



Sexual
Violence
Prevention
Association

Phone: 703-424-9936

Email: info@s-v-p-a.org

Website: www.s-v-p-a.org

To:

Colorado General Assembly

Senate & House of Representatives
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Date: March 26, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly,

The Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA) endorses Colorado's [HB26-1123](#) '[Preventing Sexual Abuse in Jails](#)', an important action in the fight to protect incarcerated people from state sexual violence. This legislation takes meaningful steps to strengthen accountability, protect whistleblowers, and prevent harmful strip search practices.

Strip and cavity searches are a form of state-sanctioned sexual violence; when the government allows or requires government agents to carry out sexual acts on someone without their consent, typically by claiming it is necessary for "safety." Strip and cavity searches are a violation of consent, autonomy, and privacy that cause immense trauma.

Strip and cavity searches are also a common site of state-tolerated sexual violence; when the government agents commit sexual violence and the government allows it to happen by ignoring reports, silencing survivors, and averting accountability. During these invasive searches, guards and other prison staff frequently commit acts of sexual violence against inmates and detainees. Further, some facilities require body cameras or surveillance cameras to record the search. These recordings can be helpful for accountability but they can also be misused for sexual exploitation.

In July of 2025, former Jail Commander Edward Aber was charged with 117 counts of invasion of privacy after watching more than 100 videos of strip searches conducted on women detained at La Plata County Jail. He viewed these invasive videos outside of his official capacity over 3,000 times for sexual gratification. Eighteen of the incarcerated women are pursuing legal action. The SVPA firmly stands with them.

This one case is not an outlier; it is a symptom of a system that causes widespread harm. Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA) recognized this issue and drafted HB26-1123 to prevent state sexual violence. It will require sweeping improvements to prevent sexual violence in prisons by increasing regulations/requirements and by building upon the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

HB26-1123 will prevent state-sanctioned sexual violence by minimizing the number of strip and cavity searches performed in prisons, jails, and detention facilities throughout the state of Colorado. More specifically, this bill will require that two officers independently determine that there is “reasonable belief” to conduct a strip search and that the reason and results of the strip search are documented in a report.

The bill will also prevent state-tolerated sexual violence by limiting the recording of strip searches, restricting access to footage showing nudity, and preventing the reproduction of such recordings. It will also protect whistleblowers who report sexual violence during strip searches. HB26-1123 reaffirms protections for incarcerated people under PREA by ensuring that detainees are aware of their rights, have access to resources and safe reporting avenues, and that all complaints are processed adequately.

A summary of the bill’s provisions are provided below:

- Strip Search Standards: Expands the reasonable belief standard to all arrests, requires that two officers independently identify strip searches are from two officers, and mandates documentation of each search.
- Recording & Privacy Protections: Limits recording of strip searches, restricts access to footage showing nudity, and bars defendants from reproducing such recordings.
- Sexual Abuse Response & Reporting: Requires jails to implement response protocols, mandates staff reporting of sexual abuse, and protects whistleblowers.

- Survivor Rights & Access to Support: Ensures prisoners are informed of their rights, provides access to advocacy services, and supports survivors in custody.
- PREA Compliance & Oversight: Requires PREA coordinators, public access to their contact information, and establishes a process for independent audits of jail practices and procedures.
- Accountability for Officers: Mandates loss of certification for officers found to have sexually abused a prisoner.

We deeply appreciate CCASA's amazing advocacy and leadership. We are happy to join them in this fight for prevention throughout Colorado. Our support of this legislation is a continuation of our advocacy against the long-overlooked sexual violence by Jail Commander Aber and the broader issue of state sexual violence.

Our state sexual violence framework guided our public condemnation of Commander Aber's abuses and the lack of accountability from La Plata County Jail. Additional recent actions include our work in San Francisco and Montana. We're also advocating to prevent PREA changes that would increase state sexual violence against trans and gender-nonconforming people behind bars.

The SVPA strongly endorses HB26-1123! This bill directly addresses the structural conditions that allow state sexual violence to persist in Colorado's detention facilities. By strengthening PREA accountability measures, reducing the frequency of strip searches, and protecting the privacy of incarcerated individuals, this bill represents a meaningful and necessary step toward preventing sexual violence.

Regards,



Omny Miranda Martone
Founder and CEO
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)