

**Testimony of Steve Abbott**  
**Policy Lead, Gusto**  
**Presented to the Colorado Senate Committee on Finance**  
**March 30, 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Steve Abbott, and I am the Public Policy Lead at Gusto, a people platform that empowers small to medium sized businesses.

We enable small business owners to easily pay employees and contractors, remit taxes, stay compliant with legal obligations, and keep accurate records, while also providing payroll, human resources, health benefits, and financial health benefits to over 200,000 small businesses and millions of employees across the country.

In Colorado, we are proud to serve approximately 10,000 small businesses, typically with a 100 or fewer employees across all industries. In addition, Denver is one of our home bases, comprising most of Gusto's corporate employees.

Our work and client base uniquely positions us to understand the needs and pain points of small businesses, and to provide our — and our customers' — perspective on how best to serve them during this challenging time of surging COVID cases, labor shortages, supply chain constraints, and inflationary pressures.

Inequities exacerbated by the pandemic reinforced the need for meaningful action to elevate accountability, and tangible results around representation, inclusion, social impact, and equity (RISE). RISE principles are critical to Gusto's mission of building a world where work empowers a better life, and we are committed to making business, product, and advocacy decisions with equity at the core. Gusto believes that a healthy small business ecosystem is one that is fair and inclusive for all businesses, including women- and minority-owned businesses, and reducing barriers for entrepreneurs is key to helping underserved communities.

Gusto's own research found that nearly half of all businesses started by women in the past year are minority-owned, who largely started these businesses out of economic need. The COVID pandemic exacerbated the adversity that women entrepreneurs face, and women, in turn, responded by transforming challenge into opportunity. This is further illustrated by the 31% of women business owners that have school-aged children at home, who simultaneously face the demands of keeping their business afloat while providing childcare and education to their children in the midst of Delta and Omicron spikes. These points illustrate the vital role that women owned businesses play in helping the economy to recover and we should prioritize policies to help them.

This is why Gusto is in full support of CO HB 22-1001, the Colorado Business Fee Relief Act. Reducing business filing fees eliminates the affordability barrier for business owners to file new registrations, annual renewals, change of address forms, and trade name registrations and renewals. This could save businesses millions of dollars annually – critical funding for businesses that could be allocated toward payroll, expansion, cybersecurity services, rainy day savings, or other needs.

Gusto stands in full support of the Colorado Business Fee Relief Act. We thank the sponsors for bringing it forward and all of you for your commitments to helping small businesses and their employees within the state.

Thank you. I am happy to be a resource for any questions.



## **HB 22-1001, Reduce Fees for Business Filing, L. Cutter/C. Kolker**

### **Position: SUPPORT**

NFIB is an incorporated nonprofit association with nearly 300,000 members across America. NFIB protects and advances the ability of individuals to own, operate, and grow their businesses and ensures that the Congress of the United States and all 50 states hear the voice of small business as they formulate public policy. I have the privilege of representing approximately 7,000 members in Colorado.

The average member has between 5-9 employees and less than \$500,000 in gross revenues.

On behalf of NFIB CO membership we request your support of Hb 22-1001, Which will reduce some business filing fees.

As businesses continue their attempts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shut down due to the pandemic they now must manage a high rate of inflation in addition to supply chain disruptions.

Reducing business fees collected by the department of state, such as fees for new business registrations and annual business renewals, will provide broad-based relief to Colorado small businesses.

NFIB CO would like to thank the sponsors for recognizing the effects even small fees have on a small business.

**Please vote YES on this piece of legislation.**

Respectfully,

A.F. Tony Gagliardi  
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