



**Testimony in Support of HB1230 “Protect Colorado Residents From Federal Government Overreach”
Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
Delivered by Paula Schriefer
April 10, 2017**

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of the bill to “Protect Colorado Residents From Federal Government Overreach.”

My name is Paula Schriefer and I am the President of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. I offer this testimony on behalf of Spring Institute and the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado, a coalition of over a dozen individuals and organizations from Colorado’s resettlement agencies, refugee service providers, ethnic community based organizations, and educational institutions.

Before returning to my home state of Colorado in 2014 to take on the leadership of Spring Institute, I worked for more than 20 years on international human rights issues in both the nonprofit sector and at the US State Department, where I served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

I have always believed passionately that the true exceptionalism and influence of the United States comes as much, if not more, from the example we set, from our adherence to the rule of law, and from our soft power as it does from our military might or law enforcement. When men and women volunteer to serve in our military or enroll in our police forces, they do so to defend our values as Americans as much as to defend our individual citizens from harm.

On several occasions in the history of the United States, we have fallen short of our own ideals and have allowed fear to cause us to take actions that violate both our ideals and our constitution.

Members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado support this bill because we believe it sends an important statement that Coloradans understand that the potential measures laid out in the bill would violate our federal and state constitutions and that we will not permit federal government overreach in these areas.

It is our view that the preventive measures outlined in the bill are important to prevent the State of Colorado from:

- compromising local law enforcement efforts,
- discriminating against individuals on the basis of religion or ethnicity,
- or allowing the federal government to sidestep legal procedures in securing assistance in the enforcement of immigration laws.

Members of our coalition believe that the wording of the bill makes clear that the State of Colorado will uphold any constitutional and legal obligations, such as honoring federal warrants to either provide information to Federal Authorities or extending detention of individuals in custody.

We strongly believe that this bill deserves bi-partisan support by this Committee and the State Senate. Although this legislature, like our nation's Congress, is too often divided along political lines, I would like to remind us all of the fact that perhaps the greatest violation of our nation's ideals in the past century—namely the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent—was ordered by a Democratic President and it took over 40 years and a Republican President to issue an apology.

I hope we can all come together in support of this bill.