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Madame Chair, members of the committee, and sponsors of SB 20B-002, thank you for your work and consideration of this bill. I urge you to please vote yes on SB 20B-002 Housing & Direct COVID Emergency Assistance.

My name is Cesiah Guadarrama Trejo, and I am the associate co-state director for 9to5 Colorado. We are the statewide chapter of a national grassroots member-based organization that works on policies that uplift women and their families.

Like many others, during the past nine months we have had to shift our gears to support our members and community due to COVID-19. Many of our members have lost their jobs or have seen a reduction in income due to COVID, We have heard many stories of working class people, women, women with children and people of color who are struggling to pay for rent, food and basic necessities. COVID-19 did not create the housing crisis, but it did exacerbate the problem and it brought to light how many families are at risk of being homeless after one or two missed paychecks.

Despite statewide eviction moratoriums to prevent eviction, evictions are still happening for other reasons besides nonpayment of rent. We have seen a spike in the number of tenants seeking legal assistance due to landlord/tenant issues including illegal lockouts. For many Coloradans this is the first time they have received a notice to quit for non-payment of rent. The legal eviction process can be intimidating, and for many it's the first time they have needed to know what each step means. Through 9to5's work hosting six know-your-rights training in English and Spanish for tenants, we quickly realized the need for information and legal assistance for many.

State and CDC eviction protections for tenants and homeowners will be expiring in December, and hundreds of Coloradans will be at risk of eviction if protections are not extended and if economic relief is not provided soon.

Legal, rental, and mortgage assistance are needed now more than ever. Every health expert is advising to stay home--one can only do that if you have a home. Hospitals are reaching maximum ICU capacity, and many will need a safe and healthy home to isolate and recuperate from COVID-19.

I urge you to please vote yes on SB 20B-002. Thank you!

Witness Signup List

Senate Finance
11/30/2020 Upon Adjournment

| Bill | First Name | Last Name | Position | Representing | Text of Testimony |
|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|--------------|---|
| SB20B-001 | Catherine | Kitch | For | Self | <p>Please, we are drowning out here! I am the owner of several restaurants in Durango, CO. Those of us restaurant owners that are still open are ONLY open because we are taking out MAJOR debt and withdrawing money from our retirement accounts. This is NOT sustainable. I have not laid off my workers and I am still paying state and local sales tax, keeping my staff and customers safe, following the restrictions handed down by the Governor and local Health Department and I just got a bill from the state for our Business and Liquor Licenses.....ARE YOU KIDDING ME???!?! You want me to pay for a liquor license that I LITERALLY CANNOT use. These invoices for the licenses should be prorated including credit for this year's limited use. We are going to "wake up" after the vaccine becomes available to Zombie Towns. And we DO NOT NEED MORE DEBT....we need for things like Sales Tax and license fees to be WAIVED!! NOT DEFERRED.</p> <p>BTW I have been in business and been successful for 18 years....I know how to manage a restaurant efficiently and successfully. I am just tired of "floating" myself....it is ONLY benefitting my employees and state and local agencies! WAKE UP!!!!</p> |

Witness Signup List

SB20B-001 Tony

Gagliardi

Amend

NFIB

Amend bill as follows:

1. allow cities that are in compliance that are located in counties that aren't in compliance have the ability to apply to administer this program.
2. A percentage of loss from 2020 compared to 2019 would be a preferable method of figuring. Many businesses are facing 70-90 percent losses for 2020 over 2019.
3. Allowing restaurants to figure in the credit card processing fees as part of the total expenses. The State of Colorado is allowed to charge processing fees when citizens use a credit card for tax and fee purposes, small retailers should be allowed the same benefit.

Witness Signup List

SB20B-002 Aubrey

Hasvold

For

Colorado
Coalition for the
Homeless

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless urges you to support LLS 20B-0052. The connection between housing and health has never been more clear. To keep people housed, avoid increasing homelessness, and prevent this unprecedented public health crisis from worsening, a substantial investment in emergency housing assistance and legal aid is essential.

Consider the following facts:

- While statewide homelessness has remained relatively stable at around 10,000 people according to the annual Point-in-Time count, experts estimate that the number is closer to 30,000. Denver's homeless count has increased more than 20% from 2018 to 2020 alone (3,445 to 4,171).
- In an informal count in July, Denver Homeless Out Loud found 1,328 people living in vehicles and tents in Five Points, Capitol Hill and other parts of Denver. The 2020 official count for Denver showed 996 unsheltered individuals, indicating a likely increase amid the pandemic. This trend is likely mirrored statewide.
- Shelter capacity has been cut in half due to the implementation of distancing standards.
- Shelters and health systems are reporting a dramatic uptick in first-time homelessness because of COVID-19-related job loss, expanded unemployment running out, and lack of ongoing support from the federal government.
- According to modeling by Columbia University, we can expect a 40-45% increase in homelessness nationwide this year if action is not taken. This could mean an increase of between 4,000-12,000 Coloradans.

Witness Signup List

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|-----------|------|------------|-----|---|---|
| SB20B-002 | Mary | Coddington | For | Neighborhood Development Collaborative | <p>The Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NDC) is comprised of 16 non-profit affordable housing providers and non-profit service providers working in the Denver Metro region.</p> <p>NDC emphasizes the importance of funding emergency housing assistance in to 2021 and asks for your support of SB2 Housing and Direct Rental Assistance. As housing providers we are still seeing elevated rates of non-payment and know residents are struggling to afford their housing especially in light of the lack of support from the federal level. The funds allocated towards emergency rental and mortgage assistance earlier in 2020 were instrumental in keeping thousands of Colorado residents housed, but the crisis we are facing is not over and more support is needed to secure the 1 in 4 Coloradans at risk of eviction because of the unrelenting pandemic.</p> <p>Along with the housing assistance we encourage a communications plan to reach even more Coloradans struggling to pay for housing due to Covid health and economic impacts.</p> <p>Thank you for convening this critical special session and thank you for your support of SB2 Housing and Direct Rental Assistance.</p> <p>Sincerely, Mary Coddington Neighborhood Development Collaborative</p> |
| SB20B-003 | Kara | Miller | For | Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities | <p>The Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities supports SB20-B-003 and encourages passage of this important legislation to help those impacted financially by Covid 19 in Colorado.</p> |

Witness Signup List

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|-----------|----------|-------------|-----|------|---|
| SB20B-009 | Samantha | Fitzpatrick | For | Self | <p>Small businesses are vital to the character and spirit of our communities, as well as their fiscal well being. They should not be unfairly restricted.</p> <p>Additionally, i feel that they are important to lessen crowding at larger stores and in larger workplaces in this time when contact with crowds should be limited as much as possible. For example, if i were able to obtain what i needed at a small store near my home, it might save me a trip to a larger store where i might come into contact with dozens of people as opposed to the one or two i might contact at a small business.</p> |
| SB20B-009 | Sarah | Lavery | For | Self | <p>I am voicing public support for bill 20B-0016 brought by Sen Woodward district 15.</p> <p>Small mom and pop style businesses, in my experience, are kept much cleaner than the chains and larger stores. The employees and owners care more and thus work the hardest to ensure public safety.</p> <p>Small businesses should not receive treatment equal with larger chains. Obviously.</p> <p>Small local businesses should have more consideration, more leniency, and less regulation. They are already socially regulated by their local customers' social preferences, everyone prefers to be healthy.</p> <p>Crushing regulations disproportionately effecting local businesses while allowing chains and larger stores to remain open, is contrary to Colorado having a flourishing economy. Healthy local small businesses ensure that Colorado moneies circulate through Colorado more times before leaving our state.</p> <p>Thank you all for your civil service, Sarah Lavery Westminster, CO</p> |

