

Senate Local Government & Housing

04/09/2026 01:30 PM

HB26-1045 Disab Housing Protections

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

| Name, Position, Representing | Typed Text of Testimony |
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| <p>Davon Williams</p> <p>For themselves</p> | <p>Chair and members of the Committee,</p> <p>My name is Davon Williams, and I am a candidate for Colorado House District 3, representing communities in Denver and Arapahoe County. I am writing in support of HB26-1045.</p> <p>This bill provides important clarity around assistance animals, emotional support animals, and what constitutes a reasonable accommodation in housing. Clear definitions and standards are essential to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to housing.</p> <p>As someone with experience as a landlord, I understand how important it is to have consistent and well-defined expectations. When standards are unclear, it creates confusion for both tenants and housing providers. This bill helps reduce that uncertainty while reinforcing protections against discrimination.</p> <p>From a community perspective, housing stability depends on both access and clarity. Individuals with disabilities should not face barriers because of inconsistent interpretations of the law, and housing providers should have clear guidance on how to comply.</p> <p>HB26-1045 strengthens the application of existing protections while improving consistency across the system.</p> |

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| | <p>I urge your support.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>Davon Williams</p> |
| <p>Olivia Compton For Inside Out Youth Services</p> | <p>Thank you, Senator Exum and members of the committee, for the opportunity to share my testimony. My name is Dr. Olivia Compton, and I am a Board Member and the Vice Chair of Policy & Advocacy Committee at Inside Out Youth Services. We urge the committee to vote in favor of HB26-1045.</p> <p>Inside Out Youth Services works with LGBTQIA2+ youth and young adults aged 13-24 to build access, equity, and power in Colorado Springs. Our case manager works with young adults in their search for housing and employment and connects them with services that can address their needs. Some of our young adults are disabled and have assistance animals, which can present unique challenges, and come with additional barriers.</p> <p>The absence of clear federal guidelines on assistance animals and emotional support animals creates room for interpretation resulting in unpredictable experiences with housing providers and increases the probability of discrimination. This bill addresses this gap ensuring greater equity and access for our disabled youth and community members. For these reasons, we at Inside Out Youth Services ask the committee to vote in favor of HB26-1045.</p> |



To: Senate Local Government & Housing Committee Hearing
From: Animal Policy Group on behalf of American Pet Products Association and Independence Pet Holdings
Subject: Support for CO HB1045 Disabilities Housing Protections

Honorable Members of the Senate Local Government & Housing Committee Hearing,

On behalf American Pet Products Association (APPA), Independence Pet Holdings (IPH)/Pets and Families Housing Coalition we express our strong support for HB1045 Disabilities Housing Protections.

In October 2025, the Trump Administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) rescinded key guidance interpreting the Fair Housing Act's (FHA) and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act's application to "assistance animals," including Emotional Support Animals.

The two specific guidance documents on this topic that have been withdrawn are:

- FHEO 2020-01: Assessing a Person's Request to Have an Animal as a Reasonable Accommodation Under the Fair Housing Act (Jan. 28, 2020)

FHEO Notice 2013-01: Service Animals and Assistance Animals for People with Disabilities in Housing and HUD-funded Programs (April 25, 2013)

It was the guidance in these documents that laid out the steps housing providers need to follow to comply with the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which outline protections in housing for people living with disabilities. The guidance explicitly disallowed landlords from subjecting ESAs to breed, weight, or size restrictions and charging additional deposits, pet rent, or non-refundable fees.

While the rescission of this guidance does not, in any straightforward way, mean that these protections are no longer in place under either the FHA or Rehabilitation Act, the lack of guidance leaves significantly more room for interpretation by housing providers and much less housing security and consistency for tenants – particularly low-income tenants -- who rely on their animals for emotional support.¹

The rescission of this federal guidance, therefore, poses a serious threat to all tenants with ESAs who are living with animals that would otherwise be disallowed at their rental property due to breed, weight, or size restrictions and who are not currently paying any fees that would be typically charged to a pet owner.

Colorado is taking a vital step to ensure that these long-standing protections for Colorado tenants with disabilities (and their emotional support animals) remain in place.

Thank you for your time,

Loren Breen

Director of Government Relations

(520) 975-9880

animalpolicygroup.com



Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council

To the Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristina Ericson, and I am the Policy Director for the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. We are a federally mandated advisory body and State office that works to knock down systemic barriers faced by Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advise state leaders on the process. I am also a certified ADA specialist with specific expertise in programmatic accessibility and service animal inclusion, and I used to be the service animal policy specialist for the City and County of Denver. I am writing today in support of HB26-1045.

