

Testimony Opposing HB 25-1200

Good Morning, Members of the Committee.

My name is **Judi Atwood**, and I am here today as a **mother, advocate, and survivor of a deeply flawed child protection and family court system**. I appreciate the intent behind **House Bill 25-1200**, but I cannot support it because it **fails to provide immediate protections for children currently at risk and does nothing to hold professionals accountable when they ignore abuse, neglect, and medical needs**.

I have firsthand experience with the failures of Colorado's **Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) process**, and I can tell you that **more oversight without enforcement means nothing**. My daughter, Ashley, has a **rare disease that went completely ignored by family courts, CPS, and child protection professionals**. Despite repeated attempts to **seek intervention, reports of medical neglect and abuse were dismissed, and my daughter's well-being was placed at risk**.

Last year, **Brittany's investigation** into my daughter's case was supposed to bring clarity and accountability, but instead, it resulted in **no real action**. I provided **extensive evidence of neglect, manipulation, and failures within CPS**, yet nothing changed. No one was held responsible, no policies were corrected, and my daughter was left to suffer the consequences of a **broken system designed to protect institutions rather than children**.

Now, HB 25-1200 **claims to improve oversight**, but let's be clear:

- The **CPO already had access to case files in my daughter's case**, and it **still did nothing**.
- The **CPO already conducted investigations**, and those reports **changed nothing for Ashley**.
- The bill gives the **illusion of reform, but without subpoena power or enforcement authority, investigations remain powerless**—just like Brittany's investigation that led nowhere.

If HB 25-1200 truly aimed to **protect children**, it would:

- ✓ **Mandate accountability for CPS workers, court-appointed professionals, and evaluators who ignore abuse**
- ✓ **Ensure that children's medical needs are taken seriously in legal proceedings**
- ✓ **Provide real enforcement mechanisms—not just passive oversight with no consequences**

Until **HB 25-1200** includes **meaningful accountability and protections for children currently at risk**, I cannot support it. Colorado families deserve **justice, not another bureaucratic review process that leaves children in danger**.

Thank you.

House Health & Human Services

02/25/2025 Upon Adjournment

HB25-1200 Mods to Office of Child Protection Ombudsman

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Michael Caruso For himself</p>	<p>Subject: Opposition to HB25-1188 and HB25-1200</p> <p>Dear Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB25-1188 and HB25-1200. As a victim of sexual assault and battery, and as someone who has experienced the devastating impacts of an unfair and broken system, I believe these bills will only worsen the already dangerous and ineffective Child Protection Services (CPS) system.</p> <p>HB25-1188: Expanding Mandatory Reporting Requirements</p> <p>This bill significantly expands mandatory reporting requirements without establishing any safeguards to prevent abuse of power or errors in reporting. The lack of quality control will inevitably lead to more false or exaggerated reports, which will only harm families already suffering through unnecessary interventions.</p> <p>Additionally, the vague definition of medical abuse within this bill creates the risk of CPS and Adult Protective Services (APS) exploiting it to justify the wrongful removal of children from their homes, in cases that should never have gone to CPS in the first place. As someone who has fought to protect my family from these abuses, I fear this bill would disproportionately affect vulnerable families, especially those in minority or low-income communities, and would open the door to even more medically unjustified removals.</p> <p>HB25-1200: Child Protection Ombudsman</p>

	<p>The Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) created under this bill has no enforcement or subpoena powers, leaving agencies free to ignore its recommendations. This bill shields these agencies from any meaningful legal accountability and undermines the transparency necessary for any real reform to CPS. Critical evidence could remain hidden, and findings from the Ombudsman would be kept confidential, preventing families from seeking justice in court.</p> <p>I have personally been affected by the lack of accountability in CPS, and this bill does nothing to protect families from agencies that consistently operate without sufficient checks and balances. The lack of enforcement power will render this bill essentially ineffective.</p> <p>As someone who has been through bankruptcy while fighting to protect my son and reclaim my rights as a father, I can attest to the destructive consequences of an unchecked system. These bills, if passed, will only increase the harm already done by CPS and perpetuate the trauma that families like mine endure.</p> <p>I urge you to vote NO on both HB25-1188 and HB25-1200.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>Rabbi-Jacob Bellinsky Against themselves</p>	<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</p>

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)(I)(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 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:Create penalties for false and retaliatory reportsRequire evidence before medical abuse claims can lead to removalGrant the CPO subpoena power to obtain critical records and testimonyRequire CPO findings be made available to families and usable in courtMandate compliance with Ombudsman recommendationsAllow unannounced inspections of state-run facilitiesWithout 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 sancrosanct bonds.I respectfully ask you to reject these bills by voting NO in their current form.Sincerely,Rabbi Jacob BellinskyCrime Victim/Witness/Whistleblower303-883-7706