



Together we can end relationship abuse

House Transportation & Local Government Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB22-1356 on behalf of Violence Free Colorado. We are Colorado's statewide anti-domestic violence coalition, with 40 community-based domestic violence program members as well as community partner and individual members across the state. Those community-based programs have felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic - an impact that is ongoing.

Community-based domestic violence programs provide legal advocacy, make safety plans with survivors, provide counseling, facilitate support groups, help survivors pay their rent and find housing, operate 24/7 crisis lines, run emergency shelters, and more. Many of these programs have seen dramatic escalations in demand for services and have seen clients with more complex cases that require more resources and time. The survivors they work with are experiencing more violent assaults, are more isolated, and are coping with unemployment, challenges accessing childcare, and the mental health impacts of the pandemic. At the same time programs have faced the loss of funding sources, staff turnover and shortages, and the need to quickly make adjustments to service provision (for example offering some programs virtually).

Smaller non-profits often reach underserved and marginalized communities, and many of these communities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The funding offered by HB22-1356 would help support these smaller programs to cover the kinds of administrative and infrastructure costs that are often difficult to fund but imperative to keep the doors open and expand. We urge you to support the vital work of these small non-profits and vote yes on HB22-1356.

Thank you,

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Violence Free Colorado