



To: Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee
From: Ellen Jensby, Alliance
Date: February 18, 2025

Re: Support HB 25-1017 Community Integration Plan Individuals with Disabilities

Dear Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of HB 25-1017, *Community Integration Plan for Individuals with Disabilities*. I write today to request your support for this bill.

Alliance is a statewide, non-profit association of Providers and Case Management Agencies serving Coloradans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). Our members support people through Home and Community-Based Services, which allow people with disabilities to receive supports in their homes and communities rather than in institutional placements such as nursing facilities.

Decades of experience and research have demonstrated that supporting people with disabilities in the most integrated community setting results in better quality of life, better outcomes for both them and their communities, and savings to states and taxpayers by avoiding expensive, segregated, institutional services.

The *Olmstead* decision has been a critical tool for upholding the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act and ensuring that people with disabilities have access to community-based services. This bill will ensure these protections for Coloradans in the event that future cases weaken the *Olmstead* decision at the federal level.

For these reasons, Alliance supports this bill and urges you to vote “yes” today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen M. Jensby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellen Jensby
Senior Director of Public Policy & Operations
Alliance

Thank you Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Hanni Raley, Executive Director of the Arc of Aurora here to speak today in support of House Bill HB25-1017. Colorado has always been a leader in the disability rights and independent living movements; supporting 1017 today enshrines federal guidelines and marks your place in history by reinforcing Colorado's commitment to inclusivity and equal rights.

The Arc of Aurora supports people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their families to access the services and systems built for them, but often developed and designed without them.

A Colorado Community Integration Plan ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* This decision affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Colorado is ready for a comprehensive and enforceable plan to make this right a reality for many of our residents.

A State Olmstead Plan is not just a legal necessity; it is a moral and practical imperative. Without such a plan, Coloradans with disabilities remain at risk for unnecessary institutionalization into settings that do not align with their preferences, autonomy, or dignity. Institutionalization is not only a violation of their civil rights but also an economic burden on the state. Studies have consistently shown that providing community-based services is more cost-effective than institutional care, benefiting individuals and taxpayers.

I urge you your YES vote - because our communities are stronger when every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to live with dignity, independence, and choice. By doing so, we will not only uphold the rights of people with disabilities but also build a more just, inclusive, and fiscally responsible future for all Coloradans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

House Health & Human Services

02/18/2025 Upon Adjournment

HB25-1017 Community Integration Plan Individuals with Disab

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Robin Bolduc For themselves	<p>Good afternoon. My name is Robin Bolduc. My husband, Bruce Goguen, and I live in Broomfield. This testimony is in support of HB25-1017; a bill to protect the right of people with disabilities to live in their own home and their own communities. My husband Bruce currently receives attendant services in our home through a Medicaid waiver (EBD) using a consumer-directed model of care. Bruce is fully paralyzed and breathes with the use of a ventilator. He employs 4 people to provide his services and uses various local supply companies for his needs. Bruce is an active member of our family - he walks his dogs, wheelchair hikes, loves on his grandchildren, read books, stays up-to-date on current events, is active in the disability advocacy community, mentors other folks with disabilities, enjoys time with friends and is my very best friend. In short, he is a typical 72-year-old man living an active, valuable life who happens to be unable to move his body. Through the years, he has been placed at risk of a nursing home/facility placement - usually at discharge from a hospital. Given the progressive policies of Colorado, he has been able to safely access the services that he needs in order to remain at home. With this legislation, we can be assured that his decision to remain in our home is honored.</p> <p>Protecting his right to live in his own home has multiple benefits - it is the ethical policy for the state; it maintains his quality of life and dignity; it is the most cost-effective model of care for him; it employs multiple people and supports many businesses. Thank you for considering our testimony.</p>
Peggy Baker For themselves	<p>My daughter is 32-year-old and is autistic, nonverbal, intellectually disabled and has epilepsy. She is enrolled in the Home and Community Based Waiver (HCBS) for the Intellectually Disabled. We are using the Family Caregiver option and I am caring for her in our home, keeping her out of the more expensive option of a group home. Unlike a group setting, there is zero staff turnover, or the cost of constantly training new staff only to have them leave, which is a</p>

	<p>huge problem. She is happy and healthy living her own home in Sterling and being lovingly cared for by someone that could not love her more, her mother. This bill would provide the right for people with disabilities to live and receive community-based services whenever possible. My daughter should have the right to live in her our own community rather than far away in an institution. Please support</p> <p>HB 25-1017. Thank you, Peggy Baker on behalf of Lindsey Baker.</p>
<p>Katherine Carol For themselves</p>	<p>Testimony in Support of HB25-1017 Submitted to the Colorado State Legislature/HHS Community</p> <p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>My name is Katherine Carol, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB25-1017, which advances community integration for individuals with disabilities in response to the Olmstead decision. As the parent of an adult child with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair for mobility and an iPad for communication and who is successfully living, working, and fully participating in her community with the proper support, I have witnessed firsthand the profound benefits of true inclusion.</p> <p>For far too long, individuals with disabilities have been placed in institutional settings—not because it was the best option, but because it was the only option. Our family feared that same path, so we encouraged our daughter to purchase her own home with the help of supportive housing programs. We knew she could do much more than traditional institutional care could offer. Thanks to our version of a person-centered comprehensive integration plan providing access to housing, employment, and community-based services, she has built a fulfilling life where she is cared for and valued.</p> <p>I have listed some benefits of living and working in communities of choice selected by each person requiring support.</p> <p>The Benefits of Community Integration:</p>