Witness Signup List

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|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------------------------------------|--|
| SB20B-011 | Julie | Reiskin | Amend | Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition | <p>The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition understands the intent behind this bill. We ask that if this passes that all residential facilities no matter the size are exempt. People who are most vulnerable to COVID are trapped in facilities, some live there by choice but in all cases, these citizens put their trust in the facilities to keep them safe. Most COVID deaths have been in residential care facilities. The bill only requires that good faith attempts are met to follow health guidelines. We know that there are many nursing facilities that have had multiple infection control safety violations but they could still be "attempting" in good faith to comply.</p> <p>Sadly, most of the people in residential care are not going to get access to lawyers to sue, and their lives are not seen as valuable, but they should not be prohibited from a negligence lawsuit if there is a preventable disease spread to these most vulnerable people.</p> <p>We respectfully request an amendment if this bill goes forward.</p> |
|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------------------------------------|--|



November 30, 2020

Colorado General Assembly
Senate Finance Committee

Chairwomen Gonzales, vice chair Lee, and members of the Committee. Thank you for holding this hearing and for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Today our country is living an unprecedented health and economic crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic is touching every aspect of our lives, changing how we live, work, and think about the future. Now more than ever, Americans for Prosperity (AFP) activists continue to engage friends and neighbors on key issues and encourage them to take an active role in building a culture of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping one another.

At this juncture, is it critical for this body to proceed to enact reasonable reforms that provide clarity and limit frivolous lawsuits related to COVID-19, so health care providers, charities, nonprofits, and businesses can continue to operate and serve their communities in this unprecedented time of need. AFP supports legislative efforts that achieve these goals while at the same time maintaining protections for individuals against gross negligence, criminal misconduct, and fraud.

As we have already seen, frivolous litigation¹ targeting responsible institutions that have followed available guidance and the latest science is eroding the trust required for a safe and robust economic recovery. The virtuous cycles of mutual benefit within communities, between businesses and customers, health care providers, and patients are essential for Colorado to embark on a safe and steady economic recovery path.

First responders, medical care facilities, health care providers, charities, and businesses large and small have come together to fight COVID-19 pandemic stepping up to provide care and relief to the communities they serve. If this body were to fail to provide necessary liability protections, these community efforts could be derailed with the potential to disrupt our economic recovery, increase health care costs, and cause the price of goods and services to soar.

Thoroughly evaluating Colorado's existing laws and adopting proactive legislation that distinguishes legitimate from frivolous claims, particularly COVID-19 claims, is responsible public policy, and we commend you have returned to our state capitol to address these critical issues.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to ensure workers, businesses, and families can gradually return to their normal life without having the threat of frivolous lawsuits breathing down their necks.

Sincerely,

Jesse Mallory
State Director
Americans for Prosperity Colorado

¹ COVID-19 Complaint Tracker <https://www.huntonak.com/en/covid-19-tracker.html>



Counties & Commissioners across Colorado working to provide a unified, nonpartisan and independent voice at the statehouse.

November 30, 2020

To the Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly

CCAT applauds the bipartisan legislative leadership in bringing forward a package of bills to help Coloradans most impacted by the COVID crisis.

Counties are on the front line of the pandemic response and see firsthand the extreme challenges and hardships faced by a broad range of citizens. We stand ready to partner with state leaders to ensure these much-needed resources are offered with fidelity across Colorado.

CCAT urges legislators to pass bills providing aid in the following areas:

Small Business Relief – Small, locally owned businesses are the backbone of Colorado’s economy and communities. These very industries are among the hardest hit by the pandemic causing further strain on their employees and public support programs.

Support SB 20B-001, COVID-19 Relief Small & Minority Businesses Arts Organizations.

Child Care Support – Colorado’s economic recovery depends on access to stable, high quality, and affordable childcare so citizens can continue to work during the pandemic. This critical resource is threatened as childcare providers are among the hardest hit with revenues severely strained by plummeting enrollment and increased expenses to ensure adequate safety protocols.

Support House Bill 20B-1002, Emergency Relief Programs for Child Care Sector

Housing & Direct Rental Assistance – As the economic strain of the pandemic continues, more Coloradans are increasingly vulnerable to eviction or foreclosure. Arguably the most fundamental function of government is to ensure families have a safe, warm, and habitable place to live to weather the pandemic and resulting economic crisis.

Support Senate Bill 20B-002, Housing and Direct COVID Emergency Assistance.

*Ruth Aponte (303) 907-1980 raponte@aponte-busam.com
Dave DeNovellis (303) 359-8268 ddenovellis@aponte-busam.com*

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Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit

* Denotes individual Commissioners



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Support House Bill 20B-1002, Emergency Relief Programs for Child Care Sector

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Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit

* Denotes individual Commissioners

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition Testimony in Support of SB20B-002

Committee Chair, members of the committee, Senators Gonzales and Holbert, Representatives Tipper and Exum, thank you for bringing this bill forward. My name is Raquel Lane-Arellano and I am the Policy Manager for the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony to support SB20B-002.

CIRC is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state. CIRC achieves this mission through non-partisan civic engagement, public education, and advocating for workable, fair and humane immigration policies. CIRC supports SB20B-002 because immigrants have faced disproportionate economic and health impacts while serving on the front lines in essential roles during this pandemic yet have continuously been excluded from economic relief.

Colorado is home to 557,944 immigrants who contribute over \$5 billion in taxes annually with \$14.2 billion in spending power. One in eleven U.S. citizen children in Colorado have an undocumented parent. A recent study by the Colorado Fiscal Institute estimates that undocumented immigrants have paid \$206 million in unemployment insurance since the last recession, yet do not qualify for unemployment insurance. The \$5 million proposed in SB20B-002 is a necessary resource that will be a lifeline for our immigrant families who will be able to use this funding to support their families and our collective economic recovery during this unprecedented crisis.

The Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition was the first partner with the Left Behind Workers Fund, helping build out a network of nonprofit community based organizations ready to connect their local communities with direct assistance across the state. From the onset it was apparent how important and urgent this resource was through the calls that flooded in, and the stories from families across the state who were unable to get relief otherwise. To date the fund has been able to give 7,771 grants to families and supported a total of 13,706 children in Colorado. Now is not the time to abandon a core population of our state and workforce but rather to invest in them.

This investment in our most vulnerable communities is how we recover together. Immigrants are parents, Colorado taxpayers, entrepreneurs, employees, and valuable members of our community. This program is essential for our immigrant families that data shows are experiencing disproportionate impacts of COVID. I urge you to vote in favor of SB20B-002 to secure a collective and speedy recovery for our state.

Raquel Lane-Arellano
Policy Manager
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Raquel@coloradoimmigrant.org



Written Testimony in Strong Support of HB20B-1002: Supporting the Workers Who Care for Our Children

My name is Karla Gonzales Garcia. I am the Policy Director with the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR works to engage and empower the Latinx community to speak out about the policies that impacts our community. Together we are working to support the ability of Latinas and our families to build a future for ourselves and to live our lives with dignity.

