



March 31, 2021

Dear Honorable Members of the Colorado State Legislature:

Together Colorado is a nonpartisan, multi-racial and multi-faith statewide organization working to place human dignity at the center of public life in Colorado. We are writing this letter to you to express **our unequivocal support for HB21-1142: Eyewitness Showup Regulations** to standardize and limit the use of an eyewitness identification procedure called a “showup”.

Our initial interest and continued work on the issue comes from the showup and wrongful arrest of one of our members' sons who experienced a suggestive and biased showup that has had long-term consequences for him, his family, and the broader community. This experience ignited Together Colorado leaders to conduct extensive research on the issue, develop relationships with law enforcement and district attorneys, and work to create a change so others do not have to suffer the same harmful experience. This isn't an isolated incident; it has been happening across the state for decades, and it is time to seek a statewide policy solution.

A “showup” is a suggestive and unreliable identification procedure used by law enforcement to identify suspects when a crime has been committed. A single individual matching a witness description is detained near the scene of the crime and presented to a victim/witness in person. This practice differs from a traditional photo lineup where individuals who meet the description of the alleged perpetrator are presented in a photo array or in a lineup.

Wrongful convictions destroy people's lives. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and low-income communities deserve protection from inherently biased Showup identifications. Latinos and Blacks are arrested 1.5 - 3 times more frequently than Whites. Whatever our race, background, or zip code, we all want to move through our communities without fearing for our lives or our loved ones. Our faith traditions teach us to love and care for our neighbor.

States and law enforcement agencies across the country have recognized the risks inherent in eyewitness cases: many have embraced best practices to guard against the risk of misidentification, but not all law enforcement agencies have been required to adopt those best practices. The foundational concept of 'innocent until proven guilty' must apply to all individuals, regardless of race or place, and be put into practice consistently by all law enforcement. When we morally lead, we can make Colorado a state where each person, on all sides of the law, can thrive.

We call on you to support HB21-1142 to standardize and limit the use of showups to exigent circumstances, coupled with training and data collection across the state. This will provide justice to communities of color and low-income people statewide.

Thank you for your public service and leadership.

Signed by 186 Colorado Faith Leaders (attached below)

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