

Testimony in Support of HB26-1276

Protecting Colorado Families Act

Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Monica Hughes and I serve as the Deputy Political Director at Cobalt Advocates. I am submitting testimony on behalf of Cobalt Advocates in support of HB26-1276.

Cobalt works to ensure that all Coloradans, regardless of national origin, can access the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare, including abortion, contraception, miscarriage care, and pregnancy-related services.

Cobalt supports policies that help ensure all people, including immigrants and mixed-status families, can seek healthcare without fear, surveillance, or unnecessary disruption. When immigration enforcement practices increase risk, confusion, or fear, they can deter people from accessing essential care, including reproductive healthcare. HB26-1276 advances transparency, accountability, and health and safety protections that matter for the well-being of Colorado communities.

Across many policy areas we are seeing a growing challenge around data sharing and surveillance. Information that is collected for routine government functions can sometimes move across agencies, through subpoenas, or into federal systems without transparency or meaningful accountability. When that happens, people can be exposed to enforcement actions they never anticipated when they interacted with a public service.

A core part of our work is ensuring that sensitive personal information collected by public systems is not misused or redirected into enforcement pipelines in ways that put individuals and families at risk.

Colorado has taken important steps in recent years to set clear boundaries around how personal information is shared with federal immigration authorities. HB26-1276 strengthens those safeguards by expanding accountability when protected personal information is improperly disclosed and by increasing transparency when state or local agencies receive subpoenas from federal immigration authorities.

Transparency is particularly important here. Public reporting helps ensure that these requests are visible and that policymakers and communities understand how frequently information is being sought and how those requests are handled.

Our organization is deeply familiar with the consequences of surveillance systems that capture sensitive personal information. In other contexts, including the surveillance of health care facilities and abortion providers, we have consistently opposed practices that expose patients or providers to risk simply for seeking or delivering care. Policies that allow personal data to move

too easily into enforcement systems can create similar harms by discouraging people from interacting with public institutions or seeking the services they need.

HB26-1276 does not limit lawful public safety activity. Instead, it reinforces clear guardrails for how information is handled and ensures that public systems remain accountable to the communities they serve.

The bill also strengthens oversight of immigration detention facilities and clarifies that public transportation resources should not be used to facilitate deportation. These provisions reinforce a broader principle that public infrastructure should be used to support community wellbeing rather than expose people to unnecessary risk.

For many Coloradans, concerns about surveillance and data sharing are not abstract. They influence whether people feel safe seeking services, reporting crimes, or interacting with government agencies. When trust erodes, the effectiveness of those institutions erodes as well.

Ultimately, this bill is about trust and safety. People cannot access healthcare, report harm, or engage with public systems if they believe that doing so could expose them or their families to enforcement or risk.

HB26-1276 reinforces a clear principle that Colorado's public systems should serve communities, not inadvertently place them in harm's way. By strengthening transparency and accountability, this bill helps ensure that people can seek care and services without fear.

For these reasons, Cobalt Advocates respectfully urges a yes vote on HB26-1276.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



SHARA SMITH
Chief Executive Officer

**INTERFAITH
ALLIANCE**
OF COLORADO
ACHIEVING DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

March 17, 2026

RE: Support for HB26-1276 Protect Safety of Individuals Who Are Immigrants

Chairperson Mabrey and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate our support for HB26-1276. 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 have over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing over two-dozen faith traditions.

At Interfaith, we take to heart the ethical principle that we should act towards our neighbors how we would have them act towards ourselves. We find this principle reflected across faith traditions and scriptures, distilled in the familiar “golden rule” that, for many in our network, is a divine command. HB26-1276 would ensure that Colorado’s public resources are deployed for our common good, not for the dehumanization of our neighbors.

As I remarked recently alongside community and faith leaders at the immigrant detention facility in Aurora, our advocacy comes from our compassion for our brothers and sisters who are being targeted and also those who are doing the targeting. By strengthening health and safety standards, this bill addresses human rights in situations where neglect is too often the status quo. As a state, we don’t want to normalize the harm that comes from lack of action – we must be an example and an embodiment of the “golden rule” that teaches us that “we must love our neighbors as we love ourselves”, that they are our “heirs.”

