

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here to express my strong support for Colorado House Concurrent Resolution 25-1003—and to urge you to support it as well.

At its core, this resolution affirms something simple but powerful: that parents have the fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children. By placing this right in our state constitution, we provide lasting clarity and protection for families, at a time when that is desperately needed.

Today, 73% of parents across the country report deep concerns about the direction of public education—particularly around curriculum and values being taught without adequate transparency or involvement. Here in Colorado, we rank sixth among the worst states where students are not performing at grade level. More than 60% of parents feel that schools are overstepping on sensitive matters like gender identity and mental health—topics that deeply impact children and families, and require thoughtful, inclusive collaboration with parents.

Let me be clear—this resolution does not strip protections from vulnerable children. Systems are already in place to intervene in cases of abuse or neglect. HCR25-1003 does not interfere with that. What it does is ensure that well-meaning, engaged parents are not sidelined, ignored, or treated as adversaries when it comes to their own children.

Since 2020, the CDC has reported a 25% increase in youth mental health emergencies. Our children are struggling, and families are actively searching for answers. But too often, they're being left out of the conversation—or worse, treated as the problem. That needs to change.

Embedding parental rights in the constitution reduces legal ambiguity, brings much-needed clarity, and strengthens the trust between citizens and government. In states where parental rights are clearly protected, we see measurable improvements—higher academic satisfaction, stronger parent-school relationships, and even lower rates of chronic absenteeism.

When families are respected, outcomes improve. When the government acts as a partner—not a gatekeeper—communities thrive. This resolution helps ensure that state resources support families, not replace them.

And this isn't a partisan issue. Leaders on both sides of the aisle, including Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, have spoken out against separating parents from children. This is about unity, not division.

HCR25-1003 is not extreme. It's a responsible, measured step to ensure our laws reflect the values that hold communities together. If we want smart policy, strong families, and a government that serves its people well, then this is the way forward.

I urge you—vote yes on HCR25-1003. Thank you.



20 April 2025

Dear State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Committee,

On behalf of Moms for Liberty El Paso County, we encourage you to vote yes for HCR25-1003. The Resolution, *Person's Rights Related to Their Children*, directly aligns with the United States of America's Constitutional Rights under the 14th Amendment's Due Process Clause which protects fundamental parental rights to the care, custody, and control of their children and was firmly upheld by the Supreme Court in *Troxell v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 67 (2000).

The State of Colorado's legislative branch has continued to attack parental rights. In 2025 alone, several bills have been introduced to create division between parents and their children while attacking the family structure as a whole. HCR25-1003 will allow the citizens of Colorado to vote on amending the State of Colorado's Constitution to expand on "inalienable rights" to include a person's right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children. The amendment will ensure that the State of Colorado cannot unreasonably interfere with those parental liberties.

We urge the Committee to vote yes on this Resolution which will provide your constituents the opportunity to vote on expanding the inalienable rights and give the power back to the people.

We encourage you to honor the fundamental rights of parents including, but not limited to, the right to direct the education, medical care, and moral upbringing of their children. We ask you to advance policies that strengthen parental involvement and decision-making, increase transparency, defend against government overreach, and secure parental rights at all levels of government.

In Liberty,

Megan Schulze

Legislative Lead

Moms for Liberty - El Paso County, Colorado



OFFICE OF RESPONDENT PARENTS' COUNSEL

April 21, 2025

Dear Members of the House State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs:

I am writing on behalf of the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC) in support of House Concurrent Resolution 25-1003: Person's Rights Related to their Children. The ORPC provides high-quality interdisciplinary legal representation for parents in dependency and neglect cases. Part of the ORPC's mission includes advocating for family-centered policies and holding the state to its burden.

HCR 25-1003 would allow voters to determine if the State Constitution should be amended to include protections of parental rights, specifically, "directing the upbringing, education, and care of their children." The Supreme Court of the United States held that "the interest of parents in the care, custody, and control of their children is perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by this Court" in *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 65 (2000). The right of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children has been recognized as a right protected by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution for over a hundred years. See, e.g., *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390, 399, 401 (1923); *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 534-535 (1925).

