



Board of County Commissioners

Dan Williams - Chairman
Erik Stone - Vice-Chairman
Bob Campbell - Commissioner

May 8, 2025

The Honorable Harmeet Dhillon
Director, Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Justice Department
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Director Dhillon,

We write today as the elected Board of County Commissioners of Teller County, Colorado out of an emergent Constitutional necessity on behalf of the residents of Teller County, Colorado.

As County Commissioners, we swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitutions of the United States of America and the State of Colorado. Recent legislative actions taken by the Colorado Legislature and Governor Jared Polis leave us no choice but to appeal to the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Justice to take legal action to reverse the infringements upon the constitutional rights of our residents and prevent the potential loss of existing federal funding for highways, our vulnerable senior population, veterans, and our at-risk families struggling with housing and food insecurity. These threats are due to laws that infringe upon the Second Amendment rights of our citizens and the sanctuary laws that prevent our local law enforcement from cooperating with the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

This legislative session, the Colorado Legislature passed, and Governor Polis signed into law SB25-003, a law which bans the purchase, manufacture and transfer of nearly all semi-automatic rifles, including the most commonly held and purchased rifle in America, the AR-15. Further, the law then creates a burdensome and discriminatory process for the citizens of Colorado to "repurchase" their Second Amendment rights from the State of Colorado through up to 12 hours of paid firearm safety instruction, pass a written test at a 90 percent rate, pass a marksmanship test at an 80 percent rate, an additional and yet-to-be-defined background check, a for-fee application to county sheriffs for the firearms safety certificate, and then with the objective approval of the county sheriff, the citizen "may" receive an identification card that would allow the citizen to purchase the banned firearms. The citizen **MUST** go through this rigorous, costly, and discriminatory process every 5 years.

This law, in addition to violating the Second Amendment as affirmed in *Heller, McDonald and Bruen*, which confirmed the Second Amendment applies to state and local government, a citizen's individual right to self-defense, the right to own commonly-held firearms, and the right to not be prevented from such by objective and arbitrary standards under the law. Further this new law creates new classes of citizenry by making the purchase of these banned firearms only available to the elite class able to afford both the time and excessive expense of going through the State of Colorado's onerous barrier to regain their Second Amendment rights. Lastly, these laws violate the rights of citizens under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to make accommodation for those with learning or physical disabilities which would prevent them from passing a written



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test, attend lengthy two-day classes in person, passing the required marksmanship test, as well as other, yet to be discovered barriers to the right to keep and bear arms.

The State of Colorado has also passed sanctuary laws and policies in recent years which prevent local and state law enforcement from cooperating with ICE officials in their effort to rid our communities of criminal illegal aliens already in custody of local law enforcement. Teller County has always been a faithful partner with ICE, being the only county in Colorado with an active 287(g) Agreement with ICE. We successfully defended lawsuits brought by the ACLU of Colorado which challenged the authority of the Teller County Sheriff to enter into the 278(g) Agreement, but some elements of the program are limited due to Colorado's sanctuary laws enacted with HB 19-1124. Also, for over 20 years, the Teller County Sheriff housed ICE detainees in the Teller County Jail under an Intergovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA) but was forced to terminate that IGSA in 2024 after Colorado passed HB 23-1100, a sanctuary state law that prevents local government from contracting with ICE to house ICE detainees.

As a long-time, good faith local government partner with ICE, Teller County respectfully requests that the Justice Department and the Executive Branch be judicious in any decision to withdraw federal funding to the State of Colorado because of the State's sanctuary laws and policies and to allow the critical funding that supports Teller County's roads, veterans, seniors, and at-risk families to flow directly to Teller County. . We support the lawsuit filed on May 2, 2025 by the Department of Justice against the State of Colorado and State officials over the State's sanctuary laws and ask for the Department of Justice to file appropriate lawsuits to protect the Second Amendment rights of our citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Williams - Chairman

Erik Stone - Vice-Chairman

Bob Campbell - Commissioner

cc:

The Honorable Donald Trump, President of the United States
The Honorable Pamela Bondi, Attorney General of the United States
The Honorable Brittany Petterson, Representative, Colorado District 7
The Honorable Jeff Crank, Representative, Colorado District 5