I am speaking out to strongly support HB20B-1002, a bill to provide support to existing and new childcare programs. The global health crisis we are now in has made the already difficult child care crisis most families were facing into a child care crisis of truly epic proportions. Studies have shown that the US is on the verge of permanently losing 4.5 million child care slots and about half of all our child care programs.

Let's be frank. Families won't be able to be part of any economic recovery if parents are left without childcare and we do not ensure that childcare providers have what they need to be safe and supported.

A recent study found that 13.3 percent of working parents had lost a job or reduced their hours because of a lack of child care. Working parents lost eight hours per week on average, or one full working day, to care for their children. In households with two working adults, they found an even greater loss of 14.6 hours per week, potentially representing a significant hit to total family income. This has weighed even harder on moms.

One out of four women who reported becoming unemployed during the pandemic said it was because of a lack of child care — twice the rate among men. This is even worse for low-income and single moms, as well as moms of color – families that already have a tougher time making ends meet and finding childcare they can afford. The pandemic has forced many people to leave the workforce to become a full-time caregiver.

We need to do more to ensure that there are options for families to make sure their children are safe and cared for, but the fact is that it is even harder for many centers to stay open. Many child care providers face steep costs associated with heightened sanitation measures, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and classroom size reduction. We need to support these facilities who work so hard to support our families. We cannot stand by and watch as the childcare crisis get that much worse.

Even before the pandemic, many families were struggling to afford care for their children and individual workers in this critical sector were often having a tough time getting by. This is a problem that we must continue to work to address. A first step that

we have the chance to take right now is to provide grants to make sure centers can open and stay open.

We strongly urge you to support HB20B-1002. We must look for ways we can help the many care workers and families who are hurting right now. This is an essential first step. Thank you.

Submitted by: Submitted by: Karla Gonzales Garcia, Policy Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), 303-393-0382



Written Testimony in Strong Support of 20B-0015: Broadband Infrastructure

My name is Karla Gonzales Garcia. I am the Policy Director for the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR works to engage and empower the Latinx community to speak out about the policies that impacts our community. Together we are working to support the ability of Latinas and our families to build a future for ourselves and to live our lives with dignity.

As the pandemic continues and more people are working from home and students learning remotely, it makes the need for internet access that much greater. The fact is that both geography and income can be a huge obstacle. Folks in rural areas in Colorado often lack adequate broadband infrastructure and in some urban areas cost continues to be a barrier. This has been an issue and one that falls on people who already face challenges in educational, employment and economic opportunity. We have the opportunity to tackle this problem head on now when the need is truly critical.

That is why we are writing to strongly support 20B-0015, which would provide grants to increase access to broadband service for students, educators and other staff who lack stable, reliable internet access for online learning.

Right now, teachers in schools located in towns and rural areas serving higher percentages of students of color have reported gaps in access to internet and only 30 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools reported that all or nearly all of their students had access to the internet at home.

Improving broadband infrastructure can be used not only to close the digital divide for remote learning, but also has application to help be an equalizer promoting civic engagement and communication, as well as in the use of telehealth and closing gaps in access to care and information to increase positive health outcomes. This is an investment that makes sense in our goal to achieve health and justice. We urge to support 20B-0015. Thank you.

Submitted by: Karla Gonzales Garcia, Policy Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), 303-393-0382



Written Testimony in Strong Support of HB20B-1003: Food Pantry Assistance

My name is Karla Gonzales Garcia. I am the Policy Director for the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR works to engage and empower the Latinx community to speak out about the policies that impacts our community. Together we are working to support the ability of Latinas and our families to build a future for ourselves and to live our lives with dignity.

Let me be clear. Making sure families have enough to eat and a roof over their head is truly the least we can do. That is why I am writing to strongly support HB20B-1003, which would provide assistance to local food pantries who provide food and meals to people in need in our communities.

We know that the number of people being served by food banks and food pantries in Colorado has drastically increased as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge our health and financial security.

Families are working hard to make sure they have what they need, but so many are not able meet all of their basic necessities. Parents are forced to decide if they pay the rent or the health care bill or buy groceries. I simply can't believe that we are allowing for people to have to make that kind of choice.

The ugly truth is that in every community right now there are families who are going without enough food. A recent study found nearly one-fifth of parents with young children are not getting enough to eat during this pandemic. Research has also shown that Latinos are twice as likely to face food insecurity. That is not just scary. It is simply unacceptable.

This bill will provide much needed support to local food pantries. We need to look at continued investment both in this critical aid, as well as to making sure that people are able to make a living wage and have the support they need to care for their families. This \$3 million allocation is not what local food banks have said they need, but it is an important start.

Even before the pandemic, many families were struggling with food insecurity, including 11 million children. This situation has only made it worse. We must do more. Addressing food insecurity is an issue of health and human rights. We cannot delay in doing all we can to ease the suffering of families in our state. Please, vote yes on HB20B-1003. Thank you.

Submitted by: **Submitted by:** Karla Gonzales Garcia, Policy Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), 303-393-0382



Written Testimony in Strong Support of 20B-0051: Small Business Aid

My name is Karla Gonzales Garcia. I am the Policy Director for the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR works to engage and empower the Latinx community to speak out about the policies that impacts our community. Together we are working to support the ability of Latinas and our families to build a future for ourselves and to live our lives with dignity.

The coronavirus pandemic is hitting small businesses hard. Many programs designed to help meet this need have not included or focused on the arts sector. We are pleased that 20B-0051, which aids local businesses, includes direct relief payments to arts, culture, artists, crew members and organizations in creative industries.

A recent study found that there are more than five million Americans who make their livelihoods in the broader arts and cultural sector across the country. We also know that the arts provide comfort, resilience, wisdom, and the means for self-expression and connection, perhaps even more so during challenging times such as these. In this troubled time, many of us have turned to music and film. We have painted and made our own creations. The arts have been a critical source of self-care and reassurance.

This bill also ensures that minority owned small businesses are provided with direct relief, grants, loans and technical assistance. A recent poll found that more than 40 percent of minority-owned small businesses have added new services to support their communities and employees. This is in spite of facing structural challenges and underlying economic fragility of underrepresented groups. We appreciate the attention to ensure that as we try to help local businesses keep their doors open that restaurants and stores owned by Black and Brown people are not left behind – and in fact receive specific, strategic investment.

We can't create true economic recovery without meeting the needs of the people we expect to frequent these local businesses. We would like to see more attention paid to meeting the needs of individuals and families who are truly hurting right now, but we are also pleased to see the multi-pronged approach taken by this bill to invest in the arts and minority owned businesses.

We urge you to support 20B-0051 while continuing to find innovative and strategic ways to support individuals. We need thriving businesses and families for a stable economy. It is a matter of ensuring financial stability, as well as the health and dignity of the people in our state. Thank you.

Submitted by: Karla Gonzales Garcia, Policy Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), 303-393-0382

November 30, 2020

Dear Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

The undersigned organizations fully support Colorado's economic recovery in a time when so many are hurting. Like the rest of the nation, Colorado COVID-19 infections are increasing at an alarming rate on a daily basis. We know that businesses are struggling and must be incredibly nimble while public health orders and guidance are changing constantly. However, establishing a new standard that allows a business to be immune from accountability for negligence will not guarantee more stable economic conditions that businesses desperately need to thrive. Therefore, we strongly oppose any legislation, including the proposed Senator Tate bill, that would make changes to current liability standards.