The language that would be added by this Amendment comes directly from the long line of U.S. Supreme Court cases recognizing this right. The right is not without limits. See *People in Interest of T.W.*, 519 P.3d 1071, 1075 (Colo. App. 2022). Even with the right to parent recognized for over a hundred years, many courts have limited this right to apply only to fit parents or have acknowledged limited circumstances where the government may intervene in a parent-child relationship. Our own appellate courts have frequently wrestled balancing this Constitutional right with other fundamental rights. *Id.* Adding this language to our State Constitution would provide clarity and ensure that this right is always recognized in our state. The ORPC supports allowing the voters to decide if Colorado should protect parents' rights in the same way the U.S. Constitution protects these integral, fundamental rights.

Best regards,

Melanie Jordan

Policy Director, Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel

April 21, 2025

TO: House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs Committee, Colorado Assembly

SUBJECT: HCR25-1003, Person's Rights Related to Their Children

I support HCR25-1003, Person's Rights Related to Their Children, and urge a yes vote. This proposed constitutional amendment to the Colorado Constitution would recognize parental rights to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children as a fundamental inalienable right. Given the onslaught of Colorado legislation hostile to parental rights occurring in our state, it is critical to bring this constitutional amendment to the voters in 2026. I believe Coloradans will approve this constitutional amendment as a fundamental right recognized in the Colorado Constitution.

The US Supreme Court has held that parental rights regarding the upbringing, education, and care of their children is a fundamental constitutional right under the 14th Amendment Due Process clause in the US Constitution. Specifically, the Supreme Court held in Nebraska v. Meyers (1922), 262 U.S. 390 (1922) that a state law requiring that school classes be taught in English violated fundamental parental rights to control the education of their children under the 14th Amendment Due Process Clause. A parochial school run by the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Congregation taught classes in German. The Court spoke to the substantive meaning of the Due Process clause:

“While the Court has not attempted to define with exactness the liberty thus guaranteed, the term has received much consideration and some of the included things have been definitely stated. Without doubt, it denotes not merely freedom from bodily restraint, but also the right of the individual to contract, to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and generally to enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.”

Meyers at 399. The Court reaffirmed parental rights over the upbringing of their children in Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925), as a fundamental constitutional right. In Pierce, the Court struck down an Oregon law requiring all children attend public schools, as a violation of a parent's right to determine the appropriate schools for their child's education. Both Meyers and Pierce decisions have been reaffirmed by the US Supreme Court in subsequent cases.

It is my sincere hope that the US Supreme Court will soon issue a broad seminal decision on parental rights, to void horrific state legislation violating parental rights with regards to health care, religious upbringing, exposure to sexually inappropriate and exploitive material as "education", etc. Particularly odious are recent Colorado bills which establish the age of consent for children at age 12 in some areas, contrary to medical knowledge on brain development of minor children and contrary to long-held views on the need for parental care and guidance until age 18.

In the meantime, we should recognize parental rights as fundamental inalienable rights in the Colorado Constitution. I urge a yes vote on HCR25-1003.

Terri Carver

Former State Representative (2014-2022)

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

04/21/2025 01:30 PM

HCR25-1003 Person's Rights Related to Their Children

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Rebekah Esko For themselves	I strongly support HCR25-1003 because it gives Colorado voters the opportunity to vote on the issue of parents' rights. Colorado residents and visitors have concerns about Colorado's laws and policies with respect to families. This bill will help clarify the issue. I'm a Colorado native and I visit Colorado regularly. Like many others, I'm watching Colorado legislation in order to make decisions about my future plans relative to Colorado. Please do the right thing and support this bill.
Leif Sigstedt For themselves	This is a common sense bill that codifies the fact that parents are the only ones who are in control of how their offspring are taught and raised. This is how it's always been and how it should always be. Please support this bill by voting YES! Thanks for your time and consideration.
Kenny Lohmann Against themselves	all persons have an inalienable right to raise their children — NOT THE STATE.
Thomas Patterson Against themselves	Colorado law doesn't allow parent to know that their kid is getting therapy, not allowed to know that their kid is on meds, not allowed to know that kids have an abortion and not allow to know that kids are being manipulated to change their gender while at school. Parent are mandated to be responsible for kids to attend school, be responsible for everything kids do or if they hurt someone. Parents are not informed that their kids are being medicated and come home with a gender affirming mindset by meds that have a huge amount of side affects. A loving parent addresses their kid by their God given name and they are removed from them. Someone should investigate how this would even be sensible unless the state is promoting the removable of kids from loving parents and somehow benefiting financially from this child abuse by the state.
William Wagner	Prepared Testimony of

