

Manny Rutinel Voted To Allow The Release Of A Man Charged With Second-Degree Attempted Murder Where The Victim Suffered Severe Brain Injury And Spent Substantial Time In The Hospital. After The Criminal Was Released, He Later Brought A Gun Onto The University Of Northern Colorado Campus.

On May 6, 2024, Rutinel Voted Yes On HB24-1034 Which Related To “Adult Competency To Stand Trial.” “The act reforms and clarifies the criminal competency to proceed process. The act provides necessary parties with access to information related to the defendant's claim of incompetency to proceed. The act adds to the information that is included in a competency report. The act delineates a court's options when it finds that a defendant is incompetent to proceed. The act directs when competency services may be provided on an outpatient basis. The act sets forth the circumstances when a court has to dismiss the defendant's case based on the highest level of charge against the defendant and how long the defendant has been waiting for restoration services.” (HB24-1034, [Roll Call Vote](#), Passed: 48-12-0-5; Rutinel Voted Yes, 5/6/24; [CO Leg](#), Accessed 7/1/26)

HEADLINE: “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)

In 2025, An Attempted Murder Charge, Among Other Charges, Were Reportedly Dropped Against A Man Who Allegedly Took Part In An Attack On A Group Of Individuals In Greeley, And The Man Was Released From Jail. “A high-profile case out of Weld County involving an attempted murder has renewed debate about the state’s competency laws and public safety. The case arose from an incident last spring, in which a group of men led by 21-year-old Debisa Ephraim allegedly attacked a man and his friends in downtown Greeley. After Ephraim was found incompetent to stand trial, his charges, which included attempted murder, were dropped, and he was released from the Weld County Jail earlier this month.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)

- **The Specific Charge Was Reportedly “Second-Degree Attempted Murder.”** “According to Reams, 21-year-old Debisa Ephraim was arrested in April and charged with second-degree attempted murder following an altercation between him and another man that had been captured on video.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Sheriff Condemns Law That Led To Release Of Violent Suspect,” [Colorado Politics](#), 9/16/25)

The Victim Reportedly “Spent Over A Month In The Hospital With A Traumatic Brain Injury.” “Meanwhile, her brother, the victim, fought for his life. He spent over a month in the hospital with a traumatic brain injury and had to learn how to walk and talk again. While he has mostly recovered, his speech will never fully return to normal, she said.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)

HB24-1034 Mandated Courts To Drop Criminal Charges In Certain Cases In Which A Defendant Was Deemed “Incompetent.” “It is not completely clear why the suspect was deemed incompetent. Amabile, the law’s author, said she heard he was diagnosed with an intellectual and developmental disability. Colorado Politics tried but failed to obtain any documentation shedding a light on Ephraim’s diagnosis. The district attorney’s office in charge of Weld County refused to comment, saying it’s an active case. Amabile defended the law requiring the dropping of charges in such cases. She said she and her colleagues introduced House Bill 1034 with the intent of making it easier to transition someone declared incompetent from the criminal justice system to the civil system. Individuals found incompetent to proceed due to mental illness are often sent to a mental hospital, but there aren’t many options for people like Ephraim, who have other conditions, as well as an alleged history of violence. One option is a nursing home or similar care facility, but such centers don’t admit patients with open criminal cases, Amabile said, which is why the law requires the court to dismiss them.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)

Soon After His Release, The Man Was Arrested Again “After Allegedly Bringing A Gun To The University Of Northern Colorado (UNC) Campus In Greeley.” “Ephraim, the man at the center of the debate around Colorado’s competency laws, was arrested again last a month after he was released from jail following the dismissal of the attempted murder charge. Ephraim was apprehended after allegedly bringing a gun to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) campus in Greeley. He was not a student, and according to campus police, he was banned from the campus. A notice issued by UNC campus police warned students about Ephraim’s presence on campus, calling him ‘someone (they) believe to be dangerous.’” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)

The Alleged Perpetrator, Debisa Ephraim, Holding A Rifle:



(Dillon Thomas, “Police In Northern Colorado Arrest “Dangerous” Man Recently Released From Jail Who Was Allegedly Seen With A Gun,” [CBS News](#), 9/25/25)

The Weld County Sheriff’s Office Attributed The Man’s Release To HB24-1034 Which They Said, “Weaken[ed] The Criminal Justice System By Handcuffing Law Enforcement, Prosecutors And Judges For The Sake Of Criminals”

The Weld County Sheriff’s Office Attributed The Man’s Release To HB24-1034 Which They Said, “Weaken[ed] The Criminal Justice System By Handcuffing Law Enforcement, Prosecutors And Judges For The Sake Of Criminals.” “The office of Weld County Sheriff Steve Reams posted a video of the Greeley attack on X, saying Ephraim had been released under a 2024 law that, he said, required individuals declared incompetent and unlikely to be restored to be released from jail. “The state legislature and the Governor have continued to weaken the criminal justice system by handcuffing law enforcement, prosecutors and judges for the sake of criminals,” the sheriff’s office said. “Colorado HB24-1034 has created a crisis where very dangerous individuals are being released to the street to reoffend over and over, this is the latest example.” (Marrissa Ventrelli, “Weld County Case Ignites Debate Over 2024 Law On Suspects Declared Incompetent,” [Colorado Politics](#), 10/2/25)