

THE COLORADO SCHOOL FOR FAMILY THERAPY

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The State of Colorado House of Representatives

February 26, 2014

Dear Honorable Members of the House of Representatives

My presentation: I would like to speak in favor of HB1271

My interest: I am the Director of the Colorado School for Family Therapy founded in 1995. The School is a Private Occupational School regulated and approved by the State of Colorado Department of Higher Education Division of Private Occupational Schools (DPOS) for the education of mental health professionals (CRS 12-59). I also served as a Professional Member and Vice Chair of the Professional Counselors Examiners Board (2005-2006); as the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Representative on the State of Colorado Commission for Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) (2007-2012); as an expert witness for DORA and the Attorney General's Office (2006 and 2009); and a member of the DORA MFT Professional Development Standards Committee (2010). I have educated hundreds of addiction counseling candidates throughout the State and our graduates have been elected leadership of professional organizations and appointed to DORA regulatory boards. I am also the President and Founder of the multidisciplinary professional organization: The Colorado Mental Health Professionals Association (COMHPA). Also, my School office in Aurora is only about 3 miles from the Aurora Theatre shooting and family members of my students were severe impacted by this horrible act of violence.

My testimony: HB1271 needs to be enacted into law for 3 simple reasons:

- 1.) **Public Safety and Protection of the Public:** Innocent Colorado citizens need to be protected from the violent acts of persons who are mentally ill or criminally motivated. A clear statutory provision of a duty to warn and a duty to protect would serve that purpose.
- 2.) **Limitation of Liability for Mental Health Professionals:** A clear statutory duty to warn and duty to protect would limit the liability of helping professions who exercise such duty to protect innocent Colorado citizens from such homicidal acts.
- 3.) **Basis for Intervention to Help Clients:** Mental Health Professionals will have a clear legal basis to seek further professional help for potentially violent clients prior to perpetration of such violent acts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Reo Leslie, D.Min., LMFT, LPC, CAC III, RPT-S
School Director
The Colorado School for Family Therapy

THE COLORADO MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION
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Mission Statement:

Providing risk prevention, professional development, advocacy, leadership, social justice, protection, and opportunities to influence public policy for Colorado mental health professionals on a multidisciplinary basis

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE -\$100.00

REGISTRATION FORM:

THE FIRST 100 Members Earn a FOUNDING MEMBER certificate

Membership Benefits:

- 1.) Consultation on Grievances, Lawsuits, Career and Business Development, and Risk Management
- 2.) Free Initial Consultation with Lawyers Specializing in Mental Health Law
- 3.) Opportunities to Influence Public Policy in a Manner Consistent with the interests of Mental Health Professionals

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