



Mister or Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jade Woodard, Executive Director of Illuminate Colorado. Illuminate is a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. I am writing this letter in support of HB20-1296 on behalf of Illuminate, as the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, as well as the coordinating entity behind the Colorado Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Coalition.

Colorado's Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Coalition is comprised of partners from across the state that represent various disciplines with the common goal of reducing the risks and instances of child sexual abuse. This coalition promotes effective and comprehensive education, advocacy, and communication to prevent child sexual abuse and protect children.

Approximately 1 in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults are perpetrated against children ages 17 and under. It is time to remove the civil statute of limitations. Due to a variety of personal and societal factors, almost 73% of child victims don't disclose to anyone for at least a year; 45% don't tell anyone for almost five years; and many never disclose at all.

As the CDC outlines, child sexual abuse is a preventable adverse childhood experience (ACE) that can affect how a person thinks, acts, and feels over a lifetime, resulting in short- and long-term physical and mental or emotional health consequences. The pain and trauma that a survivor may endure does not have a time table or time limit, so neither should their opportunity to seek accountability through the courts.

Colorado prospers when our kids thrive. They are our future workforce, leaders, and community members. The impacts of sexual abuse do not go away as children grow into adults. Adult survivors of child sexual abuse are nearly three times as likely to report substance misuse, and are also more likely to be impacted by mental health issues. This bill allows child and adult survivors of sexual assault time to heal so that they may access the civil legal system and monetary resources necessary to rebuild their lives after surviving sexual abuse.

Please join Illuminate Colorado in our support of HB20-1296.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have questions or comments, as I am available for any follow up.

Sincerely,

Jade Woodard
Executive Director
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June 12, 2020

Dear members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

I write on behalf of Colorado Nonprofit Association to express our support for HB 20-1296. We represent over 1,400 nonprofit organizations statewide. Our mission is to lead, serve, and strengthen Colorado's nonprofit community to improve the quality of life throughout our state.

We support this legislation because protecting the safety and well-being of children is and should be a core value of Colorado's public policy. Adults who survived sexual assault and misconduct as children are often emotionally and psychologically scarred for life. They should not be limited in how long it takes for them to be ready to speak up and seek justice.

We recognize that the staff and volunteers of many nonprofit organizations work closely with children and that incidents of sexual misconduct may occur in the future. Most nonprofits take precautions such as thorough background checks, careful supervision, and having clear procedures to address such incidents. HB 20-1296 will hold nonprofits liable if they do not take adequate precautions and fail to act to address the situation.

HB 20-1296 ensures that all institutions, including nonprofits, will be held accountable if they fail to put the protection of children before other values they hold. 1296 ensures survivors of sexual offenses can seek the justice they deserve from those who have caused harm.

This is the right policy because we've seen too many Coloradans hurt by sexual misconduct and it's time for our state and our institutions to do more to help those who have suffered and keep it from happening again.

We ask you to vote yes and please contact me with any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Turner".

Mark Turner, Senior Director of Public Policy
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