<p>For Parental Rights Foundation</p>	<p>Distinguished Professor Emeritus William Wagner Vice President, Parental Rights Foundation</p> <p>Before the Colorado House of Representatives Committee on State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs April 21, 2025</p> <p>Distinguished Chair and Distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 25-1003</p> <p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>My name is William Wagner and I hold the academic rank of Distinguished Professor Emeritus (Law). I served on the faculty at the University of Florida and Western Michigan University Cooley Law School, where I taught Constitutional Law and Ethics. I currently hold the Faith and Freedom Center Distinguished Chair at Spring Arbor University. Before joining academia, I served as a federal judge in the United States Courts, as Senior Assistant United States Attorney in the Department of Justice, and as a Legal Counsel in the United States Senate. Most relevant though, I also serve as Vice-President and Member of the Board of Directors of the Parental Rights Foundation (PRF). PRF is a non-profit research and educational institution dedicated to the promotion and preservation of parental rights and the protection of children.</p> <p>I testify today in support of HCR25-1003 and comment here on the correct constitutional standard for fundamental inalienable rights.</p> <p>HCR25-1003 PRESERVES INALIENABLE PARENTAL RIGHTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN</p> <p>HCR25-1003 empowers the voters of Colorado to preserve in Colorado's Constitution the deeply rooted historical and legal tradition recognizing parental rights as inalienable. The U.S. Supreme Court recognizes that inalienable parental rights are fundamental. Accordingly, HCR25-1003 provides that</p> <p>All persons have certain natural, essential and inalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; of acquiring, possessing and protecting property; OF DIRECTING THE UPBRINGING, EDUCATION, AND CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN; and of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness.</p>
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	<p>Under United States Supreme Court precedent, a court applies strict scrutiny when reviewing government actions that interfere with parents' inalienable right to control and direct the upbringing of their children.</p> <p>“The essence of all that has been said or written on the subject is that only those interests of the highest order and those not otherwise served can overbalance legitimate claims to the free exercise of [a fundamental inalienable right].” – Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U.S. 205 (1972); See also Adarand v. Peña, (1995), Widmar v. Vincent, (1982), and Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc., v. Hialeah, (1993).</p> <p>Courts at various levels of the federal judiciary used this same terminology in at least 125 cases since its introduction in 1972. Its meaning, therefore, is well established and clear. Colorado statutorily likewise recognizes the fundamental nature of this inalienable right CO Rev. Stat § 13-22-107 (2024):</p> <p>Parents have a fundamental right and responsibility to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children. The law has long presumed that parents act in the best interest of their children.</p> <p>The proposed Constitutional Amendment will ensure Colorado recognizes the correct constitutional standard to preserve the deeply rooted historical tradition and legal standard for parental rights and child protection in America. Moreover, the amendment in this way would also preserve Colorado’s compelling government interest in passing laws protecting children from abuse by unfit parents while utilizing the correct fundamental right standard. Indeed, state laws that provide for child safety and protection are upheld under a strict scrutiny standard because the government has a compelling interest in protecting children where unfit parents threaten their welfare. For example, Colorado has a compelling interest in protecting children against the physical abuse of a child committed by an unfit parent.</p> <p>The proposed amendment also preserves a fit parent’s fundamental liberty to control and direct the upbringing of their children, especially in the education sphere. After all, who is in the best position to know what is in the best interest of a child? The fit parents who raised the child or a government authority (well-intentioned or not) who did not? The deeply rooted historical and legal traditions of this nation recognize what every parent knows the moment they hold their child for the first time. It has been given to them the duty, responsibility, and right to control and direct the upbringing of their child. The right properly serves as a limit on the exercise of government power. The proposed amendment properly recognizes this right in the State of Colorado and properly provides this limit on the exercise of the State’s power.</p> <p>Passage of HCR25-1003 empowers the people of Colorado to vote to make Colorado the 21st state in the nation to recognize parental rights as a fundamental inalienable right in state law. The other 20 states are: West Virginia prior to 1931, Kansas and Michigan in 1996, Texas in 1999, Utah in 2000, Colorado in 2003, Arizona in 2010, Nevada and Virginia in 2013, Oklahoma in 2014, Idaho in 2015, Wyoming in 2017,</p>
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	<p>Florida and Montana in 2021, and Georgia, North Dakota, Iowa, Alabama, and North Carolina in 2023, Tennessee last year, and Indiana in 2025.</p> <p>For all the above reasons, I urge passage of HCR25-1003. The proposed amendment will preserve the longstanding traditional inalienable parental rights protection recognized in U.S. Supreme Court precedent.</p>
<p>Betsy Rhoades</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am very concerned with the direction this state is going in terms of parental rights. I do not desire these rights as a way to control my children. On the contrary, my deepest desire is to teach, protect, and most of all, love them. And who knows them better than I? Their mom. This state is slowly trying to tear families apart, and that breaks my heart. Families are the backbone of this country, and we need to get back to supporting them. I believe this amendment is a step in the right direction. Let's get back to supporting parents and children together, as a family should be.</p>
<p>Anne Lindsay</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>Because of the radical agenda of some of the democrats in our Colorado legislature, we need this amendment to the constitution for the protection of parental rights.</p>
<p>Hal Moore</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>This resolution is a meaningful step forward in protecting my inalienable rights as a parent, grand parent, and great grand parent. Inalienable rights are fundamental rights that cannot be taken away or denied, often considered inherent to all individuals. Examples include the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as stated in the Declaration of Independence. By clearly affirming that parents have the inalienable right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children, it strengthens families and reinforces a fundamental value held by Coloradans. This is a strong, principled measure that empowers families and ensures their voice remains central in decisions that impact their children and family. As a retired public school teacher in Colorado, strong families are the cornerstone to a peaceful society. State government has NO RIGHT to raising my family and children. Thank you.</p>
<p>Brenda Kelly</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>As the mother of six children, I strongly support this bill that affirms Parental Rights. The U.S. Constitution, particularly the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, protects parental rights, including the right to direct the care, upbringing, and education of their children. The Supreme Court has consistently upheld these rights, emphasizing that parents have a fundamental right to make decisions regarding their children's upbringing. These rights, which have been secured in our US Constitution, have been eroded in the state of Colorado. Even this year, we have seen bill after bill undermining parental rights as it pertains to their children. There are already plenty of bills in the books that protect children when they are in a bad situation, but there are no laws that protect parents who just want what is true and right for the own</p>