Any economic recovery requires the public to have confidence that businesses are operating as safely as possible. Establishing legal immunity for businesses that operate unsafely would do the opposite of instilling public confidence. Instead, it would introduce new anxieties to an already highly anxious public. And it would have real-life consequences for every community, since legal liability is one of the most powerful incentives we have to ensure that businesses operate safely. When workplaces are not properly protected, patients, customers, clients and the community are all at risk.

In addition, there is no evidence that businesses are being targeted by lawsuits, frivolous or otherwise, that are hindering their ability to operate the best they can during these challenging and unpredictable times. Changing a well-established statute to solve a non-existent problem unnecessarily puts lives at risk while ultimately hindering Colorado's overall economic recovery. This concern is not hypothetical. Some essential businesses have already put employees back in the workforce without ensuring their safety.¹ As a result, infections have spread in and out of the workplace.² In some cases, this has led to renewed shutdowns, slowing the pace of recovery.³ From protecting the food supply chain to preventing needless deaths in nursing homes,⁴ it is clear that companies responsible for the health and safety of others must continue having every incentive to protect them. Many companies already had serious safety problems prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic cannot be an excuse for failing to protect workers and the public.

¹ Zach Montague, *Coronavirus Cases at D.C. Whole Foods Highlight Risks Facing Grocery Workers*, NEW YORK TIMES (April 15, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/us/politics/coronavirus-grocery-workers-washington.html>. and

² Ryan Osborn, *Denver King Soopers employee dies of COVID-19 after working at Capitol Hill store with 12 cases, union says* <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/05/18/denver-cap-hill-king-soopers-coronavirus-death/>

³ Christopher Collins and Sophie Novack, *COVID-19 Cases Now Tied to Meat Plants in Rural Texas Counties Wracked with Coronavirus*, TEXAS OBSERVER (April 22, 2020), https://www.texasobserver.org/east-texas-coronavirus-chicken/?fbclid=IwAR1im8139ixuHyclCFHDxDeSi-6do82msm_85DSkBRE8rxBzHZqfwjfskSY; and Jessica Seaman, *Leprino Foods to partially reopen Fort Morgan cheese plant after workers tested positive for coronavirus* <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/04/29/leprino-foods-fort-morgan-cheese-plant-workers-coronavirus/>

⁴ Ben Kessler, *17 Bodies Crowded into Tiny Morgue Found at New Jersey Nursing Home*, NBC NEWS (April 16, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/17-bodies-crowded-tiny-morgue-found-new-jersey-nursing-homen1185121>.

⁴ Ben Kessler, *17 Bodies Crowded into Tiny Morgue Found at New Jersey Nursing Home*, NBC NEWS (April 16, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/17-bodies-crowded-tiny-morgue-found-new-jersey-nursing-homen1185121>.

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Moreover, greatly compounding the problem are recent trends toward deregulation and lax regulatory enforcement of workplace.⁵ The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has substantially stepped back from its role to protect the health and safety of workers during this pandemic, and is dangerously relying on employers to self-police.⁶ Under these circumstances, the specter of unsafe workplaces is a significant concern. Without adequate protective equipment and other safety measures, workers will be deterred from coming back to work. Immunity would only exacerbate these problems.

In sum, we strongly oppose any legislation that would immunize businesses that fail to ensure safe workplaces.

Very sincerely,

9to5

American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado
American Federation of Teachers
Colorado AFL-CIO
Colorado Fiscal Institute
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Latino Forum
Colorado Poor Peoples Campaign
Colorado Trial Lawyers Association
Colorado WINS

Communications Workers of America Local
777
Plaintiff Employment Lawyers Association
Service Employees International Union 105
The Bell Policy Center
The Workers Compensation Education
Association
New Era Colorado
Towards Justice
United North Metro Denver

⁵Jeff Stein and Robert Costa, *White House Readies Push to Slash Regulations as Major Part of its Coronavirus Economic Recovery Plan*, WASH. POST (April 21, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/04/21/white-house-coronavirus-regulations/>.

⁶Noam Scheiber, *Protecting Workers From Coronavirus: OSHA Leaves It to Employers*, NEW YORK TIMES (April 22, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/business/economy/coronavirus-osha-workers.html>.

12-1-2020



Members of the Senate Finance Committee –

On behalf of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, our 3,000 members and their 400,000 employees, we write to you today to express our support of HB20B-1002, Emergency Relief Programs for Child Care Sector.

The pandemic has highlighted what we've long known: that quality child care is essential for a successful economy. Indeed, these last few months have reinforced how critical child care is to our workforce. Throughout this pandemic, our child care providers have worked diligently to remain open and do so safely so that parents and caretakers of all professional backgrounds can work. And while so many have stepped up to fill this important need for frontline workers and other employees, they are struggling due to the declining enrollment and operational challenges that the pandemic presented. A recent survey of child care providers found that 40% are worried they would need to close permanently without additional public assistance and 73% of programs have or will engage in layoffs, furloughs and/or pay cuts.

The two grant programs established by the bill, the Child Care Sustainability Grant Program and the Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant Program, will help address this crisis. These two programs will provide aid to our existing child care providers to help them stay in business and will help rebuild some of the lost child care capacity as the economy and our communities recover.

This is vital to so many Coloradans. We've seen the pandemic's devastating impact on women in particular. They are leaving the workforce in greater numbers and entering the workforce at lower numbers than their male counterparts. The availability of child care no doubt has an impact on these numbers. As of October, 32% of nationwide employers had seen employees leave the workforce and half cited child care concerns as a contributing factor. In Colorado, roughly 21,000 women entered the labor force between August and September, while more than twice the number of men did, 52,000, and between

February and September, the size of the labor force of women with kids shrank by 42,000 women.

Child care providers are businesses in their own right. They are foundational to our economy. We support this effort to protect and strengthen these essential providers in our communities. We urge you to vote yes on HB20B-1002.



illuminate
Building Brighter Childhoods

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jade Woodard, Executive Director of Illuminate Colorado, a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. I am writing this letter **in support of HB20B-1002 Emergency Relief Programs for the Child Care Sector** on behalf of Illuminate, the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.

It is crucial to provide stimulus for Colorado's child care sector as public investments now can help providers navigate the next few months so they remain viable in the spring as the economic recovery takes off. Access to child care is critical for all parents and caregivers in order for children, families and communities to thrive. More than half of Coloradans live in a child care desert where there are more than three children for each available slot.

Through Illuminate's new mobile child care program, Illuminating Child Care, we know firsthand the importance of increasing access to child care for parents and caregivers navigating complex life situations as they seek to strengthen their families. When families struggling to manage life's challenges and the demands of raising children are also faced with the challenge of finding high quality child care, it can stand in the way of strengthening families. Before a parent can begin to address any complex issue impacting their family, like mental health concerns, substance use disorders, or employment challenges, they are too often faced, first, with struggling to find child care.

