



OFFICE OF RESPONDENT PARENTS' COUNSEL

April 20, 2026

Dear Members of the House State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs:

I am writing on behalf of the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC) in support of House Concurrent Resolution 25-1004: Person's Rights Related to their Children. The ORPC provides high-quality interdisciplinary legal representation for parents in dependency and neglect cases. Part of the ORPC's mission includes advocating for family-centered policies and holding the state to its burden.

HCR 25-1004 would allow voters to determine if the State Constitution should be amended to include protections of parental rights, specifically, "directing the upbringing, education, and care of their children." The Supreme Court of the United States held that "the interest of parents in the care, custody, and control of their children is perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by this Court" in *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 65 (2000). The right of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children has been recognized as a right protected by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution for over a hundred years. See, e.g., *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390, 399, 401 (1923); *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 534-535 (1925).

The language that would be added by this Amendment comes directly from the long line of U.S. Supreme Court cases recognizing this right. The right is not without limits. See *People in Interest of T.W.*, 519 P.3d 1071, 1075 (Colo. App. 2022). Even with the right to parent recognized for over a hundred years, many courts have limited this right to apply only to fit parents or have acknowledged limited circumstances where the government may intervene in a parent-child relationship. Our own appellate courts have frequently wrestled balancing this Constitutional right with other fundamental rights. *Id.* Adding this language to our State Constitution would provide clarity and ensure that this right is always recognized in our state. The ORPC supports allowing the voters to decide if Colorado should protect parents' rights in the same way the U.S. Constitution protects these integral, fundamental rights.

Best regards,

Melanie Jordan

Policy Director, Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

04/20/2026

HCR26-1004 Person's Rights Related to Their Children

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Christian Horstmann For themselves	As a Christian who believes in and values the rights that the God of the Bible has given to parents to educate and care for their own children, I fully support and stand behind HCR26-1004 and would love to see these God-given rights publicly and specifically recognized in the Constitution of Colorado! Thank you. God bless.
Gloria Merritt For Concerned Women for America, PAC leader	Dear Members of the Committee, Thank you for considering HCR26-1004 today. I am testifying on behalf of Concerned Women for America. As a 27-year resident of Colorado, I have raised six children here and am now blessed with nine grandchildren. This amendment is needed to help preserve the legacy of strong families in our state. Strong families—supported by parents who are striving to raise responsible, productive, kind, and healthy children—are foundational to Colorado’s future. Currently, families feel that environment weakening, and some have already chosen to leave for states they believe are more supportive of their values and approach to parenting. This will lead to our state's decline. Parents’ rights to raise their children according to their convictions should be protected. While there will always be situations where intervention is necessary, policies should avoid overreach that could undermine families who are making good-faith efforts to raise their children with care and responsibility. I respectfully ask that you move this amendment forward so that Colorado residents may have the opportunity to vote on it.

	<p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Respectfully yours,</p> <p>Gloria Merritt</p> <p>Concerned Women for America</p> <p>Chapter Leader in Westminster</p>
<p>jeany rush</p> <p>For</p> <p>themselves</p>	<p>TO: HOUSE STATE, CIVIC MILITARY VETERANS AFFAIRS</p> <p>RE: HCR26-1004 PERSONS RIGHTS RELATED TO THEIR CHILDREN</p> <p>SPONSORS: K DEGRAAF, B BRADLEY, M BAISLEY, L ZAMORA WILSON</p> <p>FROM: JEANY RUSH COLORADO CONSTITUENT 4-20-26</p> <p>VOTE: YES "OUR CHILDREN ARE STILL NOT FOR SALE"</p> <p>Folks:</p> <p>This state, this nation absolutely needs a major CHECK UP FROM THE NECK UP!</p> <p>"Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, also known as the right to own land" These Rights do include the inalienable right to freedom in the Upbringing, education, and Care of our Children!</p> <p>This does not mean a state, or Gulag should have the right to legislate the mutilation, butchery, kidnapping, stealing of children and placing them in environments and situations where they will be groomed, indoctrinated, turned away from their families, their parents, the very people who have loved them, raised them, and literally brought them into this world.</p> <p>The legislatures have passed laws that empower courts, social services, and complete strangers to literally RIP APART the very fabric of Family, Humanity, Society, Laws of God and Man, and all Reality!</p> <p>It is tragic that we actually need a bill like this to remind everyone of their OATH TO DO NO HARM, WHICH IS VIOLATED DAILY.</p> <p>The majority of the citizenry want to vote YES for this resolution to all Documents of Governance.</p> <p>If this bill is not given to the Citizens on the ballot, this body has failed Humanity and God.</p>

	<p>We are not speaking about the minority of people who would violate rights, or do harm to children. We are addressing the majority of us, who also support the very jobs the legislature currently enjoy.</p> <p>We are speaking to the very people who have Grossly over-stepped their boundaries of humankind, and have allowed Rape, kidnapping, mutilation, mental destruction, Mental and Medical malpractice, and parental rights violated daily! History will look back at these times in Total Horror! WITHOUT THIS BILL'S PROTECTIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE WE WILL NOT EVEN LIVE TO SEE A NEXT GENERATION! Let this be a beginning to Honor and Decency!</p> <p>Outraged Grandmother, citizen, In Liberty: Jeany Rush 4-20-26</p>
<p>Mary Ann McCoy For themselves</p>	<p>Parents are the first ones who have Rights as well as responsibilities for their children. Teachers, social workers, and state legislatures are way behind them. Our culture has fallen apart when we need to have LAWS to state the rights that parents have.</p>
<p>Patty McKernan For Protect Kids Colorado</p>	<p>Madame chair, members of the committee, I am not sure I can stay long enough to testify in person, so would like to submit my testimony here:</p> <p>I appreciate you hearing my testimony today. My name is Patty McKernan and I serve on the board of Protect Kids Colorado. In 2024 we had a very short window, in fact less than 100 days, to run a ballot initiative to reinforce the rights of parents in the state of Colorado. Unfortunately, our all volunteer and newly formed board fell short of the required signatures to get our measure on the ballot, but once again, every parishioner at the dozens of Catholic Churches I collected signatures for asked me time and time again: WHY DO WE HAVE TO DO THIS? Thank you Rep DeGraff for bringing this to the resolution to the Legislature. My advice for this committee is to just vote yes. You know the three measures we have on the November ballot will pass with huge numbers since they are an 80%+ favorable issue. Coloradans trust parents, not government, to love and protect our children. Vote yes on HCR26-1004 today and you might agree with most voters in November.</p>
<p>Susan Cullison For themselves</p>	<p>As a parent who was harmed by anti-parent laws, In STRONG SUPPORT of this sorely needed law. PARENTS are a child's best bet!</p>