

May 13, 2025

Honorable Governor Jared Polis
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80201

Dear Governor Polis,

Between 2018 and 2022, over a dozen women were kidnapped and sexually assaulted by one rideshare driver. As ten of the twelve survivors, we are writing to ask you to sign HB 25-1291. It's essential that you understand that many of the bill's provisions are grounded in our experiences as survivors.

John Pastor-Mendoza was convicted of 30 felony counts in March of this year and is serving 290 years for his crimes against us. Many of us were drugged by the water bottles given to us by our driver as a customer service tactic. While we got justice in our case, thousands of others have not. At the same time our attacker was active, another Denver rideshare driver preyed on intoxicated men and raped them. As authorities closed in on him, he escaped and fled to South America, where he still lives today.

There are not just 12 of us living with the consequences of rideshare companies that have resisted stronger safety protocols and fought accountability - there are thousands of men, women, and people whose lives have been forever impacted.

A misconception—largely driven by Uber—is that House Bill 25-1291 is anti-business, anti driver, and anti-technology. That is simply not true, and it never has been. We have not, nor have we ever wanted to, drive Uber out of Colorado. On the contrary, we recognize that rideshare services are a vital part of the state's transportation infrastructure and are relied upon by countless people every day.

What we are asking for is simple: the industry that markets itself as a safe choice for a ride home should have to live up to its promises and enact basic safety measures with accountability when those measures fail.

Other industries have faced serious challenges with sexual assault and have still managed to enact meaningful protections. A powerful example is the U.S. military, which struggled for decades with systemic underreporting and a lack of accountability due to the chain of command's control over investigations. In 2022, that changed with the National Defense Authorization Act, which removed prosecutorial authority over certain crimes, including sexual assault, from commanders. The legislation also expanded confidential reporting options and strengthened the role of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), providing critical victim advocacy and oversight. If an institution as large, complex, and entrenched as the U.S. military can take these steps, then surely a forward-thinking state like Colorado can do the same for the safety of our communities.

Sexual assault is a pervasive and deeply insidious crime—one that thrives in silence, secrecy, and inaction. Confronting it requires the courage to speak openly, even when it's uncomfortable; to call out what's wrong, even when it's inconvenient; and to make changes, even when they're difficult. Governor Polis, you have the power to make Colorado's rideshare system safer.

Rideshare companies will argue that there will always be bad actors and that no regulations can catch them all. If this bill can prevent even one bad actor from slipping through, isn't it worth it? **The inability to stop every predator is not a justification for stopping none. We can—and must—do better.**

House Bill 25-1291 has undergone extensive revisions, compromises, and careful consideration since its original draft, evolving into the balanced and workable legislation now on your desk. These changes demonstrate that this bill can serve the interests of both safety and industry when both sides are willing to engage in good faith.

We—the survivors—whose lives have been irrevocably altered by the actions of a rideshare driver, stand firmly behind this bill in its final form. We are not seeking revenge, nor are we trying to dismantle a multi-billion-dollar industry. What we want is simple: to ensure that what happened to us doesn't happen to someone else.

We sincerely hope that you, your friends, or your loved ones never have to endure what we did. And we ask you to put politics aside—just long enough to do what is right.

Sincerely,

Erika Rinnert

Katie Davis

Rae Perry

Cassie Koza

Jessica Schneider

Katrina B.

Juliana G.

Katie M.

Marie D.

Leslie Z.