High-quality child care reduces parental stress and isolation. Even just adequate child care to ensure a child's health and safety is not accessible or affordable for many working families. This may lead parents to feel forced to leave their children alone or with caregivers who do not have the capacity to provide safe and appropriate supervision, leaving them vulnerable to endangerment, neglect, or abuse. Investing in the grant programs outlined in HB20B-1002 will save and protect our existing child care providers as well as help rebuild some of the lost child care capacity that we will rely on as the economy recovers.

The wellbeing of our state's children and families must remain urgent and high priority. Please join Illuminate Colorado in our support of HB20B-1002.

Sincerely,

Jade Woodard, MPA
Executive Director

jwoodard@illuminatecolorado.org

(303) 845-0193 cell



DATE: November 30, 2020
TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Kinsey Hasstedt, State & Local Policy Director, Enterprise Community Partners
RE: **Support SB2, Housing & Direct Rental Assistance**

Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging, and platforms for resilience and upward mobility for all. We bring together nationwide know-how, partners, policy leadership and capital investments to multiply the impact of affordable homes and put opportunity within every household's reach.

COVID-19 has caused extensive housing instability throughout Colorado. Particularly given inaction at the federal level, SB2 and the funding it will provide are necessary to alleviate some of the housing instability Coloradans have been experiencing for months—and will surely continue to face. **Enterprise Community Partners urges your support of SB2 - Housing & Direct Rental Assistance.**

COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges to Colorado and states across the nation. The foremost of these challenges is the potential loss of housing for thousands of Coloradans due to the crisis, and the health threats to those already experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) has already allocated upwards of \$20 million in rental assistance through its Property Owner Preservation Program and Emergency Housing Assistance Program, collectively serving more than 13,000 Colorado households. DOLA is on track to fully expend all currently available funds, and we know demand for rental assistance is already greater than what these programs can fill. According to the most recent estimates from the COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project, 8% of Colorado renters were in arrears as of late October, and between 345,000 and 436,000 Colorado renters were at risk of eviction by the end of the year (notwithstanding the current eviction moratorium).

Moreover, this is an equity issue: COVID-19 related housing insecurity has been shown to disproportionately impact low-income renters, households of color, and families with children. Need for rental assistance is only likely to increase as COVID cases continue to rise throughout Colorado.

The need for intervention is great – both for low income households with lost incomes and housing instability, and for homeless households. Dedicating \$45.5 million in state funds to housing assistance and direct supports, along with \$500,000 to the Eviction Legal Defense Fund, will go a long way in helping thousands of Colorado households to remain safely and healthily housed through the coming winter months of this pandemic. **Thank you for your support of SB2 – Housing & Direct Rental Assistance.**

Sincerely,
Kinsey Hasstedt, State & Local Policy Director

The Honorable Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Avenue, Room 136
Denver, CO 80203

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Governor Polis,

I am a citizen of the State of Colorado and a resident of _____ County.
I am writing to express my concern regarding your policies during the COVID-19 crisis.

(Initial all that apply):

_____ I have read the Open Letter to the Governor written by Russell and Christina Ballinger of Play Street Museum and support their statements to you.

_____ My children have visited Play Street Museum. It is important to my family that Play Street Museum be allowed to remain open.

_____ I believe I am capable of deciding how best to keep my children safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

_____ I believe that small businesses are an important part of the community.

_____ I believe citizens should have the right to choose whether to patronize businesses or stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

_____ I pledge that, in the event I feel it is unsafe for my family to visit local businesses, we will remain home.

_____ I feel that government regulations during the COVID-19 crisis have unnecessarily infringed on constitutional rights.

_____ I request that you rescind, or in the alternative, modify public health and executive orders for the State of Colorado in order to allow businesses to remain open.

Respectfully,

(Print Name)

(Signature)

Date signed

November 27, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Avenue, Room 136
Denver, CO 80203
Governorpolis.state.co.us

Dear Governor Polis:

We are writing to you to express our grave concern regarding the ramifications of restrictions on counties that constitute a "Level Red" on your COVID-19 Dial. On November 23, 2020, it was announced that El Paso County had been moved to Level Red and accordingly, new shutdown restrictions would apply beginning Friday, November 27, 2020. Consequently, our own business has been forced to close its doors to the public. We are the owners of Play Street Museum ("PSM"), an interactive children's museum located in Colorado Springs. Play Street is purposefully designed to encourage a young child's sense of independence and creativity.

It is not a revolutionary claim that forced shutdowns are devastating to small businesses. Despite your stated goals of "foster[ing] an economy that is beneficial to everyone" and "facilit[ating] recovery of Colorado's economy," your office has continually handed down orders that are devastating to the state's economy and community.

PSM has become a haven for families in the Springs. Parents, aunts, uncles, caretakers, and grandparents bring children to PSM to escape the mindless chatter of electronics, and give young ones the chance to be creative, playful, and social. Play therapists meet clients at our site for treatment. PSM helps build foundational traits that we all want in future citizens - the ability to think outside the box, the skills to form bonds with people different from themselves, and the courage to solve problems. PSM birthday parties give children and their friends an entire museum to themselves, with the freedom to laugh, play, and celebrate. We are not writing this as an advertisement for our business, but to help you understand the purpose behind PSM, and why continued restrictions will have long-lasting ramifications on the community. In June of this year, we extended an invitation for you and your staff to visit the Play Street Museum site. Understandably, you were unavailable. Our invitation to you, and all other state officials, remains open should anyone wish to tour our museum. We guarantee even you will be unable to resist putting pegs into our giant Lite-Brite!

Governor Polis, your office claims that restrictions are put in place to protect citizens during a public health crisis. What your policies fail to take into account is life after COVID-19. What is the use of surviving COVID-19 if there is no community to which our families may return? The children of Colorado have suffered enough from being forced out of school. They miss their friends, their routines, and their life outside the four walls of their homes.

It is a cruel and absurd reality that the adults of Colorado are free to continue buying alcohol, cigarettes, and recreational marijuana, while young children cannot share cake for their birthdays. The policies your office has put into place say that while alcohol and cannabis are critical to our citizens, the mental and emotional health of our children is not. Governor Polis, we respectfully but vehemently disagree.

Once we were allowed to reopen following the initial shutdowns of this summer, we instituted even more strict cleaning and health precautions in a space which we already kept immaculate. We take temperatures, sanitize, and limit capacity. Through diligence, determination, and educating ourselves on CDC guidelines, we were able to operate our business in a way that has allowed families to enjoy themselves while staying safe and healthy. Despite these efforts, we are yet again being forced to shut our doors. Our family-owned business barely survived the first round of shutdowns handed down from your office. Given the merciless pressure from our business landlord, it is unlikely we will be able to reopen our doors after the next wave of shutdowns. Many other local businesses, like PSM, are able to adapt operations in order to comply with necessary precautions while still remaining open. If given the opportunity to remain open, these businesses stand a chance at survival. They stand a chance at being able to employ other citizens who need an income to support their own families. You have denied businesses that chance.

We are asking that you trust your citizens. Coloradans are determined, strong, and resilient. They are also intelligent enough to make their own decisions regarding their family's safety. If people choose not to patronize businesses because of their concern for exposure, that is a choice they are entitled to make. Conversely, if people feel safe enough to continue on with their lives, they should also be entitled to make that choice. It is unclear why you should be allowed to dictate every minute detail of people's lives. You were elected as a governor, not a nanny.