	<p>children. It seems that the State of Colorado believes that these children, whom they have not born, have not cared for, have not educated, are theirs to make decisions for. This is not right! Please move this bill out of committee and allow the legislators to go on record whether or not they want to support the Constitution of the United States.</p>
<p>Jeany Rush For themselves</p>	<p>TO: House State, Military & Veterans Committee RE: HCR25-1003 Person's Rights Related to Their Children Sponsor: Degraaf FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs, Constituent 4-20-21 VOTE: YES</p> <p>This bill states what we all support! I support this BILL!!!</p> <p>THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS THE RIGHT TO DIRECT THE UPBRINGING, EDUCATION, AND CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN!</p> <p>This amendment to the Colorado State Constitution is now needed to insure that the Voters have an opportunity to vote on this concurrent resolution to protect voters rights for property, children and their education, and the Parents inalienable rights over their Kids.</p> <p>It is really important that Parents are informed, and kept in the loop when a complete stranger literally grooms them into practices that could damage/harm their bodies, minds, and their whole lives.</p> <p>It should be a common sense practice, and here we are needing to protect our children, our lives from people who have bad intentions.</p> <p>We never had this kind of insanity when I went to school, and we came out with intelligence. Now half of our kids in Colorado are exposed to more and more damaging ideology, agenda, lowering their academic performance by as much as HALF! People, counselors, administrators are pushing such harmful chemical and mental agenda they are having their minds pushed into harmful directions. No one should have this happening. No one told our kids don't tell your MOM and DAD what we are discussing. This is Sexual Assault, and sadly often those preaching this are also involved in the practices! How is that neutral? How is that humane? How is that not Criminal?</p> <p>The Frankfurt School in Berlin in the 20-30's. Marxist ideology to have the STATE take over the children, removing safety, warmth, religion, and any dignity! To Make them workers of the world." BENEATH SHEEPS CLOTHING: Julie Behling The War on Children: Starbucks, NO WayBack, just a few! Trafficking films too! Our children are</p>

