away from any other location the victim(s) is/are likely to be found.

Shall refrain from contacting or directly or indirectly communicating with the victim(s)

It is Further Ordered NO NEW OFFENSES COMPLY WITH MPO AS CONDITION OF BOND NO CONTACT WITH ANYONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18

8/02/2024 Related Event MROV Mandatory Protection Ord Vacat 8/22/2024
Return of Service Protect Ord Event ID: 000017 E-Filed: N
8/02/2024 Related Event MROG Mandatory Protection Ord Grant 8/02/2024
Order Event ID: 000018 E-Filed: J
Ruling: REVIEWED, Document Title: Order:Entry of Appearance and Discovery Demand

8/02/2024 Related Event ENTR Entry of Appearance 8/01/2024
Order Event ID: 000019 E-Filed: J
Ruling: ACTION TAKEN, Document Title: Order:Brief in Support of Argument for Personal Recognizance Bond

8/02/2024 Related Event BREF Brief Filed 8/01/2024
Order Event ID: 000020 E-Filed: J
Mandatory Protection Order signed by deft

8/05/2024 Appearance Bond Event ID: 000021 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT
Appearance Bond 2

8/05/2024 Waiver of Extradition Event ID: 000022 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT
Waiver of Right to Contest Extradition

8/07/2024 Notice Filed Event ID: 000023 E-Filed: J
PPL/ THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO
Notice of Endorsement of Witness 1B53442DD48F7

8/21/2024 Proposed Order Event ID: 000024 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT
ORDER RE: MOTION TO MODIFY BOND CONDITIONS 7B07A596B96E3

8/21/2024 Motion Event ID: 000025 E-Filed: J
DEF/ HAWKINS, MICHAEL SCOTT
Motion to Modify Bond Conditions 7B07A596B96E3

8/21/2024 Related Event ORDR Order 8/21/2024
Order Event ID: 000026 E-Filed: J
Ruling: ACTION TAKEN, Document Title: Order:Motion to Modify Bond Conditions

8/22/2024 Related Event MOTN Motion 8/21/2024
Minute Order (print) Event ID: 000027 E-Filed: N

FILE DATE	SCHEDULED EVENT DESCRIPTION	SCHD DATE	TIME	ROOM	APPEAR
8/22/2024	Mandatory Protection Ord Vacat	8/22/2024			E-Filed: N
	Related Event MROG Mandatory Protection Ord Grant	8/02/2024			

PRELIMINARY HEARING
JUDGE BOWLING CLERK SSW
DDA JARAMILLO
DEF PRES ON BOND IN THE COURTROOM WITH CSL C ESTOLL
COUNSEL FOR CHILDREN J SUMMERS BY WEBEX
PARTIES AGREE TO CONTINUE PH WITH A WAIVER OF 35 DAYS
PH SET FOR 10/31/24 1:30PM IN PERSON
DDA STATES DR COURT IS NOT AWARE OF THE ALLEGATIONS IN THIS CASE
MPO AMENDED OVER THE PPL'S AND VICS OBJECTIONS
DEFENSE REQUEST TO REMOVE GPS MONT DENIED /SSW

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

05/07/2026

HB26-1309 Abuse in Cases of Separation

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Lisa Fontes For herself	<p>I am a national expert on domestic violence, coercive control, and child abuse. I have testified a half dozen times in Colorado and worked on probably a dozen family law cases in the state. I have worked on hundreds of cases in other states.</p> <p>HB26-1309 Abuse in Cases of Separation would fill an important gap in existing Colorado law. In requiring the court to make specific written findings and require conditions if the court awards parental responsibilities to a party found to have committed domestic violence, the bill focuses the judge on his or her RESPONSIBILITY to state their understanding of what happened. I have seen too many cases where judges and especially magistrates make rulings that seem unconcerned with the serious risk that domestic abusers pose to their children and their former partners. In requiring courts to articulate their reasoning, this bill also invites focus on what should be fairly rare--that a finder of fact would grant parental responsibilities to someone who has a history of dangerousness. Some domestic abusers can change--many cannot. It is a fallacy that people who have shown themselves to be dangerous to their partners can be fine parents. The very characteristics that make them feel entitled to abuse their partners (self-centeredness, impulsivity, lack of empathy, etc.) also make them feel entitled to (eventually) abuse their children as well.</p> <p>Colorado has been and continues to be a leader in protecting its children. This bill would be a further demonstration of Colorado's leadership in this regard. Too many Colorado parents and children have died at the hands of domestic abusers.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention.</p> <p>Lisa Fontes, Ph.D.</p>
Stephanie Montgomery For herself	<p>My name is Stephanie Montgomery. I am representing myself.</p> <p>In 2023, my now estranged husband was arrested after assaulting me and two of our five children who were in the home at the time. He was convicted of a Class 5 Felony Menacing as he had brandished a</p>

