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## Testimony for HB25-1255

1 message

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Tue, Mar 4, 2025 at 2:44 PM

To: "committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov" &lt;committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov&gt;

### Testimony in Support of HB25-1255

*Colorado Judiciary Committee Hearing*

March 2025

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Tamra Axworthy and I am writing today in support of **HB25-1255** because I believe that **no healthcare provider should be forced to violate their deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs in order to practice their profession.**

**HB25-1255 affirms and protects the conscience rights of healthcare providers — rights that are essential to preserving the ethical integrity of medical practice.** Specifically, **Section 25-63-102(1)** of the bill states:

*A health-care provider has the right not to participate in, and not to be punished, disciplined, or discriminated against for declining to participate in, a health-care service on the basis of conscience.*

This is a vital protection. Healthcare providers enter their profession to care for others, but they should never be **coerced into performing, assisting, or referring for procedures that violate their conscience.** Whether the objection is based on **moral, ethical, or religious grounds**, these providers deserve the freedom to practice medicine in a way that aligns with their **core values.**

Additionally, **Section 25-63-102(3)** makes clear that healthcare providers who exercise their conscience rights cannot be:

*liable in any civil, criminal, or administrative action, or subject to disciplinary action by a licensing board or other entity, for declining to participate in a health-care service on the basis of conscience.*

This ensures that doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are not **punished for standing by their convictions.** These protections are especially important in today's climate, where **professional and legal pressures are mounting against providers who hold views that differ from prevailing political or cultural trends.**

The protections outlined in HB25-1255 are fully consistent with **long-standing legal precedent.** In **Burwell v. Hobby Lobby (2014)**, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that **no individual or organization should be forced to act against their religious beliefs**, recognizing the importance of **religious and moral freedom in both public and professional life.** The **First Amendment**, along with **federal conscience laws like the Church Amendments and the Weldon Amendment**, further affirms these rights.

At its core, **HB25-1255 is not about limiting healthcare access — it's about protecting the diversity of thought and belief that strengthens our healthcare system.** Patients are best served when they can trust that their providers are acting with **professional integrity, not under coercion.**

I urge you to **pass HB25-1255** to ensure that Colorado remains a state where healthcare professionals can **practice in accordance with their conscience** — without fear of **retaliation, discrimination, or legal threat**.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to protecting these fundamental rights. I urge a yes vote.



# INTERFAITH ALLIANCE

OF COLORADO  
ACHIEVING DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

March 4, 2025

RE: Opposition to HB25-1255 Health-Care Provider Right to Exercise Conscience

Chairperson Mabrey and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and share our concerns regarding HB25-1255 Health-Care Provider Right to Exercise Conscience.

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding through building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. We are an interfaith public policy and advocacy organization with over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing over two dozen faith traditions. Religious freedom is a defining pillar of our work.

We believe that religious freedom is critical to building a society in which people of different faiths, traditions, and practices exist together and foster mutual understanding and respect. We believe that freedom of religion and conscience allows individuals to flourish and live the lives they wish for. But we also believe that when faith is used to justify discrimination and the imposition of beliefs on others, that is not religious freedom. It is religious extremism. To put it simply, “Your liberty to swing your first ends where my nose begins.”

HB25-1255 goes a lot further than allowing individual practitioners to exercise an objection to a particular healthcare procedure. It would allow healthcare facilities and those offering healthcare coverage to the public to discriminate in who they provide care for and what kinds of care a patient can receive, based on mere subjective opinion, not medical science. It would also allow providers to discriminate in their hiring practices, interfere with credentialing, and insulate them from any legal consequences that result from limiting access to protected healthcare. Ultimately, this bill is not going to advance religious freedom, but instead use religious extremism to allow healthcare providers to narrow the healthcare available to patients and their ability to access the care they need.

Therefore, we respectfully urge a No vote on HB25-1255 Health-Care Provider Right to Exercise Conscience.

