



**Senate Bill 244
Testimony
March 19, 2009**

Madam Chair, Members of the committee, Senator Shaffer, thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon. I am here on behalf of the Colorado Competitive Council – a statewide coalition of employers, chambers of commerce and trade organizations focused on ensuring Colorado’s competitive edge in economic development and protection of our business climate.

Our organization has taken a position of opposition on Senate Bill 244. We are very sympathetic to the plight of the individuals and families struggling with autism. We have taken this position because the increased costs of this ~~unlimited~~ coverage will likely lead to even more employers dropping coverage for their employees.

Nearly two-thirds of Coloradoans receive health insurance through employer sponsored health plans. We need to work to make those plans more affordable. Loading plans with additional mandates, such as the mandate in this bill, make them unaffordable to a growing number of Colorado employers and their employees.

The temptation to require additional coverage is intense – and the cause in this case will be difficult to deny. But as you prepare to vote please consider this issue: The addition of a new, ~~unlimited~~ mandate on potentially complex and expensive treatments not currently defined or covered *will* lead to increased costs.

Employers continue to struggle to provide their employees access to quality, affordable health care. In this economy, this goal is increasingly difficult to meet.

This proposal is a step in the wrong direction and we respectfully ask this committee to vote for the people who are not here today – those who will be priced out of the health insurance market if you pass this new mandate.

To maintain Colorado's ability to attract and retain high quality jobs we need to control healthcare costs. We believe this bill takes a significant and unpredictable step in the wrong direction. We respectfully ask this committee to consider Colorado employers and employees and reject this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.