Justice is not justice if it is only for the citizen; it must be for every human being. How we treat those we detain speaks directly to our values as a state, and so we respectfully urge a YES vote to advance HB25-1276 from the committee with your favorable recommendation, to protect the safety and dignity of every Coloradan, regardless of their status.

Thank you for your consideration,
Shara Smith, CEO
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Lorna Benton. I am testifying in strong SUPPORT on HB26-1276. A first generation American; the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants, escaping persecution and violence. I also am a Colorado Licensed psychotherapist of 25 years, an adoptive mother, and citizen of a country I barely recognize.

I and my family have been watching with horror, the events of the current immigration movement in this country. I was raised with the imperative of honor and duty. Sadly, I see a steep decline of "Truth, Justice, and the American way".

My father came to this country as a 10 year old boy. His parents were flat broke and had only had friends with whom to stay for a couple of months. My family; however, were white skinned and my father and grandmother had blue eyes and spoke multiple languages. Acutely aware of racism, discrimination and prejudice, they changed their names and engaged in elocution lessons in order to lose any trace of an accent, in order to try to assimilate. Sadly, the result was my families loss of rich intergenerational culture. My family became white bread, apple pie Americans, served in the military, attended Ivy League schools, volunteered in our communities, and paid substantial taxes.

A few thoughts and concerns regarding NOT having 1276 pass.

First of all, I hear the concerns for the LEO's civil financial penalty of up to \$50,000 for wrongdoing; however, I am not hearing the equal concern for the financial hardship, mental health damages, child care concerns for the immigrants who are detained based only on subjective, arbitrary criteria. These are civil offenses, not criminal. The consequences of that wrongful detention are far more costly to these immigrants. Immigrants are Colorado residents.

Secondly as a clinician, I see first hand the ripple effects of damage, trauma, anxiety, re-activation of trauma for those seeking amnesty.

Thirdly, coming back to the point of being a first generation American, some members of my family were sent to concentration camps, house there for 5 years, and ultimately murdered. The notion that those conditions are happening in our country and in our state, literally makes me physically ill. There must be oversight of the "detention centers", particularly since it is well known that these centers are for profit, private entities, who reportedly dehumanize this population, no different than back in the 1930's.

Lastly, while my family is the poster family for the American dream, my grandfather was the consular of Venezuela in the Czech Republic, my father was the largest employer in Puerto Rico, and Central and South America was their sales territory. I am horrified by the generalization of the Latino population being stereotyped as criminal. In my 60 years on this planet, I have seen the overwhelming warmth, generosity, and family dedication of the majority of the Latino population. Of course, there are exceptions- in any population.

Start somewhere. Protect those that are vulnerable.

Thank you.

Title of Bill / Issue:

HB26-1276 - Protect the Safety of Individuals Who Are Immigrants

Date of Hearing:

March 17, 2026

To:

Members of the Judiciary Committee

Colorado General Assembly

Chair Mabrey, Vice Chair Carter, and members of the Committee:

My name is JGP, and I am a resident of Denver, Colorado. I am writing to express my support for HB26-1276.

I strongly support this bill because, as the child of immigrant parents and as a legal advocate for immigrant communities, I have seen firsthand the urgent need to strengthen protections for immigrants' personal information and to hold detention centers accountable through regular environmental and health inspections.

I believe in a future where humanity is centered in decision-making, where human rights are treated as intrinsic, and where compassion and dignity guide our actions. We share a responsibility to pursue justice in our communities—through accountability, repair, and the restoration of power to those who have been harmed. I am the product of two courageous immigrant parents who taught me resilience, the power of community, and the importance of love in the face of adversity.

As an intern with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, I witnessed firsthand the conditions inside the GEO detention facility in Aurora. Clients often shared that our legal consultations restored a sense of humanity because they were treated with dignity and respect. At the same time, I worked with individuals who were denied cancer treatment, dialysis, and life-saving surgeries. These experiences made clear to me that the current conditions in detention centers are inhumane.

This bill would require detention centers to submit annual reports to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on critical issues, including pregnancy outcomes, chronic health conditions, disabilities, dietary needs, temperature conditions, access to legal counsel, and access to spaces for worship or reflection. These are basic standards of care.

I have attended immigration hearings at the Aurora facility and witnessed families separated and in distress. I have also heard from community members who live in fear—afraid to take their children to school or attend medical appointments. This is not acceptable.

