

May 25, 2021

Members of the Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee:

My name is Jennifer Goodrum. Though I wear other hats in the Capitol, today am I writing as a resident of Greenwood Village to express my strong personal support for Section 6 of HB21-1250. A heartfelt thank you to Senator Fields for bringing this important fix to an action the Greenwood Village City Council took last year to provide blanket immunity and exempt local police from the personal responsibility measures put in place through SB20-217.

Approximately three years ago, my family moved to a community within Greenwood Village seeking a more diverse and inclusive neighborhood as our children started elementary school. They had attended a childcare center in Greenwood Village during their early years that had a diverse student and teacher population and we wanted to create continued opportunities for these friendships and educational opportunities to continue in their years ahead. Upon joining our local neighborhood, we were encouraged to meet several new neighbors and be engaged with a local school that have been beacons of these values.

However, not long after settling into the community, the Greenwood Village City Council adopted Resolution 40-20 – sidestepping the bipartisan and broadly supported police accountability measures adopted in SB20-217, particularly with regard to qualified immunity for its police force. The passage of Greenwood Village Resolution 40-20, which adopted unanimously after almost no Council discussion and with no community input, was met with statewide bipartisan condemnation from Republicans, Democrats, the state Attorney General, police chiefs, and more – as well as an outcry from within our community and my profound personal dismay.

The action taken by the Greenwood Village City Council in Resolution 40-20 was taken unilaterally on only one side of the police reform discussions that have occurred in recent years and does not reflect the values of many within our community. Shortly after the adoption of the resolution, neighbors joined forces to push back on the Resolution – which we have continued to do over the course of the last year. A group of residents, community members and I petitioned the Greenwood Village City Council to rescind Resolution 40-20 at a September 2020 Council meeting. Many, including my family, also participated in local protests and awareness efforts. Neighborhood groups have approached the City Council on many occasions over the last year with proposed options to replace Resolution language, to create of a diversity and inclusion task force to improve upon policies and training within the city, and more. The Council has not acted on any of these options in spite of having ample opportunity to respond to community requests.

As a resident of Greenwood Village, I have grave concern with the message that has been heard by those who live, work and play in our community – particularly during a time when there has been broad and bipartisan outcry to improve on inclusiveness and accountability as well as increase accountability for policing actions. Greenwood Village seems to generally have a well-trained police force that has adopted many good policies, but this still does not exempt our community from the clear intent of state law or reasonable accountability. There are certainly other means to go about showing support for a city's police force than by defying one of the central tenets of SB20-217, as other cities and municipalities have demonstrated. The personal responsibility components of SB20-217 bill have far less financial or legal impact on police officers than those that doctors, nurses, EMTs, lawyers or even teachers face every day.

At its core, Resolution 40-20 fails to acknowledge the systemic inequities, disparities and implicit biases that fueled statewide discussions on police accountability. It does not acknowledge the experiences and concerns of the numerous residents of color in our community – including my direct friends and extended family members. While it remains clear from media, social media and the broader Colorado community reception that this resolution and subsequent actions in the community are having harmful impacts on our community, the City has not changed course.

As testimony is heard today on HB21-1250, you may hear from some within the Greenwood Village community about frustrations with the City Council actions over the past year. There are many others, including people of color, within our community who share similar concerns, but have felt uncomfortable speaking directly on record – fearing retaliation or backlash. It's heartbreaking that our community currently feels unsafe to many friends and neighbors. We have a group of residents strongly committed to bringing change, but HB21-1250 addresses a piece of city policy that we feel can't afford to wait for future changes and actions among our City Council.

Given the opportunities that Greenwood Village has had to remedy their poor policy choice and lack of action over almost a year now, I am writing today to ask your support for Section 6 of House Bill 1250 in order to ensure that communities like mine don't continue to sidestep the important police accountability measures that are vital to ensure residents, workers and visitors across communities in Colorado feel safe, welcome and included.

Please add your support for this important piece of the bill.

With sincere thanks,

Jennifer Goodrum
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Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Paul Baumann and I am a resident of Greenwood Village, Colorado. I am here today to voice my support for House Bill 1250, and in particular Section 6 of the bill, which would address an action that the Greenwood Village City Council took last year to provide blanket immunity and to exempt local police from the personal responsibility measures put in place through last year's Senate Bill 20-217.

As I begin, I ask you to hear these names:

Michael Brown

Daunte Wright

Tamir Rice

Elijah McClain

Adam Toledo

Ma'Khia Bryant.

Each of these unarmed youths was shot and killed by police. These are but a handful of names I could have included here.

I ask you: Do you ever think to yourself that your child's name will be added to that list?

I do. On a daily basis.

You see, although I am a white, cis male, with a Ph.D. and absolutely no police record, I have two Latinx children, which my husband and I adopted in 2012 and 2016.

Our son, the older of the two, is neurodivergent, as well – the likely result of exposure to alcohol and drugs while *in utero*. This means he often acts on impulse and rarely filters the words he speaks.