Governor Polis, how has your income been affected by the state's shutdowns? Have you been able to pay your bills without applying for governmental loans? Do you go home to a bare pantry and rack your brain to figure out how to feed your young, hungry children? Have you stood for hours in line to apply for a minimum wage job? Have you walked up to the door of a business into which you have poured your whole life, only to find a threatening letter from your landlord's attorney posted on it?

Ours is not the only business on the brink of disaster due to public health and executive orders. We do not pretend to be experts in medicine, public health, or political strategy. We are two humble people with a passion for children's education, who built a small business from the ground up for the sole purpose of shaping the next generation.

We write to you to ask that you amend your policies regarding COVID-19 restrictions to accurately reflect the needs of the people of Colorado. Your citizens do not need babysitting; they need the freedom to exercise their constitutional rights. They need the opportunity to earn a living. They need an opportunity to care for their children.

If you continue to strangle the state, it will not recover from this pandemic. For the sake of Colorado's economy and sanity, please rescind your orders.

Respectfully,



Russell and Christina Ballinger
Play Street Museum
7075 Austin Bluffs Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80923
christyballinger@playstreetmuseum.com

Cc via e-mail and first class mail:

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Senator Cory Gardner
United States Senator for Colorado
102 S. Tejon Street, Suite 930
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Congressman Doug Lamborn
Congressional District No. 5
1125 Kelly Johnson Blvd, Suite 330
Colorado Springs, Co 80920

Senator Owen Hill
Senate District 10
200 E Colfax
Rm 346
Denver, CO 80203
Owen.hill.senate@state.co.us

Representative Shane Sandridge
House District 14
200 E Colfax
Rm 307
Denver, CO 80203
Shane.sandridge.house@state.co.us

Mark Waller
El Paso County Commissioner, District 2
Centennial Hall
200 South Cascade Avenue, Suite 100
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
markwaller@elpasoco.com

The Honorable John William Suthers
Mayor of Colorado Springs
30 S. Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

11/30/2020

10:54

SB20B-001

Catherine Kitch Position: For
Representing: Self

Please, we are drowning out here! I am the owner of several restaurants in Durango, CO. Those of us restaurant owners that are still open are ONLY open because we are taking out MAJOR debt and withdrawing money from our retirement accounts. This is NOT sustainable. I have not laid off my workers and I am still paying state and local sales tax, keeping my staff and customers safe, following the restrictions handed down by the Governor and local Health Department and I just got a bill from the state for our Business and Liquor Licenses.....ARE YOU KIDDING ME???!?! You want me to pay for a liquor license that I LITERALLY CANNOT use. These invoices for the licenses should be prorated including credit for this year's limited use. We are going to "wake up" after the vaccine becomes available to Zombie Towns. And we DO NOT NEED MORE DEBT....we need for things like Sales Tax and license fees to be WAIVED!! NOT DEFERRED.

BTW I have been in business and been successful for 18 years....I know how to manage a restaurant efficiently and successfully. I am just tired of "floating" myself....it is ONLY benefitting my employees and state and local agencies! WAKE UP!!!!

11/30/2020
10:21

SB20B-001 Tony Gagliardi Amend NFIB

Amend bill as follows:

1. allow cities that are in compliance that are located in counties that aren't in compliance have the ability to apply to administer this program.
2. A percentage of loss from 2020 compared to 2019 would be a preferable method of figuring. Many businesses are facing 70-90 percent losses for 2020 over 2019.
3. Allowing restaurants to figure in the credit card processing fees as part of the total expenses. The State of Colorado is allowed to charge processing fees when citizens use a credit card for tax and fee purposes, small retailers should be allowed the same benefit.

Written Testimony in Support of HB20B-0034, Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program
Rebecca Dubroff, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association
December 1, 2020

My name is Rebecca Dubroff and I serve as a Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association (AHA) is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Heart disease is the number one killer worldwide, and stroke ranks second globally. We want to see a world free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. In partnership with millions of volunteers and supporters, AHA funds innovative scientific research, fights for stronger public health policies, and provides lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat disease.

As of September 2020, more than 29 percent of Coloradans (1 in 3) lacked reliable access to nutritious food. The numbers are even higher for parents, people of color, and those living with disabilities. Food access is a serious issue and remains a top concern for almost 1 in 5 Coloradan households. Increased unemployment, underemployment and school closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are rapidly and drastically increasing these numbers.

Without access to affordable and nutritious food, people are at higher risk for diet-related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke. According to recent research, 1 in 7 individuals with atherosclerosis, have limited access to nutritious foods. Atherosclerosis is a heart problem where the buildup of fats, cholesterol and other substances in and on your artery walls can restrict blood flow.

As you can imagine, leaving atherosclerosis unchecked could be dangerous. The fatty plaque may partially or totally block blood flow through arteries in the heart and brain, leading to a heart attack or stroke. Treatments for the condition can include medication to prevent clot formation and to control risk factors, surgery, or lifestyle changes such as heart-healthy eating, weight management, exercise, and quitting smoking.

Individuals with cardiovascular disease face even higher health care costs, including medication costs, so they have to choose what to prioritize, food or medication. It is critical that these individuals, and all individuals, have access to nutritious affordable foods. Please support HB20B-0034, Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program to increase food access for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Testimony sent via the chat function on WebEx:

Jon Nicholas to all panelists: 1:32 PM

I write in favor of amending SB20b-010. The Estes Valley region depends upon existing easements thru WAPA to provide all communication in the region. In Sept. 2013, CenturyLink lost its fiber to Estes Park due to flood damage in Glen Haven. Private providers have all relied upon the Town of Estes Park's fiber loop and middle mile access to fibers thru WAPA to Loveland. During the recent fires, Estes Park finally obtained dundant fiber access thru the Adams Tunnel/WAPA to ensure public safety. In 2014, citizen meetings with CenturyLink and in 2015 with TDS did not create interest in improving private services to Estes Park. The Town decided to invest in muni broadband. after 6 years if careful study. Private providers already have access to the WAPA fibers and seek this WAPA provision to prevent more competition, not to benefit local residents.

Testimony sent via chat box on WebEx

this was sent in chat from webex

1:14:59 PM

rom Jon Nicholas to all panelists: 1:10 PM

1:15:01 PM

I write in support of SB20B-009, as an individual. During the first shutdowns and recently, I have seen arbitrary distiinctions between which businesses can remain open that have had hard impacts on small businesses. In Larimer County, it is estimated that 3% of current cases trace to restaurants. In the meantime, going to a supermarket on Monday afternoon felt very unsafe and crowded. I have attended the Loveland movie theaters five times since July. It felt like the safest public space, with attendees between me alone and up to five in a large space with IDed seating and stringent sanitation. The loss of small business will impact employees for years with stress, financial losses, depression and substance abuse all known impacts of shutting down small businesses and favoring large chains. These businesses will not continue or return withour equitable treatment.

HOUSING & DIRECT COVID EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (20B-0052)

Written Testimony

Tyler Jaeckel, Director of Policy & Research

November 30, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. I am Tyler Jaeckel, the director of policy and research at the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

The Bell Policy Center supports 20B-0052, Housing & Direct COVID Emergency Assistance. Colorado faces an unprecedented rental housing crisis. Even if the federal government were to provide immediate funding that could be focused on Colorado's eviction crisis, there would still be a need for the state to invest state resources. Especially in the absence of federal funds, Colorado needs to do what we can to stabilize families.

