



**COLORADO
ORGANIZATION FOR
LATINA
OPPORTUNITY AND
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

February 25, 2025

AMEND HB25-1188 Mandatory Reporter Task Force Recommendations

To: Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee

My name is Vanessa Martinez and I am the Vice President of Policy at the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR is a reproductive justice organization who works alongside and empowers Latinas across the state to speak out on the issues that impact our daily lives.

I am submitting this testimony to encourage committee members to **AMEND HB25-1188**, in order to ensure young Coloradans are not cut off from healthcare they need, and to prevent discriminatory practices in reports for child abuse or neglect.

Although well intended, mandatory reporting often prevents young survivors from seeking support and services, limiting their autonomy. We all have the right to agency over our own lives, and our society has a responsibility to empower young people to make healthy decisions about their lives and bodies, including seeking reproductive care and mental health support. But for young people who have experienced sexual violence, seeking that care becomes complicated when they know providers are required to report to law enforcement.

Unfortunately, experience has too often shown that young people of color especially cannot rely on law enforcement to act in our best interests. Based on that reality, mandatory reporting contributes to an environment of fear, and dissuades young people from seeking the care they know they need. **We urge you to amend this bill to exempt 15- 17-year-old survivors seeking confidential therapeutic services from mandatory reports unless it involves intrafamilial abuse or a person in a position of trust.**

We also urge an **amendment to prevent discriminatory practices in reporting on child abuse or neglect** to make bill language clear that no person shall file a report due to a family's or child's race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability status.

We urge these **amendments to HB25-1188** in order to protect autonomy for young people, supporting and trusting them to make their own decisions, and respecting and honoring those decisions.



LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>

HB 25-1188 Mandatory Reporting

1 message

Dottie Williams <dottie.luv@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 25, 2025 at 7:32 AM

To: committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov

Cc: Debbie Carroll <carrolldebbie73@yahoo.com>, paladnmedia@substack.com, Carl Roberts <carl@coloradoresilience.org>, Rosemary Van Gorder <rosevango50@gmail.com>

As a concerned citizen and a person who has been greatly affected by mandatory reporting, I can tell you with confidence that expanding mandatory reporting will not help. The mandatory reporters that you already have are not mandatory reporting!

My daughter was abused in a foster home in Pueblo West. At least 10 mandatory reporters have been made aware of this disclosure of my daughters, but nothing has been done about it.

Please do not further the problem by expanding the government's reach into mandatory reporting until you have fixed the problems with the mandatory reporters that already exist!

We are into solutions not more problems!

Warmest regards,

Dorothy Williams

House Health & Human Services

02/25/2025 Upon Adjournment

HB25-1188 Mandatory Reporter Task Force Recommendations

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Rabbi-Jacob Bellinsky Against themselves	<p>Dear Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, I am writing to express my strong opposition to two bills scheduled for hearing today, February 25: HB25-1188 (Mandatory Reporters) and HB25-1200 (Child Protection Ombudsman). These bills, despite their stated intentions, will worsen rather than improve Colorado's already troubled and corrupt "child protection" system. As a crime victim of our corrupt court system and someone who remains deeply concerned about "child welfare" in the State of Colorado, my understanding is that these bills fail to address the fundamental problems within the current CPS system - namely, its broad unchecked discretion and lack of accountability to the families it is meant to protect. HB25-1188 (Mandatory Reporters) creates several concerning issues: The 24-hour reporting requirement (§19-3-304(1)(a)) leaves no time to verify facts before triggering CPS investigations, leading to unnecessary family disruption. The bill's vague definition of medical abuse opens the door for state agencies to interfere with legitimate parental medical decisions, potentially facilitating what many families have experienced as "medical kidnapping." By requiring all suspicions to be reported, even those based on uncertainty (§19-3-304(3.3)(a)), this bill will dramatically increase false and retaliatory reports. The bill fails to establish protections against racial, economic, and disability-based discrimination in reporting, despite acknowledging these bias issues exist (§19-3-304(3.2)). Perhaps most concerning, there are no meaningful penalties for false reports, allowing CPS to continue being weaponized in divorces, custody battles, and personal disputes. HB25-1200 (Child Protection Ombudsman) similarly fails Colorado families: The CPO has no enforcement power - any recommendations made can be completely ignored by CPS and state agencies without consequence. The bill deliberately denies the Ombudsman subpoena power (§19-3.3-103.4(4)), ensuring critical evidence remains hidden. CPO findings cannot be used in court (§19-3.3-103(1)(a)(l)(C)), effectively shielding agencies from legal scrutiny and denying families wronged by CPS access to potentially exonerating evidence. The Ombudsman can only visit facilities "if facilities allow access" and</p>

