

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

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August 6, 2001



Bill Owens
Governor

Honorable David J. Thomas
1st Judicial District Attorney
500 Jefferson County Parkway
Golden, CO 80401-6020

Dear Dave:

Thanks for contacting me about the proposed psychiatric review project to be conducted on Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the killers in the Columbine High School tragedy. I am pleased to support this intriguing concept as a means to help implement the recommendations of the Governor's Columbine Review Commission.

As you know, the Commission's goal was to understand some of the factors that may have contributed to Columbine, and to recommend reforms that might help to avoid future tragedies. A key recommendation of the Commission's final report was to develop threat-assessment systems that schools and law enforcement can use to predict and prevent potential violence by students. The psychiatric review project you describe could be very helpful in this regard, and to increasing our general understanding of the causes of violence among our young people.

I understand from your letter, and from follow-up conversations between project participants and my office, that the project's purpose is to conduct a detailed psychiatric examination of the two perpetrators. This "forensic autopsy" will seek not only to better understand some of the specific psychological factors that may have contributed to Harris' and Klebold's murderous rampage, but to isolate potential behaviors that might generally be precursors to youth violence. Such information could be valuable in developing the student threat-assessment methodologies and systems that the Commission's report recommends.

Please keep me informed as the project moves forward and let me or my chief counsel, Troy Eid, know if we can be of assistance. Thanks again and best regards.

Sincerely,

Bill Owens
Governor

Cc: Honorable William H. Erickson