	<p>Independence & Dignity: Living in the community allows individuals with disabilities to make choices about their daily lives—where they live, what they do, and who they spend time with—just like anyone else. My daughter now makes decisions about her schedule, meals, and social life, which would not have been possible in an institutional setting.</p> <p>Employment & Purpose: With the proper employment support, my daughter is doing work she loves. She feels a sense of purpose and belonging, contributing to her workplace and earning a paycheck. This is not just about work—it’s about self-worth and economic empowerment.</p> <p>Social Connection & Community Engagement*: Community living allows individuals to form genuine relationships outside of segregated environments. My daughter has neighbors who check in on her, friends she meets for coffee, and a community that sees her as an integral member—not just a person receiving care.</p> <p>Better Health & Quality of Life: Studies consistently show that people with disabilities have **better health outcomes and a higher quality of life when living in the community rather than in institutional settings. Access to personalized support in a home environment promotes mental well-being, personal growth, and stability.</p> <p>Cost-Effectiveness Community-based services are often more cost-effective than institutional care, offering more personalized and efficient use of public resources while improving outcomes.</p> <p>For families like mine, community integration is not just an ideal but a necessity. Without planning and support, too many individuals with disabilities will continue to face barriers to full participation in society. HB25-1017 ensures that Colorado moves forward with a comprehensive plan that upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities and builds a more inclusive future for all.</p> <p>I urge you to pass this bill and commit to a Colorado where everyone—regardless of ability—can live, work, and thrive in their community.</p>
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	<p>Thank you for your time and commitment to making true inclusion a reality.</p> <p>Sincerely, Katherine Carol Denver, Colorado</p>
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Good morning,

My daughter Ashley is studying at Longmont High School she is set to graduate next year and plans to continue her education.

Ashley is currently studying government in High School and would like to offer her support in favor of HB25-1017 and wondering how she could help getting the Bill to pass.

Ashley has been invited to the Capital on 3/26 and would like to meet with you if possible.

Below is Ashley's testimony in support of HB25-1017

Sincerely,
Judi Atwood - Ashley's Proud Mother

Statement in Support of HB 25-1017

By Ashley Pittman, Age 16

My name is **Ashley Pittman**, and I am 16 years old and I am a student at Longmont High School. I have **White-Sutton Syndrome**, a rare disease that affects only 90 people in the world. Because of my condition, I have faced **medical challenges, educational barriers, and family struggles that most people can't even imagine.**

In 2022, after learning about my diagnosis, my father contacted Dr. Ellen Elias at Children's Hospital in Denver—not to ask how to help me, but to ask how to institutionalize me. He wrote down this conversation where I could see it, making it clear that instead of supporting me, he wanted me removed from my home and my community.

I am here today to say that **children like me deserve to be included, not institutionalized.**

House Bill **25-1017 is important because it protects kids and adults with disabilities from being forced into institutions when they can live in their communities with the right support.** It will require Colorado to make sure that:

 **Government agencies provide services in the most integrated setting possible**



No one is pushed into an institution simply because they have a disability



Decisions about where people live and receive care are based on their needs, not convenience or cost

If this bill had been in place earlier, maybe I wouldn't have had to read a note from my own father asking how to have me placed in an institution. Maybe I wouldn't have spent years wondering why people didn't see my potential instead of my diagnosis.

Passing **HB 25-1017** isn't just about laws—it's about **respecting the dignity of people like me**. It's about recognizing that **disability isn't something to hide away, but something to support**.

I urge you to **pass this bill** and give people with disabilities the right to live, grow, and thrive in their communities—just like everyone else.

Thank you.

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your support of HB 25-1017, Community Integration Plan Individuals with Disabilities. My name is Linda Miller, and I am the advisor for People First of Larimer County, which is part of The Arc of Larimer County and the Colorado Arc Network. I am also the mother of two amazing boys with disabilities. Tobi, our oldest, is on the autism spectrum, and in 2022, our youngest son, Nathan, was diagnosed with sudden onset rheumatoid arthritis. I also live with a traumatic brain injury.

Across Colorado, people with disabilities have thrived in the community of their choice since the passage of the Olmstead Act in 1999. However, there is concern that this federal law could be overturned. To protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to live in the community and not be forced into institutional settings, we must support House Bill 1017.

The most important aspect of the Olmstead Act is that it ensures individuals with disabilities are not segregated in institutions and are able to live independently with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). By passing HB 25-1017, Colorado state law would protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to live independently, participate in sports programs, work in the communities they live in, socialize with friends and neighbors, advocate for their rights, and enjoy the same freedoms as everyone else to live in their community of choice in Colorado.

I would like to thank Rep. Clifford and Rep. Froelich for their work on this important bill. Let's ensure that Coloradans with disabilities are protected. Everyone deserves the right to live as independently as possible.

Sincerely,

Linda Miller
Advisor for People First of Larimer County

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I am writing to ask for your support of HB 25-1017, Community Integration Plan Individuals with Disabilities. My name is Linda Miller, and I am the advisor for People First of Larimer County, which is part of The Arc of Larimer County and the Colorado Arc Network. I am also the mother of two amazing boys with disabilities. Tobi, our oldest, is on the autism spectrum, and in 2022, our youngest son, Nathan, was diagnosed with sudden onset rheumatoid arthritis. I also live with a traumatic brain injury.

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Sincerely,

Linda Miller
Advisor for People First of Larimer County