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Good Afternoon Chair Gonzales, Vice-Chair Roberts, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dustin Zvonek, I am an At-Large Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem in the City of Aurora, and I am providing written testimony on behalf of the City. I want to begin by stating that the City of Aurora is opposed to HB 1437. We have taken this position because of the impact this legislation would have on local control and the chilling effect it would have on our efforts to reduce costs while maintaining service quality.

House Bill 1437, as it stands, undermines local control by imposing arbitrary restrictions on how cities that handle domestic violence cases in municipal courts can spend city resources. In Aurora, we shoulder a significant financial burden by handling non-felony domestic violence cases in our municipal courts, effectively subsidizing Adams and Arapahoe counties.

Initial estimates from City staff suggest that the City of Aurora incurs costs amounting to several million dollars annually, covering additional judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and administrative support for utilizing our court system these cases.

Although we are not currently pursuing cost-saving measures as it relates to our in-house public defender's office, we have recently considered transitioning our public defenders to a contract basis, akin to all other municipalities that are also not a county across Colorado. State-imposed restrictions should not hinder such possible moves, and that is exactly what HB 1437 does.

I would implore the Committee not to restrict our ability to manage our taxpayer resources as we, the local elected body for the City, undertake actions in the our residents best interests. We urge you to consider the fiscal realities faced by cities like Aurora, and refrain from imposing unnecessary and arbitrary constraints that hinder our ability to serve our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dustin Zvonek, Mayor Pro Tem  
Aurora, Colorado