For Coloradans, the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to harm those beyond individuals directly affected by the virus. Families are having to decide between paying bills or eating. Work is unattainable for thousands of Coloradans. Up to 42.1 percent of Colorado residents report taking on debt to meet everyday spending needs, putting [Colorado second worst in national rankings released by Lendingtree](#). For Coloradans, using credit cards or loans (26.7 percent) was almost as likely to be a tactic for financing immediate spending needs as using savings or selling assets (28.5 percent).

According to early November Census Bureau data, at least 8 percent of Colorado renters are behind on rent, and 16 percent are housing insecure. [A recent study modeled the connection between eviction and COVID-19 spread](#). It found that a 1 percent eviction rate could be associated with a 25 percent increase in COVID cases; a 2 percent rate could lead to a 64 percent increase in cases. Further funding helps renters with time to get long-term assistance, keeps people in their homes during winter months, and buys time for additional federal assistance to arrive.

Every million dollars allocated pays at least one month's rent for 750 households. These rental assistance programs provide critical support for families, and they also have the effect of reducing state expenditures on healthcare, shelter, and other social services.

In particular, we are supportive of the following aspects of the bill:

- The **funding for housing assistance is flexible** and allows for the funding of programs that focus on long-term housing sustainability. New models that both alleviate rental debt and secure ongoing rental assistance are proving to be a vital tool during the crisis.
- Funding is specifically **allocated to individuals who are not eligible for other assistance**. Individuals without access to other assistance face significant resource needs from housing support to food assistance.

- When eviction moratoria ultimately expire, **tenants will increasingly need legal assistance in non-payment and no-fault eviction cases.** Before the expiration of the moratorium, legal defense funding is critical to help tenants avail themselves of the state's expanded eviction protections.

The assistance provided in this bill is no substitute for long-term housing relief that is needed at the federal level, but it makes important investments that will directly help Coloradans during this crisis. We urge the passage of this bill and hope to work with you on further housing relief in the months to come.



November 30, 2020

Dear Members of Colorado General Assembly:

Black Hills Energy is in support of the bill, Concerning Assistance for Individuals who are Unable to Pay Their Energy Utility Bills, which allocates \$5 million in General Fund dollars to the low-income energy assistance fund to help households facing economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coloradans are currently experiencing unprecedented financial strain and some utility customers have been put into a position where they will be unable to pay their bills at this time.

We strongly support programs that assist customers with energy assistance and are doing our part to help customers in this time of great need. Some customer support programs specific to Black Hills Energy include:

- Black Hills Energy Assistance Program (BHEAP) program, which is a bill payment assistance program for income qualified customers.
- Black Hills Cares, which is customer and company funded and administered by Energy Outreach Colorado. These funds go directly for local use in helping customers pay for energy related expenses. As part of this program, Black Hills Energy matches dollar for dollar all customer contributions and is the only electric utility to provide shareholder funds for this purpose. In the past 10 years, Black Hills Cares provided more than \$4 million in donations to assist those in need.
- Prior to the issuance of the Governor's Executive Order, , Black Hills Energy suspended all customer disconnects for nonpayment across its entire service territory to support customers who may be impacted by COVID-19. While we reinstated disconnects for nonpayment in September, we have been working with customers by conducting an unprecedented and wide-ranging customer assistance and outreach campaign. We have conducted "warm" calls to customers to connect them with resources, we have bolstered social media efforts around assistance, and have drafted written communications in the form of letters, postcards, emails, and texts. All messaging has included information on how to connect with energy assistance resources in the community or how to enroll in bill payment options. We remain focused on avoiding each disconnect through extensive measures.
- Black Hills Energy offers various assistance options to customers such as payment arrangements, budget billing and medical extensions. We have modified our payment arrangements and extended budget billing to ensure that more customers can enroll in available programs. This has the effect of keeping customers focused on managing their usage and seeking assistance so that overdue balances do not become unmanageable.
- We continue to work closely with agencies such as Energy Outreach Colorado, Posada, and Catholic Charities regarding needs and support of customers. We are working with EOC to find more ways to reach out to customers across our territory.

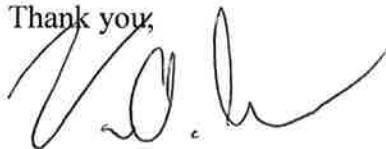
- Black Hills Energy has provided over \$120,000 for COVID relief to entities throughout Colorado and are continuing to evaluate future gifts.
- Our local Black Hills Energy team hosted an in-person event for assistance and arrangements in late September in the Eastside neighborhood of Pueblo and found that to be an impactful way to reach customers who need assistance.
- We have taken measures to make our electric home energy audit available virtually and offer \$100 gift cards by completing the home energy audit process.

Now, more than ever, Coloradans need a safety net to ensure that they can protect their families and maintain access to electricity and natural gas to power and heat their homes. This bill will help bolster programs currently in existence and provide critical support to those who need it most.

As a provider of essential energy services, we are ready and are doing everything we can to continue to serve our customers with safe, reliable service in these uncertain times.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical bill. If we can help to answer any questions, please contact Christina Rosendahl, Manager of Government Affairs at 303-378-1602 or at christina.rosendahl@blackhillscorp.com.

Thank you,



Vance Crocker, VP- Colorado Operations, Black Hills Energy



Nick Wagner, VP- Colorado Regulatory and Policy, Black Hills Energy



November 30, 2020

Dear Members of Colorado General Assembly:

Black Hills Energy is in support of the bill, Concerning Assistance for Individuals who are Unable to Pay Their Energy Utility Bills, which allocates \$5 million in General Fund dollars to the low-income energy assistance fund to help households facing economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Black Hills Energy Assistance Program (BHEAP) program, which is a bill payment assistance program for income qualified customers.
- Black Hills Cares, which is customer and company funded and administered by Energy Outreach Colorado. These funds go directly for local use in helping customers pay for energy related expenses. As part of this program, Black Hills Energy matches dollar for dollar all customer contributions and is the only electric utility to provide shareholder funds for this purpose. In the past 10 years, Black Hills Cares provided more than \$4 million in donations to assist those in need.
- Prior to the issuance of the Governor's Executive Order, , Black Hills Energy suspended all customer disconnects for nonpayment across its entire service territory to support customers who may be impacted by COVID-19. While we reinstated disconnects for nonpayment in September, we have been working with customers by conducting an unprecedented and wide-ranging customer assistance and outreach campaign. We have conducted "warm" calls to customers to connect them with resources, we have bolstered social media efforts around assistance, and have drafted written communications in the form of letters, postcards, emails, and texts. All messaging has included information on how to connect with energy assistance resources in the community or how to enroll in bill payment options. We remain focused on avoiding each disconnect through extensive measures.
- Black Hills Energy offers various assistance options to customers such as payment arrangements, budget billing and medical extensions. We have modified our payment arrangements and extended budget billing to ensure that more customers can enroll in available programs. This has the effect of keeping customers focused on managing their usage and seeking assistance so that overdue balances do not become unmanageable.
- We continue to work closely with agencies such as Energy Outreach Colorado, Posada, and Catholic Charities regarding needs and support of customers. We are working with EOC to find more ways to reach out to customers across our territory.