	<p>must coordinate visits in advance (§19-3.3-112(1)(a)), eliminating any chance of identifying abuse through surprise inspections. Rather than these ineffective measures destructive to families and "child welfare," I urge you to outright reject these bills or at minimum immediately draft amendments that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create penalties for false and retaliatory reports Require evidence before medical abuse claims can lead to removal Grant the CPO subpoena power to obtain critical records and testimony Require CPO findings be made available to families and usable in court Mandate compliance with Ombudsman recommendations Allow unannounced inspections of state-run facilities <p>Without such crucial safeguards, HB25-1188 and HB25-1200 will most certainly only expand a system already prone to corruption, bias, and financial incentives for wrongful child removals and the destruction of families and sacrosanct bonds. I respectfully ask you to reject these bills by voting NO in their current form. Sincerely, Rabbi Jacob Bellinsky Crime Victim/Witness/Whistleblower 303-883-7706</p>
<p>Stuart McKelvey Amend themselves</p>	<p>I am asking for the Amended portion of the bill at the very least, if not the Amended then please vote NO!</p> <p>MY REASONINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My daughter was removed based on false reporting by the investigation caseworker - There is a founded case for Fraud because of the safety plan that no parties were aware of, with one signature that was fraudulently signed by a case worker - The other 2 parties in the safety plan document was blank - There was no date on this safety plan - Judge made removal orders on false statements and false allegations. - Even though there was a founded case of Fraud there was nothing done making it right on our end by no means!
<p>Kathy Underhill For themselves</p>	<p>Good morning Chair and Committee.</p> <p>My name is Kathy Underhill, the mother of 3 girls and I am testifying today in support of HB25-1188. Specifically, I support removing victim advocates from the list of mandatory reporters for teens who have been sexually assaulted or experience dating violence.</p>

	<p>Imagine your teen daughter telling you through her tears that she has been sexually assaulted. You call three national rape crisis hotlines. You call local hotlines. You look on the web. In every single instance, when you explain that you need guidance for your 15 year old daughter, you are told the same thing: We can't really help you if the victim is under 18. We are mandatory reporters.</p> <p>So she can't tell her school counselor or a trusted teacher. She can't tell her pediatrician or pastor. She can't tell a therapist. They are all mandatory reporters.</p> <p>Feeling completely helpless and boxed in, you have to explain to your daughter that to get her the guidance she needs through a crisis line means her traumatic assault must immediately be reported to the police or human services.</p> <p>I know this, because I experienced it. After my daughter's assault, word leaked out somehow and other teens who experienced sexual assault started texting my daughter, and she told them I could help. They texted me. They needed to understand their options. Some had told their parents about being raped, but the parents had no idea what to do to help. Others hadn't out of fear because they were at a house party, had consumed alcohol or otherwise thought the blame for being raped would fall to them. When teens don't have an adult to turn to for guidance, where do they go? Either to an ill equipped friend or the trauma stays locked inside, echoing around their head and heart.</p> <p>But it doesn't have to be this way. When a teen can call a crisis line, they can talk with a trained adult who can sympathize and guide. The hotline can explain what the teen's options are for reporting and weigh the pros and cons. They learn that they can get a special medical exam. And, they can be encouraged to tell their parents when appropriate.</p> <p>The only reasons I can see to vote no on this bill, is to suppress the voice of girls, to keep the prevalence of rape in the shadows and perpetuate the feelings of secrecy, guilt and shame.</p>
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	Thank you for your consideration of my testimony and please vote yes.
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