

House Judiciary

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SB24-006 Pretrial Diversion Programs

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Evie Hudak For Colorado PTA	<p>Colorado PTA supports SB24-006. PTA believes that every child deserves the opportunity to grow into a happy and healthy adult, which includes mental, physical, and overall well-being. One of PTA's highest priorities is to reduce the number of young people unnecessarily involved in the justice system. In fact, beginning in 1899, PTA was one of the first associations to encourage federal and state lawmakers to create a safe and rehabilitative justice system for children by establishing separate courts and probation systems from those serving adults. While the impact of the juvenile justice system over the last 40 years has been remarkable, improvements still need to be made.</p> <p>PTA believes that greater attention and resources should be provided for mental health early intervention and prevention services. Juvenile diversion programs are important to allow youth with mental health problems to get the kind of help they really need, particularly if these were the real cause of their delinquency charges.</p> <p>Even more important is the provision of this bill that allows for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be diverted from juvenile detention or incarceration. PTA advocates against expelling students with disabilities from school for disciplinary violations and instead placing them in alternative educational settings that address the discipline problem. Putting these young people into diversion programs is a comparable strategy.</p> <p>Overall, SB 006 ensures greater safety and equity for some of our most vulnerable youth.</p>