Sincerely,  
Shara Smith, Chief Executive Officer  
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

Thank you for your time. My name is Melissa Ogburn and I provide testimony in support of HB25-1255: Health-Care Provider Right to Exercise Conscience.

I am an attorney, practicing in Colorado for more than 20 years. HB25-1255 is absolutely correct in that “the right of conscience is a fundamental and unalienable right central to the founding of the United States and has been deeply rooted in the nation's history and tradition for centuries.” The right of conscience in the United States is based on the belief in natural rights and the idea that people should be free to worship and think as they choose. This belief was influential in the drafting of the First Amendment, which protects both freedom of speech and religion.

In Colorado, conscientious objection is already recognized in various legal contexts, ensuring individuals' rights to act according to their deeply held beliefs. For example, individuals in Colorado are protected by law when it comes to military service, with the option for conscientious objectors to seek alternative service options if their beliefs prohibit them from bearing arms. The state's legal framework upholds the principle that no one should be forced to take part in actions that violate their conscience, balancing personal freedoms with societal obligations. These legal protections are essential in fostering a society that respects diversity of thought while ensuring that individuals are not coerced into acting against their core values. Recognizing the right of conscience is fundamental in upholding anti-discrimination laws, something Colorado has proudly recognized. The right of conscience protects health care workers who hold sincere and deeply held beliefs from discriminatory practices against them.

As it stands, Colorado is only one of four states along with the District of Columbia without specific laws protecting the right of conscience in terms of abortion. This puts Colorado as a far outlier, especially in comparison to the states around us. The only other states without right of conscience laws with respect to abortion are Mississippi, Vermont, and New Hampshire. This means that the states around us have laws that favor medical professionals and tend to attract top medical professionals away from Colorado. Yet, Colorado has expanded Medicaid programs and is offering medical services to more people than ever. The citizens of Colorado need access to quality healthcare and, in recognizing such need, Colorado needs to support quality healthcare professionals. Voting yes on HB25-1255 will support healthcare practitioners in Colorado, attract better healthcare professionals to the state, and provide an avenue for treating Coloradoans. It does not take away access to abortion. Colorado already has dedicated abortion facilities and allows abortion by medication. Voting yes on HB25-1255 will also place Colorado in line with the U.S. Constitution. No state and no legislator should tolerate government coercion in areas of personal belief and practice. I urge you today to add your name to the protection of healthcare workers in Colorado, work to provide better healthcare to Coloradoans, and to protect the right to exercise conscience. Please vote yes on HB25-1255.

Thank you.

TO: HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

RE: HB25-1255 Healthcare Provider Right to Exercise Conscience

DATE: 3/4/2025

SPONSOR: Rep Stephanie Luck

Thank you for this opportunity to support this bill.

My name is Jody Nickeson from Jefferson County, and I represent myself.

This bill is a good bill that speaks in alignment with individuals having the right to medical procedures of their choice. Why should the health care providers not be able to do the same.

Many have concerns about their individual values, morals and principles in their field of expertise. Many doctors today already refuse to treat patients if they refuse to follow their protocols (covid or cancer) and request patients to find another doctor in alignment with the patient's.

We found this true in the COVID era where there were many doctors that refused to administer the protocol were brought up in front of the Medical Board and their licenses revoked or suspended. Now with more science being produced they are now getting their licenses reinstated. This is especially true with the Ivermectin conspiracy and now we are able to get it prescribed and filled by pharmacies.

This bill would decrease the judicial complaints and help aid more doctors to align their expertise with an individual's needs. I personally experienced this after losing my husband to the forced protocol doctors had to perform unwillingly because of government protocol. This emotional experience made me lose my husband to the government guidelines instead of the doctors' knowledge who were forced to do procedures that they did not agree with. I will pursue the issues that may have saved my husband's life if I could have had doctors who counseled me who had the freedom of performing their knowledge instead of having their hands tied as they so often told me.

Please support this bill and vote YES!

Thank you.