Written Testimony as prepared for delivery in support of **HB21-1106 – Safe Storage of Firearms (Reps Duran/Mullica, Sens Bridges/Hansen) to** the House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs Committee by Erica Manoatl, Manager of Research Initiatives at the Children's Campaign

March 1, 2021

- Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Erica Manoatl and I currently work as the Manager of Research Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign.
- I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB1106, and am thankful to Representatives Duran and Mullica for bringing forth this bill.
- The Children's Campaign supports this bill because of the tragic reality it seeks to address. In Colorado, gun injuries, deaths and suicides among our children have increased substantially; 254 Colorado kids and teens died due to firearm injuries between 2013 and 2017.
- Most of our state's child firearm deaths in recent years have been suicides. Between 2003-2007 and 2013-2017, firearm suicides among Colorado youth increased by nearly 80 percent, and suicide has been identified as the leading cause of death among Colorado children between the ages of 10 and 18.
- The evidence is clear—laws like HB1106 save lives. We know that safe storage laws have high-quality empirical evidence from many states to show they lead to a decrease in these traumatizing and sometimes fatal outcomes among children, and a stronger safe storage law in our state would make Colorado a safer place for all children to thrive.
- While I understand this issue deeply from a data and research standpoint, I also come to you today as a former teacher, who watched her 8th grade students go into lockdown repeatedly due to neighborhood gun violence, and helped them begin to talk through the trauma of a gun brought into the classroom.
- Even children who are not directly injured by guns are affected by gun violence, as firearm tragedies create community-wide trauma and toxic stress. Nationally, many youth witness gun violence against others in their families or communities, and a majority of high school students worry about experiencing a shooting themselves.
- No child should have access to a firearm, and our kids should not have to worry about gun violence daily.
- Thank you, and we urge your support of HB1106.