



## Written Testimony in Strong Support of 20B-0034: 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 20B-0034, 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 20B-0034. Thank you.

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