



## Please Support Residential Treatment SB22-148

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Monique Terpstra a Ute Mountain Ute tribal member who works for the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC), as an Indigenous Advocate, and in the process of opening a Native American Resource Center for the Western Slope of Colorado. I am writing this to let you know how much we need a center that will help with the Behavioral and Mental Health issues that many Native Americans face today. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition and personally.

I support the Southern Utes plans to open a much needed Mental and Behavioral Health center that will adequately address well-being of Native American and Alaskan Natives. We have nothing here in Colorado for Mental and Behavioral Health exclusively for Native Americans. The closest ones are in UT, some in NM, and a few facilities up north. In the job(s) that I am working I have seen so many cases that could potentially benefit from a Native American center focused on culturally sensitivity and understands who we are and take that into consideration when treating us.

As an employee for CCDC I have come across two Ute Mountain tribal members that have been through different treatment centers here in Colorado. Not one had programs to offer a culturally sensitive atmosphere that could possibly start the healing process. I do know that the person in treatment needs to want to quit before the treatment will work but these two cases have both been through

abuse of all kinds and never have been given the chance to be treated for the terrible traumatizing events that have happened over and over in their lives.

One was molested and beaten by her stepfather who was not a tribal member, with no help from the authorities over and over. The other has been abused, raped and now has done so many drugs that he is not even well enough to make most decisions by himself. Where in Colorado can they go for help with the historical type traumas that keep happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Since the word has gotten out about the Native American Resource Center, I am already getting referrals for Native Americans who need help. This is with NO advertisement.

An example in the past two weeks is one Rocky Boy Chippewa Cree lady who has Dual Diagnosis and who has suffered some of same type of abuse as the Ute Mountain Utes. We have called multiple places for help, and there is always a waiting list, or they do not have any programs for Native Americans. She is homeless and acutely manic. She needs a home with behavioral and mental therapies that are in tune with her beliefs and will not think she is slow or stupid for being quiet. Many Native Americans have different tendencies than European people. Some of the differences include not looking someone in the eyes as we are taught that is disrespectful, or we do not speak a lot as we do not want to draw attention to ourselves, we like stay in the background, there are others, but just putting this here so you can see how easy it is for a Native American to be left out, judged or put into the wrong category. Having a Native American Center that understands who we are, and where we come from would be a good start to healing process so many Indigenous people desperately need.

Please support SB 22-148.

Thank you for your time,

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