

February 7, 2024 MRTF Meeting Summary

The meeting's discussion revolved around amending mandatory reporting requirements to ensure reports are not being made solely due to certain child or family characteristics. The task force concluded its discussion on this topic and will not revisit it until finalizing the report later in the year.

Changes to the roadmap were presented. Members will be kept as a single group (instead of breakouts) to discuss alternative reporting and warmlines later in February due to high interest among the group. Subsequently, subcommittees will work from March onwards to address each directive systematically. Sticking to a specific roadmap will ensure all directives are addressed. This meeting concluded the discussion on the first recommendation, and the group will proceed with addressing each individual recommendation in the future.

Jordan Steffen and Bryan Kelley made revisions to the proposed language of CRS 19-3-304 regarding persons required to report child abuse or neglect. Members received a survey containing the draft language and their responses were noted, with most supporting the changed language. Twenty-seven task force members responded to the survey, with the majority supporting the draft language. A few respondents opposed the changes. Those who didn't respond to the survey were given time to voice their support or opposition at the end of the discussion. Doris Tolliver emphasized the importance of hearing from everyone to understand their concerns and incorporate them into the final report and recommendations.

Task force members were encouraged to raise any questions, major concerns, or overarching issues they may have regarding the recommended language. Zane Grant expressed overall support for the presented language but mentioned a concern about the onus on reporters to know about community resources. Jennifer Eyl echoed this concern and suggested that mandatory reporters may need more clarity on their obligations.

Jill Cohen expressed opposition to the proposed language and suggested alternative wording, indicating that her concerns extend beyond minor word changes. She mentioned the possibility of incorporating language from OCR's Foster Care Bill of Rights to ensure families are free from discrimination. Additionally, she highlighted a specific change regarding the department's obligation to provide lists of community resources, suggesting it should be optional rather than mandatory. Jill will send her suggestions via email for further consideration.

Cris Menz expressed support, but opposed the proposed language due to the absence of protection for various identities such as sexual orientation and religion. Cris emphasized the need for comprehensive civil rights protection, feeling that the proposed language falls short in addressing potential discrimination based on these identities. Without broader protections, individuals may not feel comfortable reporting instances of abuse or neglect.

Leanna Gavin reiterated a point discussed in previous meetings, emphasizing that changing the language would require corresponding changes in other parts of the statute. Specifically, she highlighted potential conflicts with section 19-3-12 and the definition of dependency and neglect.

Roshan Kalantar expressed concern about separating reporting and resourcing, fearing that focusing solely on reporting may overshadow the importance of resource allocation. She worries that if not addressed concurrently, resource allocation may be neglected or delayed. She also expressed that the

protections outlined in the proposed language are inadequate, highlighting the omission of certain identities, and suggests that existing broader language in the law could be incorporated to provide more comprehensive protection.

Jennifer Eyl expressed her struggle with addressing the definition piece without first discussing who mandatory reporters are. She represents organizations serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence and highlighted the tension regarding removing victim advocates from the mandatory reporting list. She would like to consider who is on the list of reporters before defining neglect and determining what gets reported. She also noted that training is a crucial aspect to address but emphasized the need to consider these factors in ongoing discussions.

Gina Lopez echoed Jennifer's concern about defining neglect without considering who mandatory reporters are. She highlighted the prevalent concern about liability among organizations, but expressed support for moving forward while acknowledging the need to address ongoing concerns.

Stephanie Villafuerte assured the group that all issues raised will be addressed, particularly regarding resourcing. She assured the group that all concerns and directives, including the question of whether advocates should be mandated reporters, will be addressed according to the roadmap. She acknowledged the complexity of the task and appreciates the members' patience. She invited members to reach out if they feel their concerns are not adequately addressed to ensure everyone is comfortable with the process.

Trace Faust then called on task force members who had not responded to the pre-meeting survey to ensure that all voices are included in recording their support or opposition.

Oppose:

1. Jennifer Eyl
2. Cris Menz
3. Adriana Hartley
4. Jill Cohen
5. Roshan Kalantar

Support:

1. Zane Grant
2. Ida Drury
3. Yolanda Arredondo
4. Stephanie Villafuerte
5. Shawna McGuckin
6. Ashley Chase
7. Kaycee Headrick
8. Michelle Murphy
9. Tara Doxtater
10. Kelsey Wirtz
11. Kathy Wells
12. Michelle Dossey
13. Sara Pielsticker

14. Gina Lopez
15. Dawn Alexander
16. Donna Wilson
17. Margaret Ochoa
18. Leanna Gavin
19. Jessica Dotter
20. Kevin Bishop
21. Sam Carwyn
22. Carlos Castillo
23. Nate Hailpern (Support, clarified)
24. Jade Woodard (Support, with caveats)

Public Comment:

An individual using the initials CD who wished to remain anonymous due to personal circumstances expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their experience and frustration with the Department of Human Services in South Denver and the failures they experienced within the system. They mentioned their involvement with disability issues, including genetic conditions, and the challenges they face in advocating for their child, especially in navigating school systems and medical providers who lacked understanding and support. CD highlighted discrimination based on disability, personal injury, and their own status as a domestic violence survivor. They expressed disappointment with the legal system's failure to uphold their rights under various civil rights laws and the devastating impact on their life and family. CD emphasized the need for further investigation into systemic issues, accountability for false allegations, and addressing biases and discrimination within the system.