	<p>handgun and ascertained "I'm going to kill you." This represented one of three documented arrests for him, the only one of which domestic violence was affirmed, with a finding of child abuse founded by the Department of Human Services.. Further, it was one of countless domestic violence events with him as the perpetrator. He was ordered onto probation and ordered to complete domestic violence treatment. The provider considered him to successfully complete domestic violence treatment despite the provider violating the Domestic Violence Offender Management Board standards and failing to hold him accountable to the abuse of his family as substantiated in written findings by the DVOMB. The assumption that convictions and criminal court interventions are the answer to keeping children safe, is flawed.</p> <p>The Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board affirms 75% of domestic violence related fatalities in 2024 involved the use of a firearm, with 9 out of 10 perpetrators of domestic violence fatalities between 2021 and 2024 being men. These statistics are alarming, yet victim survivors and children are still placed in lethal situations in order to suffice the judicial system's expectation of parent right over child safety. Even more alarming is that children are presumed safe even when a parent may have a significant history of violence, mental health and substance abuse issues. I am here in support of House bill 26-1309. When domestic violence and child abuse are present, children are harmed as statistics show. This bill is a step in the right direction to increasing the best interest of children standards, placing safeguards in place to support child and victim-survivor safety and including measurable therapeutic interventions. It is so gravely critical judges, magistrates and other judicial officers have specific legal guidelines to follow when allocating any parental responsibility. Children deserve to live lives free from continued harm and the judicial system is tasked to ensure this happens to the best of their ability where parental allocation is in question.</p> <p>In ending, so few of those in opposition of this bill are victim-survivors. We must consider those with lived experience as critical.</p>
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Submitted Testimony and Exhibits in Support of HB26-1309

May 7, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the attached written testimony and supporting exhibits submitted in support of HB26-1309.

My name is Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins, and I am appearing remotely to testify in support of this bill. I submit these materials as a mother, survivor, protective parent, parent failed by Colorado's family court system, and as Founder of the Lydia Philippi House of Justice.

The attached materials are provided to support my testimony and to give additional context regarding the child-safety concerns, family-court related harm, and systemic gaps addressed by HB26-1309. The packet includes:

1. Written Testimony of Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins in Support of HB26-1309
2. Lydia Philippi House of Justice – Organizational Overview
3. Exhibit A – HuffPost Article Regarding Family Court Harm and Child Safety Concerns
4. Exhibit B – Colorado Court Docket Search Results Reflecting Criminal Trial Setting Beginning June 30, 2026
5. Exhibit C – Redacted Register of Actions Excerpt Reflecting Listed Charges, Bond Conditions, and Mandatory Protection Order Entries

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony and the attached materials.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins
Founder, Lydia Philippi House of Justice
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Written Testimony in Support of HB26-1309
Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
May 7, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Michelle Waul Webster. I'm a lawyer and policy advocate. I have spent my career working on reforms to help families and communities thrive, including justice system reform. I have served as a law clerk for a judge on a criminal and civil docket in a busy urban court, drafted model legislation, and advised legislators on policy issues.

But most importantly, I am a mother. I am here today in support of HB26-1309 as a Colorado parent and legal professional who understands how much lawyers and judges need clear statutory guidance when navigating domestic violence allegations in family court.

HB26-1309 strengthens how existing protections are applied by requiring clear findings and a consistent framework for courts to follow in cases involving domestic violence.

In my experience navigating the family court system, I saw how concerns about domestic violence, abuse and coercive control can be minimized or addressed too late in the process, after critical decisions about parenting time and decision-making are already underway. That creates significant risk for children and for the parent working to keep them safe.

Children are harmed when patterns of domestic violence, abuse and coercive control are not taken seriously from the outset. In the most tragic cases, that failure has led to the loss of children's lives in our state. But harm also occurs in less visible ways, when children are placed or required to maintain relationships in environments where they are not safe, and where their experiences have been dismissed or misunderstood by the court.

And that is one of the core problems this bill addresses: outcomes should not depend on which judge you happen to get and how prepared they are in understanding and applying the law in these complicated cases.

Judges in family court cases have an incredibly difficult job and are not required at the moment to participate in any specialized training on domestic violence. These cases are complex under

any circumstances, and even more so when domestic violence, abuse and coercive control are present. But these are also some of the highest-stakes decisions judges in our state make every day, with long-lasting consequences for children's safety and well-being. We should not accept a system where the thorough, trauma-informed application of the best interest of the child standard varies from courtroom to courtroom.

This bill provides a clear framework. It requires courts to make on-the-record findings, by a preponderance of the evidence, on whether domestic violence has occurred before allocating parental responsibilities. That is not a burden. It is a roadmap. It tells judges what questions to ask and in what order, and it gives attorneys a clear legal standard to invoke.

This bill brings needed clarity and consistency. By requiring courts to address domestic violence and coercive control upfront and strengthening how these cases are evaluated, it ensures that safety is treated as a foundational consideration - not just one factor among many. It gives courts clear direction to prioritize safety in every case where domestic violence, abuse and coercive control is raised.

