

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. My name is Tom Thomas and I am a historian and planner with the National Park Service. I have worked on plans and conducted public outreach in numerous national park units throughout the west and other parts of the nation. I am also the president of Local 1105 of the American Federation of Government Employees. In addition, I am an instructor of history at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am here today to speak in opposition to HB17-1141, "Equal Protection from Federal Employee Personal Attack." Based on my experience in the federal government, I believe that bill sets a dangerous precedent and is intended to create a fearful environment and demoralize federal public servants who just want to do their job and protect some of our most valuable resources - public lands.

The bill would have the potential of further straining relations between the federal and state government. It would blur lines of authority between federal, state, and local governments with no discernible benefit. Many of these federal public servants are also residents in the communities that adjoin public lands. This bill presents the possibility of setting federal employees at odds with friends, neighbors, and family members in their communities. It may create controversy and conflict in areas where it does not exist and inflame conflicts that are ongoing.

I have encountered anti-federal government sentiment at various points in my career. I have seen the impact it has had on my colleagues' lives. Once this sentiment is established, it is very difficult to counter. The bill has the potential to contribute to those sentiments and make conscientious management of our public <sup>lands</sup> that much more difficult.

*I urge you to vote no on this bill.*

Tom Thomas

HB 17-1141

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