



Testimony in Support of HB26-1422: Security Measures for Certain Government Entities for the House State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Submitted by: Maju Varghese, Executive Director, Democracy Security Project

Date: April 24, 2026

My name is Maju Varghese, and I serve as the co-founder and Executive Director at the [Democracy Security Project](#) (DSP). At DSP, we support, train, and offer resources to anyone in civil and cultural society facing credible online or offline threats, harassment, and disruptions to their work and personal life because of their work defending democracy and building strong, thriving communities.

Since our founding in 2024, we have supported nearly 14,000 people across the country - change-makers, organizers, civil servants, authors, artists, teachers, healthcare professionals, journalists, leaders, and more. This includes numerous office seekers and elected officials in Colorado, from school board to state legislators.

Political violence in all its forms has become a disturbing part of civic engagement and has a chilling effect on civil and cultural society. **That's why we write to urge the committee to support HB26-1422, advance it to the full House, and ultimately pass it into law.**

HB26-1422 is an important step forward in protecting the lives of judges, elected officials, and their staff. This is a critical measure in combating the rising tide of violence and harassment that public officials face.

The data is clear. According to the Brennan Center's national surveys from 2022-2023, 40% of state legislators reported an increase in the frequency of abuse, including insults, harassment, threats, and physical attacks, and nearly one-third reported an increase in the seriousness of those threats. Princeton University's Bridging Divides Institute found that younger women, immigrants, and candidates with disabilities experience especially high rates of harassment, ranging from personal insults and disinformation to property damage. In Future Caucus's survey, young candidates and young lawmakers, especially those from marginalized communities, raised concerns about their families' and personal safety, which affected their decision-making to continue working in public service.

Contact

 help@democracysecurityproject.org

 democracysecurityproject.org

 1-234-DSP-Help



This is a bipartisan problem. 84% of former Members of Congress surveyed said they were concerned about the possibility of violence related to the 2024 Presidential Election, including 74% of Republicans and 94% of Democrats.

If we want our best and brightest to run for office and serve their communities with dignity, we must provide resources to ensure their safety and protect their personal information.

Our team at DSP has seen firsthand the impact of these threats on Colorado officials. We have worked with elected officials whose homes were targeted because their addresses are public information. We have supported officials whose children's photos were circulated online as threats. And we have worked with dedicated people who want to serve their communities in the legislature but decline to run because they cannot ensure their families' safety while serving the public.

HB26-1422 addresses this crisis by allowing public officials to protect their personal information from public disclosure, a common-sense measure that will enable more people to serve without putting their families at risk. With additional security measures in place to quickly and efficiently respond to matters related to personal safety and security, public officials will have access to resources to mitigate risk and respond to threats that may arise.

We urge the committee to vote in favor of **HB26-1422**. This legislation is essential to protecting those who protect our democracy in Colorado. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Colorado.

Respectfully submitted,
Maju Varghese,
Executive Director, Democracy Security Project

Contact

 help@democracysecurityproject.org

 democracysecurityproject.org

 1-234-DSP-Help

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

04/27/2026

HB26-1422 Security Measures for Certain Government Entities

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Bennett Rutledge Against themselves	<p>Chair Willford, Major Clifford, and members of the committee,</p> <p>Bill HB26-1422 - Security Measures for Certain Government Entities embodies a concept, which I am sure Chad Clifford remembers well, from his military service in a war zone: The top brass does not belong in the front lines. Yet I notice that he has, in his short years in the Colorado Legislature, supported and even sponsored bills which do not deliver on the State of Colorado's obligation to furnish equal protection of the laws to the people of Colorado. This is a bill which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">â€¢ Establishes more lumps of bureaucracy to the mass of Colorado Governmentâ€¢ Drains tens of millions of dollars annually from the pockets of already overtaxed Coloradansâ€¢ Adds complexity, making "Ignorance of the Law is no excuse!" even more of a cruel jokeâ€¢ Insulates the people who are in the thick of Colorado day-to-day life from the leaders of Colorado <p>and finally, is part of a trend away from the leadership style of Dwight Eisenhower, and more in the direction of William Westmoreland.</p> <p>Vote no on HB26-1422 - Security Measures for Certain Government Entities.</p>
Jered Morgan Amend themselves	<p>Yet again high ranking government officials are getting protections, while victims of crime, specifically Address Confidentiality Program participants are getting the shaft. This bill (and the current statute) create a 2-tiered system where government officials get MORE protection than actual victims of stalking, harassment, domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual assault. 18-9-313 leaves out</p>

	<p>from the definition of "protected persons" address confidentiality program participants, who get similar, but LESS protection in 18-9-313(2.5) vs the current (2.7) and the now proposed version of (2.7). I ask the assembly to consider true victims of crime and amend this bill to repeal and replace (2.5) with (2.7) and amend the definition of "protected person" to included address confidentiality program participants so that everyone enjoys the same protection regardless of if they're a victim or government official. As it stands now ACP participants do not have recourse when someone posts their information to the internet since they are not a 'protected person' in the statute, they can only request government remove their information and have no private right of action for other bad actors. Harmonize this statute so that everyone enjoys the same protection.</p>
--	---

Responsive Gov Action Testimony in Support of CO HB 26-1422

Thank you, Chair Willford, Vice Chair Clifford, and members of the committee. My name is Sarah Gonski. I'm the Director of State Policy at Responsive Gov Action, a non-partisan organization working to help policy makers find solutions that make government more efficient, accessible, and responsive to the needs of real human beings.

I'm here today in strong support of HB 26-1422.

Responsive government depends on capable people willing to serve. But across Colorado and the country, public officials and candidates are facing an alarming rise in threats to their safety, their families, and their personal information. These aren't abstract concerns. They are driving real people away from public service, and deterring others from ever stepping forward.

HB 26-1422 takes meaningful, concrete steps to change that.

This bill improves security leadership in both the legislative and judicial branches. The creation of a dedicated administrator of legislative safety will improve security coordination, accountability and strategic decisionmaking to protect legislators, staff, and everyone who enters the capitol complex. A new courthouse security task force will modernize security standards, protecting judges, staff and the people they serve.

The bill's privacy protections will also protect elected officials, candidates and their families. Allowing candidates to list a mailing address rather than a home address is a straightforward change that meaningfully reduces the risk of targeted harassment. Extending personal information protections to judicial employees, lawmakers, and staff, and expanding what qualifies as protected information to include social security numbers and financial accounts, closes gaps that bad actors can exploit to intimidate, harm and harass public servants.

The threats facing public servants are real, and they are growing. Colorado deserves a government where talented, everyday people can step up and serve without fear. This bill moves us closer to that by helping public servants feel so they can focus on that service. Responsive Gov Action respectfully urges you to support HB 26-1422. Thank you for your leadership and service.