At its core, this bill is about making family court custody decisions involving domestic violence more systematic, more transparent, more grounded in safety, and ultimately result in better outcomes for children. For lawyers, it provides a clear framework to advocate for their clients and ensure safety concerns are heard at every stage. For judges, it provides the structured inquiry and mandatory findings that protect both children and the integrity of their decisions. When a judge knows what the law requires them to examine, and a lawyer knows what they must prove, the system works better for everyone, especially children.

I urge you to vote yes on HB26-1309. Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Lydia Philippi House of Justice

A survivor-led initiative of Mount Simon Ministries

Mission

The Lydia Philippi House of Justice exists to educate, advocate, and help build stronger pathways of protection for mothers and children impacted by domestic violence, post-separation abuse, litigation abuse, family-court related harm, child safety concerns, and systemic failures.

About

The Lydia Philippi House of Justice is a justice-centered, survivor-led initiative founded through Mount Simon Ministries. It was created to respond to the serious gaps that continue to place protective mothers and children at physical, legal, financial, emotional, and long-term safety risk.

Its work is grounded in the lived realities of survivors and focused on increasing awareness, strengthening advocacy, and encouraging informed collaboration across legal, legislative, faith-based, professional, and community spaces.

Current Focus Areas

- Justice-centered education and advocacy
- Survivor support and community partnership
- Legislative engagement and public awareness
- Professional collaboration around child safety and family-court related harm
- Education on coercive control, post-separation abuse, and litigation abuse
- Awareness of family court gaps, reporting barriers, and system intersection issues between family and criminal courts

Public Engagement

A central part of this work is the **First Annual Behind the Survivor's Veil Summit, Summer 2026**, which will serve as the public launch of the Lydia Philippi House of Justice. This one-day educational summit is designed to bring together survivors, protective mothers, advocates, attorneys, trauma-informed professionals and experts, legislators, court-connected professionals, agency representatives, ministry leaders, and community partners to address family court gaps, litigation abuse, child safety concerns, and opportunities for stronger protection and reform.

Approach

Although the Lydia Philippi House of Justice is an initiative of Mount Simon Ministries Church, it is not limited to serving individuals of a faith background or promoting religious belief as a condition of support. All mothers are welcome to receive support and services regardless of personal convictions. The initiative recognizes the importance of responsible partnership among churches, agencies, advocates, attorneys, lawmakers, trauma-informed professionals, and

community systems so that survivors and children receive informed, ethical, and practical support.

Founder

Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins
Founder, Lydia Philippi House of Justice

rachel@msmchurch.org
www.msmchurch.org

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Rachel Pickrel-Hawkins. I am here as a mother, a survivor, a protective parent, a parent failed by Colorado's family court system, and as the founder of the Lydia Philippi House of Justice, a survivor-led initiative focused on education, advocacy, and stronger protections for mothers and children impacted by domestic violence, post-separation abuse, family-court related harm, and child safety failures. I have submitted written testimony and supporting exhibits for the committee's review.

I am here in support of HB26-1309 because child safety must be the standard in family court, not an afterthought. Colorado has worked hard to define coercive control, abuse, and domestic violence. But in family court, those realities are still too often minimized, ignored, or treated as secondary to forced contact or preserving parental access at all costs.

This bill matters because it requires what should already exist in family court: that judges and magistrates determine whether domestic violence occurred and consider relevant evidence of abuse and child safety before allocating parental responsibilities. Too often, that does not happen unless the law explicitly requires it.

This is not a rare issue. Domestic violence is common in contested custody cases, yet family courts still too often minimize abuse and fail to protect children.

My case reflects many of the forms of abuse this bill recognizes: coercive control, intimidation, surveillance, destruction of property, litigation abuse, stalking by proxy, and threats to use law enforcement and the legal system against me.

I fled for our safety with my children four years ago. My former spouse, a retired Aurora police officer, is now facing seven felony counts of sexual assault on a child by a person in a position of trust, along with child abuse charges. Yet during family court proceedings, instead of protecting my children from danger, the narrative was flipped. I was called a liar, my evidence was disregarded, and I was jailed while he remained free on bond.

I brought forward police reports, therapists, mandatory reporters, advocates, experts, eyewitnesses, and findings from the Department of Human Services and Child Protective Services. Despite that, my children were not heard and were placed in further harm's way, including through court-ordered therapy that became another vehicle for coercion and control.

Had the standards in this bill been applied in my case, my children would not have been subjected to further harm. Reunification, joint decision-making, and parenting time would not have been ordered while this abuse evidence and these safety concerns were present.

HB26-1309 is not radical. It is a necessary measure to ensure that family courts identify abuse, assess risk, hear children, and act before more damage is done. I urge you to pass this bill and make clear that in Colorado, child safety is not optional. It must be the foundation of every family court decision.