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## **CFOIC DENOUNCES HOLMES' EFFORT TO CLOSE COURT FILE**

Restricting public access to information in the Aurora movie theater shooting case would set a dangerous precedent and erode the public trust in our state's judicial system, the Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition said Friday.

"A heinous crime committed in a darkened movie theater that left 12 dead and hundreds injured and devastated should not result in the judicial process being shrouded in secrecy," said Jeff Roberts, executive director of the CFOIC. "We hope the judge will deny the defendant's request and keep our courts open to public scrutiny and accountability."

A motion filed by suspect James Holmes' attorneys on Wednesday asks the court to seal all transcripts of proceedings in the case and to remove the case from the "Cases of Interest" section of the court's website, which provides the public with direct access to court documents.

The defense lawyers argue that easy access to pleadings in the case jeopardizes Holmes' right to a fair trial by an impartial jury. But deleting the case from the court's website would merely serve to overwhelm Arapahoe County court clerks with requests for information from news media and interested members of the public. In their motion, Holmes' attorneys also point to the fact that court files have been sealed for years in the Sir Mario Owens capital murder case. However, in that case, which involved a murdered witness, the judge cited witness protection issues as a reason for keeping transcripts of those proceedings secret. No such issues exist in the Holmes case.

Prosecutors have not yet responded to the defense attorneys' motion. A hearing on other matters in the case is scheduled for Monday morning.

The Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition is a nonpartisan alliance of groups and individuals dedicated to ensuring the transparency of state and local governments in Colorado by promoting freedom of the press, open courts and open access to government records and proceedings.

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