

April 14, 2021



FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Esteemed Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA) submits this letter in support of House Bill 21-1165 Concerning Assistance for Victims of Strangulation Who Receive Medical Examinations. The Colorado Crime Victim Compensation fund was created in 1981 so victims of crime would not have to bear the financial burden of receiving care in order to deal with the physical and emotional injuries caused during a criminal act. HB 21-1165 decreases barriers for victims of strangulation to access the Colorado Crime Victim Compensation fund, as a payer of last resort.

The ability to pay should not limit victims' access to necessary medical care and treatment related to strangulation. We know if victims are concerned about medical costs, they are less likely to get evidence collected. We also know the evidence initially collected may be essential to the investigation, apprehension of the offender, and criminal prosecution. Furthermore, prompt medical care for victims contributes to better physical and mental health, and access to prompt medical care may reduce the number of significant health consequences following strangulation.

Similar to legislation passed both federally, through the Violence Against Women Act, and in Colorado, through the creation of the Sexual Assault Victim Emergency (SAVE) Payment Program, HB 21-1165 recognizes that victims of strangulation should not have to bear the burden of paying for forensic evidence collection as a result of the crime committed against them, nor should they have to forego medical care out of concern for the costs associated with treatment.

For these reasons, CCASA urges a yes vote on HB21-1165. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please email me at brie@ccasa.org.

Sincerely,

Brie Franklin
Executive Director