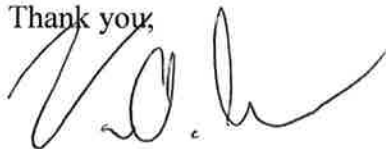
- Black Hills Energy has provided over \$120,000 for COVID relief to entities throughout Colorado and are continuing to evaluate future gifts.
- Our local Black Hills Energy team hosted an in-person event for assistance and arrangements in late September in the Eastside neighborhood of Pueblo and found that to be an impactful way to reach customers who need assistance.
- We have taken measures to make our electric home energy audit available virtually and offer \$100 gift cards by completing the home energy audit process.

Now, more than ever, Coloradans need a safety net to ensure that they can protect their families and maintain access to electricity and natural gas to power and heat their homes. This bill will help bolster programs currently in existence and provide critical support to those who need it most.

As a provider of essential energy services, we are ready and are doing everything we can to continue to serve our customers with safe, reliable service in these uncertain times.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical bill. If we can help to answer any questions, please contact Christina Rosendahl, Manager of Government Affairs at 303-378-1602 or at christina.rosendahl@blackhillscorp.com.

Thank you,



Vance Crocker, VP- Colorado Operations, Black Hills Energy



Nick Wagner, VP- Colorado Regulatory and Policy, Black Hills Energy

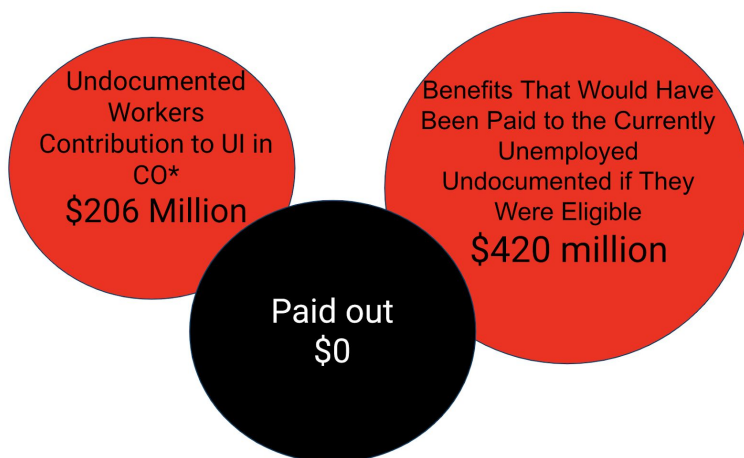
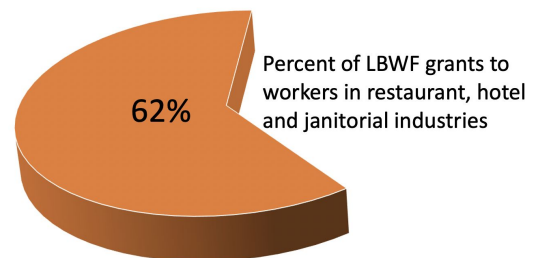
Left Behind Worker Fund Testimony in Support of SB20B-0052

Mark Newhouse & Katrina Van Gasse, founders Left Behind Workers Fund

This bill’s emergency direct cash assistance seeks to build on work done to support immigrant workers by a partnership of community-based organizations and the Left Behind Workers Fund. The Left Behind Workers Fund has been supported by private foundations (60%) and four public partners (The City of Denver, Adams County, The City of Boulder and Boulder County).

Immigrant workers without documentation are important members of our communities. They work in industries that are critical to our economy and our way of life in Colorado. They make our tourism industries run, they provide in-home care to our seniors, they nurture our children, and their hands bring food to our tables, whether that table is in a home or at a restaurant. Like the rest of us, immigrants work hard to support their families and contribute to society.

During this COVID recession the industries they primarily work in, restaurant, hotel and janitorial/cleaning, have been the hardest hit. The recent Red level restrictions throughout our state are leading to another wave of restaurant shutdowns and layoffs. The unemployment rate for these workers without documentation has been estimated to be 29%¹.



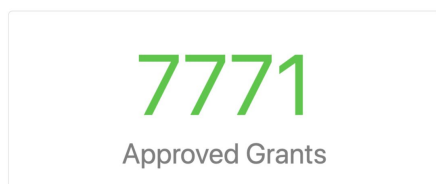
The Colorado Fiscal Institute² estimates that in Colorado, employers of these workers have contributed, since the last recession, \$206 Million in insurance premiums on their behalf to the State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Yet, in this recession they have received \$0 in unemployment insurance benefits.

The Left Behind Workers Fund (LBWF) was formed to provide direct grants to recently unemployed workers ineligible for unemployment insurance and the federal

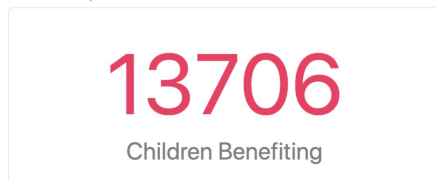
stimulus check. The Left Behind Workers Fund partners with the following 30 community-based organizations to reach to, and to screen applicants:

| Screening Organizations | Outreach Organizations |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| RISE | Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition |
| Aurora Community Connection | Colorado People's Alliance (COPA) |
| Village Exchange Center (Natural Helpers) | La Plata Family Centers Coalition |
| Adelante Network Jeffco | Alianza NORCO |
| Servicios De La Raza | Centennial BOCES |
| El Centro Humanitario | Jewish Family Services |
| Focus Points | Fax Partnership |

| Screening Organizations | Outreach Organizations |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| GES Coalition | Lutheran Family Services - Denver |
| Lifespan Local | Montbello Walks |
| Mi Casa | East Colfax Community Collective |
| AMISTAD | Colorado Change Collective |
| Hispanic Affairs Project | DPS/FACE |
| Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center | Westwood Unidos |
| Family & Intercultural Resource Center | Rocky Mountain Welcome Center |
| Full Circle | Mosaic Church of Aurora |
| LaMedichi - Manaus | MHUW 211 |
| Adelante Community Development | Tri-County Health Department |
| SARCO | Spring Institute |
| Amigos de Mexico | |



Children Benefiting *



The LBWF has delivered thousands of grants across the State of Colorado. Those grants have supported households with more than thirteen thousand children. We continue to deliver these thousand dollar grants. When fully funded, the system can distribute a million dollars every nine working days.

The State of Colorado has contributed to our rental aid fund, but we believe that the needs of these left behind workers is best (and most efficiently) addressed with direct cash grants. Direct cash provides these workers with the power to choose how best to put scarce dollars to use to support themselves

and their families.

With the roughly \$9 Million we expect to have distributed by year's end, we will have reached an estimated 25% of those eligible. \$9 Million is, of course, a tiny fraction of the \$200 Million paid in as unemployment insurance premiums.

We believe that this workforce, which plays such a critical role in many of the industries we need to lead our recovery, deserves not to be left behind in their time of greatest need. This bill's proposal of five million dollars for direct cash grants deserves support and can be a critical part of the lifeline to this community. Furthermore, dollars delivered to this population very quickly circulate in our economy, to landlords, to grocery stores etc...supporting our economy during these difficult times.

- [1. Excluding undocumented immigrants from stimulus funds cost \\$10 billion in economic activity](#)
- [2. A Strong Recovery Requires Relief for All Coloradans](#)