

Members of the committee: My name is Joel Northam, I'm a Denver county resident. I grew up in Colorado Springs. I'm here to express my support for 1280. On September 17th of last year, I was suddenly arrested by Denver police on a warrant from Adams county that I didn't know existed. I was then taken to Denver County Jail and it wasn't until 8 days later that I was finally brought before an Adams county judge and released on a personal recognizance bond. At the Denver County Jail, I was given one surgical mask, a pair of underwear, and a pair of jail clothes that was to last me the entire time I was there. I was then placed in a unit with 7 other people who were being constantly rotated in and out, as the more senior inmates were being placed in other sections of the jail and new people were being brought in. There was a COVID outbreak in the pod and people were constantly being reshuffled. The psychological toll and the feeling of knowing that a virus that has been killing people left and right is now spreading in the pod I was in is something that is going to stay with me for some time. I overheard inmates in my unit say things like "in other places you're supposed to see a judge between 24-72 hours but some places in Colorado stretch it out". 8 days is a long time in a jail, and I didn't know if it was going to be longer, because there was never any explanation of why I wasn't being released and whether there was a limit at all on how long they could hold me. I had to adapt to prolonged conditions in a COVID exposed unit, with one thin, less than adequate surgical mask for PPE, in unsanitary conditions, with extremely unhealthy prison food, and no

knowledge as to any time frame of my release. I met others in the jail that were experiencing a similar situation and they traded stories about the disruption that a surprise prolonged detention had on their lives: Guys were worried about losing their jobs, some were single parents who were unable to come home to their young children and had no way of securing childcare, some had elderly relatives that needed care but were unable to get it putting their health in jeopardy, the list went on. It's worth noting that these impacts weigh disproportionately on poor people, and overwhelmingly on Black and brown people. On day 8, I was finally able to see a judge and after a few hours I was released on a PR bond. I was immensely relieved but disturbed that even though I had not been convicted of a crime, even though the judge deemed it appropriate for me to be released on my own recognizance, I had already been punished with an eight day jail sentence, a total disruption of my life of which I had absolutely no notice of, and the mental and physical toll of being thrown in a space with a number of other men during an outbreak of a deadly pandemic, with absolutely no idea when I would be released. There desperately need to be limits put on these holds. It is punitive, and it shouldn't be allowed to continue. Pre-trial detention needs to be reformed, YESTERDAY, especially as the damage that the current standard has the ability to inflict is disproportionately harmful to poor and working people who have more to lose by spending that much time away from our families, our communities, and our jobs. I encourage you to vote yes on this bill because it's the right thing to do.

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

HB21-1280 Pre-trial Detention Reform

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Lauren Snyder For Mental Health Colorado</p>	<p>My name is Lauren Snyder and I am the State Policy Director for Mental Health Colorado.</p> <p>Mental Health Colorado supports HB-1280. Jails across our state report the overwhelming number of people with mental health and substance use conditions who are in their jails. In 2018, Denver county jail reported that almost half of all defendants in their custody were dealing with a mental health condition. Additionally, those individuals were more likely to stay almost 30 days longer than their peers without mental health needs.</p> <p>This session, Mental Health Colorado spearheaded a bill to improve the conditions of confinement for people with serious mental illness. When the people I advocate for enter jail, terrible things happen – suicide, self-harm, dismemberment, restraints, solitary confinement, assaults, additional charges, competency restoration, tazings, among other things, are more likely to occur.</p> <p>In fact, according to 2018 Judicial data, if you are found incompetent to proceed, you have almost a 1 in 4 likelihood to be charged with a felony while incarcerated for spitting while in a detention facility. New charges, state fines, expensive healthcare, victims, longer stays – The longer someone with a mental health and/or substance use condition stays in jail, the worse things get.</p> <p>This is why this bill is so important. The longer someone stays in jail who may not have access to medications, or supports and services – the more likely that person could deteriorate or get additional charges because they do not fit into the strict rules of a jail.</p> <p>This bill is a meaningful step forward in making sure that we are no longer a community that stores people with unmet health needs, such as people with mental health and substance use conditions, d in cages where things only get worse, not better for our for our counties, for our jail staff, and for our tax payers.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Timothy Lane Against CDAC</p>	<p>The Colorado District Attorneys’ Council, representing all 22 elected District Attorneys statewide, respectfully opposes HB 1280 – Pretrial detention reform.</p>

	<p>CDAC recognizes and understands the desire to hold bond hearings in an expedited fashion. This bill will require multiple staff members in each District Attorney's office to work weekends and holidays to ensure that bond hearing officers have sufficient information to make responsible bond decisions that do not endanger the safety of the community.</p> <p>We want to thank the sponsors and proponents for the appropriations intended to offset the fiscal impact on our DA's offices.</p> <p>However, CDAC remains opposed because of the impact to the staffing, morale and workload for our offices; especially those in rural communities where the staff size is not sufficient to spread the load. Many of our offices already face staffing shortages. While the additional funding will assist, there will still be a negative impact on our rural offices' ability to hire and retain capable, ethical, and public interest minded prosecutors.</p> <p>An amendment that changes the requirement to 72 hours, or exempts weekends, would alleviate all of these issues and be in line with several other states that have recently passed similar laws.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
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