



January 31, 2018

Dear Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I am writing to share the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless' (CCH's) thoughts on House Bill 18-1054. The Coalition's mission is work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for homeless and at-risk families, children, and individuals throughout Colorado. We provide housing for over 2600 individuals and families on any given night in Colorado through our 18 affordable housing facilities and relationships with landlords and property managers and our health system provides primary care, behavioral health, dental, vision and pharmacy care to over 13,000 low-income individuals annually.

We are encouraged by the efforts of Representative Rosenthal in bringing HB1054 up for discussion. Increasing rents, decreasing housing supply, significant population growth, gentrification of historical neighborhoods, and no designated statewide funding source for housing in Colorado is putting intense pressure on working families and individuals and increasing the rates of homelessness across our state.

A recent report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition showed that Colorado is one of 17 states that has less than the national average of affordable and available units per 100 households. More striking is that the greatest deficit in housing is for our most vulnerable families and individuals who are living in poverty or just on the brink of poverty. For every 100 housing units needed in Colorado for those who are living at 80% of area median income (about \$65k for a family of four), we have about 94 units available. However, for those living at 50% of the area median income (about \$40,000 for a family of four), Colorado only has 52 units available for every 100 needed. And, for those most in need of affordable and attainable housing, those living at 30% of area median income (about \$24,000 for a family of four), there are only 27 units available for every 100 needed. These families are being forced to double-up, live in motels, sleep in their cars, and more and more are ending up homeless and on the streets of Colorado. I think we can all agree that this is unacceptable.

We believe that Colorado needs a permanent, dedicated funding stream to generate more housing and we believe that the funding must be targeted to where that housing is most needed. Although HB1054 could provide the desperately needed upfront infusion of dollars to address the affordable housing crisis, we are concerned about the sustainability of the funding source and think that the funds should be more deeply targeted in order to address the devastating deficit of affordable homes for those living with the lowest incomes, or with no income at all. We also think that the bill should provide direction to the Colorado Division of Housing on how to allocate the funds so that only projects that attempt to address the greatest need are prioritized and that guidelines are put in place to fund only those projects that can guarantee long-term affordability.

With over 10,000 people forced to sleep on the streets in Colorado last year, this legislative body must act now to create and sustain a source of funding for housing and services. The Coalition will continue to provide housing and services to those most in need and we look forward to continuing to work together with the sponsors and this legislature to bring more resources and more expertise to solving one of Colorado's most pressing issues.

All the best -

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