



Thank you Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Chris Klene, and I am the Policy Specialist at Center for Health Progress. At Center for Health Progress, we believe that health care is a right. So, we fight for laws and policies that make it possible for everyone to take care of themselves and their families. It is with this value in mind that we are submitting testimony in support of HB20-1409, CDPHE Inspection of Penal Institutions.

The GEO Detention Facility in Aurora has shown time and time again that it is unable to provide a safe environment for the individuals being detained there. In the past two years alone, the facility has experienced multiple chicken pox and mumps outbreaks. Dozens of individuals at the facility have been afflicted by these diseases and hundreds have been forced to quarantine.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for state inspection in order to better contain and stop the spread of the COVID and other illnesses and diseases. According to recently released data from CDPHE, the GEO Detention Facility has experienced a COVID-19 outbreak. Data provided by the office of Congressman Jason Crow confirmed that the GEO facility has had trouble stopping the spread of COVID-19. This finding was confirmed by the office of Congressman Jason Crow. His office found that there were 11 COVID-19 cases among those detained at the facility as of May 28. Furthermore, at least five staff at the facility had tested positive for COVID-19 as of May 20.

At Center for Health Progress, we strongly believe that all people, no matter where they come from or how they got here, deserve the opportunity to live a healthy life. Unfortunately, individuals who are detained at the GEO Detention Facility in Aurora are being denied this opportunity when they have a legal right to health care services when they need them. In fact, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, their health is in more jeopardy now than ever. Inspections conducted by CDPHE will help provide much-needed oversight to these facilities. It is with our full support and we ask you to vote in support of HB20-1409, CDPHE Inspection of Penal Institutions. Thank you.