



## ***NEWS RELEASE –***

January 25, 2017

Contact: Ken Lane, 720-913-9025

### **DENVER DA BETH MCCANN COMMENTS ON STATE BILL PROPOSING RELIGIOUS BELIEF EXEMPTION IN APPLICATION OF COLORADO LAWS**

Below are prepared remarks by Denver District Attorney Beth McCann given at today's press conference at the state capitol hosted by Colorado business leaders, faith leaders, law enforcement, and community groups opposing HB17-1013, the so-called religious exemption bill.

#### **Prepared Statement of Denver District Attorney Beth McCann:**

I opposed this religious exemption legislation as a state legislator and I oppose it today as Denver's District Attorney. The government's job is to promote equal rights for its citizens.

The right to practice and profess your religion and faith is a fundamental right enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. As a private citizen and as a public official, I cherish that right.

But that right cannot carelessly trump the rule of law.

The issue is simple, but one proponents of this legislation seek to complicate and confuse: If you CHOOSE to provide public services, you cannot deny those services because you don't like someone's color of their skin, their national origin, their sex, or their sexual identity.

The fundamental problems with House Bill 1013 and similar proposals are many. Just to name a few:

- It encourages people to pick and choose which laws they are going to follow
- The law would open the door for politicians to pick and choose which religions and beliefs to protect
- Public safety laws could be impossible to enforce—a person claiming religious belief could refuse to comply with child labor and domestic violence laws, for example
- It creates uncertainty for law enforcement and the court system—forcing them to sort out what is a sincerely held religious belief. That is an impossible burden for our legal system

Freedom of religion is important. Let us not demean it with these misguided laws.