Our children are beautiful, and my husband and I adore them. We want them to build happy, successful lives. I suppose we would all say that about our children, and I hope we all say that about all youth,

regardless of the color of their skin or where they come from or the challenges they face is their lives.

My fear is that one day my son, will one day face the same fate as Michael, or Tamir or Elijah. Because my son has brown skin and is neuro divergent, he is at increased risk for this fate.

As it stands now, police officers in my community know that they would not be held accountable if this were the case. Our city council, the Greenwood Village city council, has essentially given carte blanche to the Greenwood Village Police department, despite measures this body put in place last year.

Many community friends and neighbors have continuously fought to have Greenwood Village replace or repeal its provision of blanket immunity for police for almost a year now. The Council has been given many opportunities to act to fix this poor decision. Still Greenwood Village has refused to change course on this resolution, which remains as a stain on our community. It does not represent me or many others in our community.

Given this, I am here today to ask your support for House Bill 1250, in particular section 5, in order to ensure that communities like Greenwood Village don't sidestep the important police accountability measures that are vital to ensure residents, workers and visitors to Greenwood Village feel safe, welcome and included within our community.

In addition, I support all other components of this bill, as they strengthen and solidify other police accountability measures put in place by this body in 2020.

Please support House Bill 1250.

Thank you.

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

HB21-1250 Measures to Address Law Enforcement Accountability

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Clare Langley-Hawthorne For Self	<p>I am a resident of Greenwood Village writing in support of Section 5 of House Bill 1250, which would address an action that the Greenwood Village City Council took last year in passing Resolution 40-20 that provides blanket immunity and exempts local police from the personal responsibility measures put in place through last year's Senate Bill 20-217.</p> <p>I wrote to my council representatives just after Greenwood Village City Council took this action expressing my dismay at their resolution to indemnify Greenwood Village police officers no matter the circumstances. While I continue to fully support our police officers (having completed the Greenwood Village Citizen's Police Academy I have seen first-hand the significant contribution they make to our community) I believe resolution 40-20 undermines genuine efforts to increase police accountability and rectify systemic issues surrounding race, policing, and community relations in Colorado. Many other professions are held to account for egregious acts or malpractice and the breadth of the resolution is disturbing as it indemnifies police officers even where they act in bad faith or with complete disregard for human life.</p> <p>Further, I was also unsettled by the lack of community engagement that occurred both prior to and after this resolution was passed. Resolution 40-20 garnered extensive negative press coverage for the city of Greenwood Village as it projected an intolerant, regressive message and I continue to be concerned about the impact this resolution has on people of color within our community. Police accountability measures are vital to ensure residents, workers, and visitors to Greenwood Village feel safe, welcome and included within our community</p> <p>I urge the Senate to support this important provision of House Bill 1250.</p> <p>Clare Langley-Hawthorne</p>
Sally Reinemer For Self	<p>I urge you to support HB21-1250</p> <p>I am particularly focused on Section 6 regarding Police Accountability. This will close the loophole that Greenwood Village took advantage of with their adoption of Resolution 20-40. Being held accountable financially is something that many professionals accept as part of the work that they do, including doctors, nurses, lawyers and many others.</p> <p>Thank you for hearing us!</p>

<p>Judy Ollman For Self</p>	<p>I am writing in support of HB 1250 and specifically Section 5, which addresses the need for accountability for police officers.</p> <p>I have lived in Greenwood Village for almost 30 years and I was deeply disappointed when I heard that the city council had passed Resolution 20-40, which indemnified the Greenwood Village police. My understanding is that Section 5 addresses this and will close the loophole that Greenwood Village exploited.</p> <p>After the resolution passed a group of concerned residents came together to try and work with the city in the hopes that they might be open to revisiting their decision. We realized that the issue we're dealing with has racial implications because the legislation SD 2017 was passed in the wake of the killing of George Floyd and it was meant to finally provide a mechanism for peace officers to be held personally accountable when their actions call for it.</p> <p>We know that Black people are afraid of the police and that Black parents coach their children on how to keep themselves safe in their interactions with the police, which is why accountability matters so much. In one of our conversations with the city one of the officials told us that after resolution 2040 passed he had received calls from Black people who are afraid to come to work in Greenwood Village. If this loophole is closed it will help in restoring a feeling of safety for all residents of GV.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the city was not open to making any changes which is why I support the passage of HB 1250.</p>
<p>Melanie Michaels For Self</p>	<p>I am writing in support of passing HB 21-1250 (specifically Sec. 6) which closes a loophole that the City of Greenwood Village passed last summer to circumvent the police reform we so badly need. My husband and I fully support the police and the very difficult work they do every day; however, Greenwood Village Resolution 40-20 attempts to undermine the police reform law that will hold the very few "bad cops" accountable. As citizens and long-time residents of Greenwood Village, we are appalled that the city council would pass this resolution with zero input from its residents. We opposed it then and we support HB 21-1250 which we hope corrects this misguided attempt by GV to "show support" for our police officers.</p>