



April 20, 2022

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 to express our support for HB22-1131 'Reduce Justice Involvement for Young Children' and SB22-023 'Deceptive Tactics Juvenile Custodian Interrogation'.**

No matter their color, background, or zip code, every child deserves to grow in a supportive environment that respects their humanity, upholds their dignity, and responds fairly to mistakes and missteps.

Children bring joy and vibrancy into our congregations every week, and as faith leaders, we know that childhood is fragile. Children need love and support to grow into healthy adults. Applying consequences and interrogation tactics designed for adults to a child takes a severe emotional, intellectual and physical toll and can have lasting impacts such as separation from support systems (family, friends, teachers, community members, and programs); increased high school dropout rates; an increased probability of youth committing future crimes; and false confessions. Child-like behaviors such as disrupting the classroom, trespassing, or minor property damage are being criminalized, yet are usually symptoms of underlying problems. Juvenile delinquency is best dealt with in a supportive, therapeutic setting rather than punitive measures that have been proven to be more traumatic than effective. Once a child enters the criminal legal system, they should be treated with care, dignity, and truthfulness, and no child should confess to a crime they didn't commit because of deceptive interrogation tactics.

We must move our energy and money away from policing and arresting children and towards proven solutions that set our kids up for fulfilling lives and keep our communities safe and supported. Kids need treatment, not punishment; compassion, not confinement; and honesty, not deception. Colorado already has systems and services in place to support our young people. HB22-1131 creates a bridge to those services for children aged 10-12 and prohibits children from being prosecuted and detained. SB22-023 protects Colorado youth from statements given under deceptive interrogation tactics being used against them in court, leading to lifelong consequences and inaccurate sentences.

As clergy and faith leaders in your communities, we call on you to support HB22-1131 and SB22-023 because we have a moral obligation to love, forgive, and protect our children. When children are adultified and criminalized, the system of policing harms our present and our future. **It is our responsibility to nurture children with kindness and protect them from systems that can bring harm, trauma, worsened mental outcomes, and separation from support systems.** Colorado needs to be a place where we treat kids with compassion and where all children can ask questions, make mistakes, and learn so they can live fulfilling lives as adults.

Signed by 98 Colorado Faith Leaders below.



Rev. Nathan Adams
Park Hill United Methodist Church
Denver

Fr. Stephen Adams
St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish
Loveland

Msgr. Robert Amundsen
Roman Catholic Priest (retired)
Denver

Mrs. Lee Anderson-Harris
United Methodist Church
Loveland

Mrs. Christine Armstrong
Catholic
Pueblo

Rev Adam Bailon
Reformed Church in America
Lafayette

Rev. Eric Banner
Jefferson Unitarian Church
Golden

Rabbi Eliot Baskin
Shalom park
Aurora

Pastor Charles E Battle
The New Pearl Church
Englewood

Rev Leta Behrens
Our Saviour's ELCA
Ft. Collins

Ms Elaine Benvenuto
Sacred Heart of Jesus
Boulder

Deacon Linda Bobbitt
Nativity Lutheran/ ELCA
Commerce City

Rev Bonita Bock
Augustana Lutheran
Denver

Mrs. Susan Bolduc
ELCA Lutheran, Colorado Springs Faith Table
Colorado Springs

Rabbi Deborah Bronstein
Reform Judaism
Boulder

Ms. Susan Brown
Park Hill United Methodist Church
Denver

Rev. Monica Butler
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Greeley

Mr. Paul Carlson
Lutheran ELCA
Denver



Rev. Dr. Neema Caughran
Center for Inner Peace
Pueblo

Rev. Shaye Champ-Correll
Christian Church Disciples of Christ
Lafayette

Dr. James Chapman
United Church of Christ
Colorado Springs

Sister Nancy Crafton SC
Sister of Charity, Cincinnati Ohio
Pueblo

Rev Thandiwe Dale-Ferguson
First Congregational Church, Loveland UCC
Loveland

Rev. Ben David Hensley
Pastor, Lakewood United Methodist Church
Lakewood

Mrs. Kelley Dawkins
Park Hill United Methodist Church
Denver

Mrs. Mary Derbort
Christ Episcopal Church
Canon City

Ms. Jyoti DeVernie
Center for Spiritual Living Grand Junction
Grand Junction

Deacon Jimmy Duffner
First Presbyterian Church Social Justice
Interfaith Ministry
Pueblo

Rev. Wesley Dunbar
St. John's Lutheran Church
Thornton

Pararabbi David Edwards
Congregation Ohr Shalom
Grand Junction

Mr. Dave Edwards
Congregation Ohr Shalom
Grand Junction

Rev. Alycia Erickson
Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church
Colorado Springs

Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry
Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship
Lafayette

Deacon Rosalie Fesser
Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center
Brush

Rabbi Brian Field
Judaism Your Way
Denver

Ms. Maureen Flanigan
Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church
Littleton



Ms Margaret Elizabeth Fuhr
Sisters of St. Francis
Denver

Father Cyrus Gallagher
Catholic
Colorado Springs

Rabbi Bernard Gerson
Congregation Rodef Shalom
Denver

Mrs. Tina Gurdikian
Resilience Church
Littleton

Dr. Laraine Guyette
Park Hill United Methodist Church
Denver

Rev Emily Hagan
First United Methodist Church of Lafayette
Lafayette

Dr. Christie Hanzlik CS
Christian Science Church
Boulder

Rabbi Kim Harris
Congregation B'nai Chaim
Morrison

Rev. Brenda Hector
Embry Chapel AME
Denver

Miss Maureen Hencmann
St. Ignatius of Loyola
Denver

Rev John Mark Hild
Christ Congregational Church
Pueblo

Dr. Kimberly Hockman
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Mr. Steve Holz-Russell
Park Hill United Methodist Church
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Mr. Patrick Hurley
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Apostolos Timo Jones
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Dr. Jeffrey Nelson
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Dr. Eric D. Nelson
Heritage Christian Center Church
Aurora



Mr. Doug Nelson
The Refuge
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Fr. Michael Nicosia
St. Paul Catholic Community of Faith, ECC
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Mr. David Nii
Community of Christ
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Bishop Karen Oliveto
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Methodist Church
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Rev Susan Otey
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Rabbi Iah Pillsbury
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Golden

Rev. Gary Weaver
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Rev. Lola West
United Methodist
Avondale / Pueblo

Rev. Wendy Williams
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Rev Dean Woodward
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