As a supporter of the Shut Down GEO coalition, I want to emphasize the importance of ensuring that private prison companies receiving taxpayer dollars meet basic standards of health, safety, and humanity. According to the Spring 2026 Community Accountability Report, conditions at the GEO Group facility in Aurora include overcrowding, malnutrition, and serious medical neglect. No company should be above the law—especially those funded by hardworking Coloradans.

HB26-1276 would require compliance with health and safety standards, mandate inspections, and enforce meaningful civil penalties. These are not extreme measures—they are the bare minimum.

I support this bill because it moves us toward a future that protects and restores the dignity of immigrant communities, and I will admit I am afraid to speak up at times because of the current climate that we are in; nevertheless, I can not remain silent. I am a strong believer in the idea of justice for immigrants, justice for all. In other words, if we ensure fairness, equality, and accountability for immigrants, we improve the quality of life for everyone in Colorado.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to vote yes on HB26-1276.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mi nombre es RC. Por motivos personales prefiero identificarme solo con mis iniciales,

Quisiera compartir y agregara a mi historia principal mi testimonio sobre el trato que recibí durante mi detención y posterior deportación en Estados Unidos, ya que considero que durante ese proceso se vulneraron mis derechos y mi dignidad como persona.

El día de mi detención fui trasladado a una oficina para ser interrogado por un agente encubierto. en el área de centennial por arapaho street Durante el interrogatorio se me realizaron numerosas preguntas y, en repetidas ocasiones, el agente insistía en que por ser inmigrante yo no tenía derechos en ese país. También me presionaba constantemente para que firmara documentos que, según me decía, permitirían trasladarme de inmediato. a donde ?? pues no me dijo y por no hablar su idioma En ese momento me sentía confundido, presionado y sin la información suficiente sobre mis derechos o las consecuencias de firmar esos documentos.

Posteriormente fui puesto bajo custodia de inmigración (ICE), donde permanecí aproximadamente 82 días detenido. Justo una semana antes de cumplir 90 días de detención se me informó que sería repatriado de manera inmediata.

Sin embargo, el proceso de traslado no fue inmediato ni digno. Fui transportado esposado durante un viaje que duró aproximadamente 13 horas, con varias escalas en distintos estados. Durante ese tiempo permanecimos dentro del avión mientras continuaban subiendo a más personas detenidas. El traslado incluyó salidas desde Denver, escalas en California, los ángeles y finalmente la llegada a Nogales, Sonora, México. en el cruce fronterizo para ser exactos

Durante el trayecto, varios de nosotros solicitamos agua, acceso al baño y otras necesidades básicas. pues fueron 13 largas horas de viaje En diversas ocasiones estas solicitudes fueron negadas o ignoradas. En algunos momentos se nos dijo que, por ser inmigrantes, no tenían obligación de proporcionarnos esas atenciones. Esta situación generó un fuerte impacto psicológico y una sensación de humillación y deshumanización.

Comprendo que mi situación migratoria implicaba un proceso legal y la posibilidad de deportación. Sin embargo, considero que ninguna persona debería ser sometida a tratos degradantes o a la negación de necesidades básicas durante su detención o traslado.

Por esta razón comparto mi historia con la intención de que situaciones como esta no se repitan y que los derechos humanos de todas las personas, independientemente de su estatus migratorio, sean respetados.

con la confianza plena de q tu seas mi voz esa voz q permaneció en silencio durante varios años en un país extranjero dedicándose a trabajar y a salir adelante con su familia jamás escúchelo bien evadiendo impuestos ni pidiendo ayudas al gobierno respetando cada una de las reglas como por ejemplo conducir con aseguanza sobriedad incluso con una licencia válida d el estado q me fue otorgada soy una persona honesta sin vicios dedicada a lo suyo

mi falta y mi único delito aquí considero fue ser inmigrante o de color humilde como nos suelen llamar o señalar por ahí siendo víctima d un agente encubierto quien presentó una supuesta investigación aleatoria en mi contra siendo víctima d perfil racial

Subject : Support for HB26-1276 – Protecting Colorado Families Act
Support for HB26-1276 – Protecting Colorado Families Act

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Anne Keke, and I am writing to strongly support HB26-1276, the Protecting Colorado Families Act.

