**Testimony as Submitted in support of SB23-170: Extreme Risk Protection Order Petitions by Hunter Nelson, Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children's Campaign**

**Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee**

**March 8, 2023, Upon Adjournment**

**Old Supreme Court**

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee,

My name is Hunter Nelson and I am a Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children's Campaign. Together with our partner organizations and communities across the state, we advocate for the development and implementation of data-driven public policy that improves child and family well-being. We fight for a world in which, without exception, public policies and investments remove barriers for most impacted children and families and improve well-being for every child and every family. The Children's Campaign is in strong support of SB23-170: Extreme Risk Protection Order Petitions.

Homicide is a leading cause of death among pregnant and postpartum women in the United States. Pregnant and postpartum women are more likely to die from homicide than from the three other leading obstetric causes of death. Most of these incidents involve an intimate partner and a firearm: One study found that 68% of pregnancy-related homicides between 2009-19 involved guns.[1] The United States has a higher prevalence of intimate partner violence than other countries, and much of this violence is fatal.

It doesn't have to be this way. According to research from RAND's Gun Policy in America initiative, state laws establishing firearm prohibitions for people subject to domestic violence restraining orders reduce total and firearm-related intimate partner homicides.[2] Firearm relinquishment laws are also associated with a substantial reduction in homicides of pregnant and postpartum women and people, according to research published in Health Affairs.[3] This promising evidence should not be ignored.

Colorado has already implemented the usage of extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) through the passage of HB19-1177, commonly known as the "Red Flag" law. But we need to take steps to ensure that the law is best serving and protecting people who are at risk of gun violence.

SB23-170 would expand who can file ERPOs to include licensed medical care providers, licensed mental health care providers, licensed educators and district attorneys. Expanding who can file petitions has the potential to save lives, especially for people who may fear retaliation from their abusers for personally filing ERPOs against them. Medical care providers, educators and district attorneys interface with community members regularly. This puts them in an ideal position to file ERPOs on behalf of their clients and patients in a way that preserves anonymity. As an organization that values maternal health, the Children's Campaign firmly supports ERPOs and the expansion of who can file these petitions.

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[1] Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women in U.S. | News | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
[2] Effects of Prohibitions Associated with Domestic Violence on Violent Crime | RAND
[3] Firearm Relinquishment Laws Associated With Substantial Reduction In Homicide Of Pregnant And Postpartum Women | Health Affairs

We also support SB23-170's requirement that the Office of Gun Violence Prevention expend funds annually on a public campaign to educate Coloradans on the availability of and how to file ERPOs. Our hope is that this would lead to more equitable statewide implementation of this important policy, supporting the health and lives of pregnant and postpartum women and people across the state. **Please vote yes on SB23-170**.

Thank you,

Hunter Nelson
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