

SB-263

My name is Michael Stafford. I am an assistant city attorney for the City & County of Denver assigned to the Mental Health Unit. The Denver City Attorney's Office handled 1419 new MH cases in 2017 and is on a record pace this year to exceed that number. We handle more MH cases than any other jurisdiction in the state.

The issue before the legislature is how to treat folks who are incarcerated and who have significant mental health issues. The proposed pilot project will provide much needed psychiatric care for that population.

Let me allay any equal protection issues raised by anyone opposing the pilot project. The legal standard that is being proposed is actually *more difficult* to prove than the legal standard involving involuntary medications in involuntary civil cases filed pursuant to Title 27, Article 65. The proposed pilot project involves a *heightened* version of the 3 decades old *Medina* standard used in civil cases.

I am *vigorously supporting* this legislation as it is indeed the 'right thing to do'. It will create more work for my office, both in numbers of trials to the Court and in a heightened legal standard, so there is no benefit to the Mental Health Unit regarding lightening of workload. There is a *huge benefit* to the folks in crisis in our jails.

Please pass this legislation. It is the right thing to do. People in crisis desperately need this help. This a vehicle to provide that desperately needed help to them.

Thank you,

Michael Stafford
Assistant City Attorney, Denver