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Good afternoon Chairwoman Ryden and members of the House State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. My name is Stacy Anderson and I am the Outreach Director for an organization called Better Priorities Initiative of Colorado. We exist to help educate the public on the numerous problems with the death penalty in Colorado.

I am here to testify against House Bill 1233 because this proposal will cause further trauma to victims' family members and jurors charged with this enormous responsibility. This will also exponentially increase the burden upon tax-payers who already pay too much for a system that doesn't work.

-In regard to victim's family members, Mr. Brauchler himself has admitted in public speeches that greater than a majority of the victims in the Holmes case favored him taking the plea deal for various reasons. Some just didn't want to live through the horrible facts of the crime being spelled out in vivid detail over and over. Others rightfully feared a Governor down the line could grant clemency and all those years of pain and waiting could be wasted anyway.

-While I would **NEVER** tell a victim's family member how to feel about the death penalty, what many of the victims in the Holmes case expressed is that the entire death penalty trial (and appeals) process is enormously traumatic, only adding to their already painful road.

-Some people tell us they don't even want to live through the trauma of the initial trial (like Tim Ricard, whose wife was a corrections officer who was murdered and despite the pleas of him and his family the prosecutor has decided to seek death in the case anyway.) This bill would cause families, some of which don't want to experience the first sentencing phase to have to relive it all over again...not to mention the years of appeals that would come upon a death sentence.

And speaking of trauma....we must not forget the enormous weight we put upon jurors by asking them to determine whether to give a fellow citizen the ultimate punishment or not. In any death case, we've already subjected 18 citizens to crime scene footage, heart-breaking testimony and grisly details that many express causes them nightmares for years to come. If at the end of all of that the jury does not agree that this person deserves to die, we are belittling the trauma they endured by telling them we aren't happy with their decision, so we choose to subject another 18 people to this trauma in an attempt to secure a punishment that may or may not ever be carried out.

As a conservative myself and having talked with many conservatives in many states about the death penalty, it is especially disturbing to be considering a measure that would make it easier to get the death penalty. The burden of proof for the government to kill one of its citizens should be the highest bar in the entirety of the criminal justice system. The idea that the burden of proof on life and death would be shifted to the defendant and that the first jury's decision would be rendered utterly irrelevant is an affront to what every child is taught in civics class about what makes this nation great.

Additionally as a fiscal conservative, I already find the death penalty to be a wasteful government program. From what I can observe from states that have a similar provision, this would likely at least double the cost of an already incredibly expensive trial. When we are already short-changing victims of violent crime and their families of the services they so desperately need, it should be out of the question to spend twice as much taxpayer money on a 2nd sentencing phase if the government fails to secure a death sentence in the first try.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to try to answer any questions.