	<p>not for sale, and any of this happening should be prosecuted to the FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW! There is so so much more Here but Bravo for this BILL!</p>
<p>Megan Schulze For Moms for Liberty-El Paso County</p>	<p>Dear State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Committee,</p> <p>On behalf of Moms for Liberty El Paso County, we encourage you to vote yes for HCR25-1003. The Resolution, Person’s Rights Related to Their Children, directly aligns with the United States of America’s Constitutional Rights under the 14th Amendment’s Due Process Clause which protects fundamental parental rights to the care, custody, and control of their children and was firmly upheld by the Supreme Court in <i>Troxell v. Granville</i>, 530 U.S. 57, 67 (2000).</p> <p>The State of Colorado’s legislative branch has continued to attack parental rights. In 2025 alone, several bills have been introduced to create division between parents and their children while attacking the family structure as a whole. HCR25-1003 will allow the citizens of Colorado to vote on amending the State of Colorado’s Constitution to expand on “inalienable rights” to include a person’s right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children. The amendment will ensure that the State of Colorado cannot unreasonably interfere with those parental liberties.</p> <p>We urge the Committee to vote yes on this Resolution which will provide your constituents the opportunity to vote on expanding the inalienable rights and give the power back to the people.</p> <p>We encourage you to honor the fundamental rights of parents including, but not limited to, the right to direct the education, medical care, and moral upbringing of their children. We ask you to advance policies that strengthen parental involvement and decision-making, increase transparency, defend against government overreach, and secure parental rights at all levels of government.</p> <p>In Liberty,</p> <p>Megan Schulze Legislative Lead Moms for Liberty - El Paso County, Colorado</p>
<p>Katrina Radley For themselves</p>	<p>Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly,</p> <p>I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 25-1003, which proposes amending the Colorado Constitution to establish a Parents’ Bill of Rights. This resolution is a critical step toward safeguarding</p>

	<p>the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and healthcare of their minor children, and I urge its passage to protect Colorado families.</p> <p>HCR 25-1003 aligns seamlessly with the principles of the U.S. Constitution, which recognizes individual liberties and limits government authority to specific, enumerated powers. By affirming parents’ inalienable rights to guide their children’s education, moral or religious instruction, and medical care, this resolution upholds the constitutional tradition of prioritizing personal freedom over state overreach. It ensures parents can choose their child’s school—whether public, private, or homeschool—consent to medical or mental health treatments, access educational and health records, opt out of programs like reproductive health education, and seek exemptions from immunizations based on medical or religious grounds. These protections place parents, not the government, as the primary authority in their children’s lives, reflecting the limited role of government envisioned by our nation’s founders.</p> <p>Moreover, HCR 25-1003 serves as a vital safeguard against harmful legislation, such as House Bill 25-1312, which threatens parental rights by redefining terms like “coercive control” in ways that could unjustly penalize parents for their beliefs or decisions regarding their child’s identity. By embedding a Parents’ Bill of Rights in the Colorado Constitution, this resolution creates a robust defense against such intrusive policies, ensuring that parental authority remains paramount and protected from legislative overreach.</p> <p>This resolution also reinforces the proper role of government as one of limited power, accountable to the people. By constitutionally securing parental rights, HCR 25-1003 ensures that the state respects the sovereignty of families and refrains from encroaching on decisions best left to parents. This approach not only protects individual liberty but also strengthens the fabric of our communities by empowering families to thrive.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the General Assembly to pass HCR 25-1003 and place it before Colorado voters in 2026. This resolution is a powerful affirmation of constitutional values, a shield against harmful laws, and a commitment to keeping government in its rightful, limited role. Thank you for your dedication to preserving the freedoms that make Colorado strong.</p> <p>Sincerely, Katrina Radley</p>
<p>Stephanie Cassada For themselves</p>	<p>I am in full support of this bill and believe that no one has a greater interest or better knowledge of a child than their parents and the direction of their youthful lives should be directed by the parents without infringement by the government. Please trust parents to know best what their children need. Thank you.</p> <p>Stephanie Cassada</p>

	Woodland Park
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