I am an immigrant from Côte d'Ivoire and have lived in Colorado for about 20 years. This state is my home. I have built my life here, and I have seen how policies that promote trust, dignity, and fairness allow families like mine to thrive. I have also seen how fear can take hold when protections are unclear or insufficient.

I want to briefly note that it is unfortunate remote testimony was not allowed. Many people directly impacted by this bill may not be able to attend in person, and their voices deserve to be heard as well.

HB26-1276 is an important step in strengthening Colorado's commitment to protecting all residents. The bill ensures accountability when personal information is improperly shared with federal immigration authorities. People should be able to trust that their data will be handled responsibly, and agencies must be held accountable when that trust is broken.

The transparency measures are also critical. Requiring disclosure of federal subpoenas and notifying individuals when their information is shared gives communities visibility and helps build public trust in government actions.

I am especially encouraged by the provisions that strengthen health and safety standards in immigration detention facilities. Regular inspections, access to medical and mental health care, and basic protections for vulnerable individuals are essential. No one should be subjected to unsafe or inhumane conditions.

Finally, restricting the use of local resources for deportation efforts helps ensure that Colorado's public services are used to support communities, not harm them. This approach strengthens relationships between residents and local institutions.

HB26-1276 builds on Colorado's existing leadership and takes meaningful steps to protect civil rights, increase transparency, and uphold human dignity.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Keke

March 16, 2026
HB26-1276

My name is Denise Madrid, and I support HB26-1276.

My family is made up of immigrants, and I am married to a Colombian immigrant. I am also the mother of a one-year-old daughter who deserves to grow up with both of her parents.

Last year, my husband was followed for weeks by masked men in unmarked vehicles. Then, on November 15, 2025, those same agents surrounded him and violently detained him.

Even though he raised his hands to cooperate, he was thrown onto the cement and forced into a vehicle. He wasn't shown a warrant until he was already inside the GEO ICE detention center.

While detained, he endured racist harassment from an officer that escalated to assault. The system blamed him rather than protecting him, and he was placed in solitary confinement for a week. Later, even though charges were dismissed, he was denied bond.

His only way to leave detention was voluntary departure — meaning he had to leave behind his wife and infant daughter.

No family should ever have to go through this.

HB1276 matters because it provides oversight, transparency, and accountability for immigration enforcement. Immigrant families deserve dignity and protection. I urge you to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Madrid
Fort Lupton, CO
March 16, 2026

**TESTIMONY ON HB26-1276,
PROTECT SAFETY OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE IMMIGRANTS**

Mister Chair and Members of the Committee good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity to advocate for Colorado's children and youth. My name is Dawn Fritz, and I am Colorado PTA's Director of Legislative Engagement. I am proud to represent our nation's oldest and largest child advocacy organization. Our mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Colorado PTA strongly supports HB26-1276

In PTA, we center our advocacy on how policies show up in the day-to-day lives of children and families. Colorado PTA supports policies that protect children from harm, strengthen families, and ensure systems are responsive and accountable.

At its core, this bill is about safety, transparency, and accountability — values that align directly with PTA's longstanding commitment to the well-being of every child, regardless of background or circumstance.

Children thrive when they feel safe — at home, in their communities, and in any system that may touch their lives. For children in immigrant families, uncertainty and fear around enforcement actions can have real and lasting impacts on their mental health, school engagement, and overall development. When children experience that instability, it impacts their sense of safety, their mental health, and their ability to fully engage in school and their communities.

House Bill 26-1276 takes important steps to bring more consistency, transparency, and accountability.

Importantly, the bill strengthens oversight of facilities that detain individuals for immigration proceedings—including meaningful protections for children in detention settings. It prohibits children from being housed with unrelated adults and requires access to medical and mental health professionals. These are basic, commonsense safeguards that recognize the unique vulnerability of children.

While no child should be in those environments, if they are, we have a responsibility to ensure that health, safety, and supervision standards are consistently met. We have an obligation to the Health, Wellness, and Safety of ALL children and increased oversight helps ensure those environments are not operating without visibility or accountability.

When children feel safe, they are better able to learn, build relationships, and thrive. When families are stable and informed, children are better supported. And when systems are transparent and accountable, communities are stronger.

Again, Colorado PTA supports House Bill 1276. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Colorado's children and families.

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