For many Coloradans with disabilities having an assistance animal is critical to living an independent, meaningful, life. I want to stress that assistance animals are not pets, they are disability supports. They are a tool to help someone through their day to day lives - similar to how a wheelchair, a pair of crutches, or an anti-depressant medication is used. They exist to help people with disabilities and psychiatric conditions with the things that are hard in life. The presence of assistive animals in housing has been a protected right in the United States for decades, and I hope to see the continuation of these protections for many years to come.

Securing affordable and accessible housing is one of the biggest barriers faced by disabled Coloradans. There are immense fears in the disability community over housing: Can I find a place without stairs? Is it close to the bus line I need? Can I age in this place? You name it. It is my professional opinion that the last thing that people need to worry about in their fight to find housing is "can my assistance dog live with me?"

Saying yes to this bill is saying yes to protecting Coloradans with disabilities at a time in history when many disability rights and protections are under attack. I encourage you all to vote yes on this bill today, and support Coloradans in living independent, meaningful lives.

Thank you.

Kristina Ericson, MSW, CPACC, ADAC (she/her)
Director of Policy and Partnerships
Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council
Phone: (720) 703-5101



April 9, 2026

RE: HB26-1045 Disabilities Housing Protection—SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government & Housing Committee:

My name is Jo Feder, and I am a Volunteer Lobbyist with the League of Women Voters of Colorado's Legislative Action Committee. **I am writing in support of HB26-1045 on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Colorado.**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO) has been a nonpartisan organization for 106 years, encourages informed and active participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 20 local leagues operating in several regions around our state. The LWVCO supports policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for everyone and continued evaluation to provide a basis for revision and strengthening of all procedures so that equality of opportunity for access to housing can be accomplished.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rescinded federal guidelines that outlined the rights that people with disabilities have regarding service animals under the Fair Housing Act. Among other things, these guidelines helped landlords, property managers, and tenants understand how to distinguish between service animals and emotional support animals. The Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act often relies on guidance from federal agencies, and without these federal guidelines it is unclear what rights Coloradans with disabilities have and what reasonable accommodations housing providers must provide to these tenants. This has created a need to codify current practices into Colorado law.

This bill addresses Colorado laws under Title 24, Article 34 (Department of Regulatory Agencies) and concerns housing protection for individuals with disabilities. This bill specifies conditions related to assessing reasonable accommodations in housing and prohibiting unfair or discriminatory housing practices against individuals with disabilities. The bill also creates definitions for "Assistance Animal" and "Emotional Support Animal" to provide clarity to housing providers and tenants, reinforces existing civil rights protections, and mitigates unnecessary animal surrender and shelter overcrowding.

The bill defines "Assistance Animal" as an animal that does work, performs tasks, assists, or provides therapeutic emotional support to an individual with a disability, and includes an emotional support animal and a service animal. It defines "Emotional Support Animal" as an animal that provides solely emotional support to an individual to alleviate a symptom or an effect of a disability. It defines "Reasonable Accommodation" as an exception or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for an individual with a disability to have equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing, including public and common-use spaces.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on HB26-1045 to provide another tool to address our housing crisis. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,
Jo Feder, Volunteer Lobbyist, Housing
League of Women Voters of Colorado

110 16th Street Mall, Suite 1326
Denver, CO 80202
303-863-0437

My name is Roland Halpern, and I am the executive director of Colorado Voters for Animals, an all-volunteer, nonpartisan animal advocacy organization representing over 45,000 Coloradans who care about animal welfare and protection.

Companion animals are part of our families; for some their only family. Having to surrender a companion animal for any reason can literally tear a family apart.

According to the 2025 *National Fair Housing Alliance Trends Report*, in 2024, 32,321 discrimination complaints were filed. 55 percent, or 17,611, involved persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, the Trends Report did not go into specifics as to the types of denials, so we don't know how many may have been animal related, but it is safe to say there were some.

When I searched the Internet looking for stories about discrimination against disabled persons owning service animals the vast majority had to do with court settlements after a discrimination suit had been filed.

One example involving an HOA in Snowmass Village resulted in a \$50,000 DOJ consent order over allegations the HOA repeatedly denied a reasonable accommodation for an emotional support animal and imposed/loomed fines, forcing the residents to leave their home temporarily.

In California a news story entitled: *Denied, displaced, dismantled* reports: "A man with a mental health disability spent nine months living on the streets of Napa — not for lack of housing, but because he had an emotional support animal."

This bill is necessary because federal oversight of discrimination laws have been diminishing. In an October 2025 article entitled: *HUD Withdraws Fair Housing Guidance Documents* the article notes that the withdrawn materials and guidance include such topics as: "reasonable accommodations for disabled persons' use of assistance animals."

Far too many animals are abandoned to shelters for any number of reasons. When that involves relinquishment of a service animal it can pose a distinct danger to a disabled person. Colorado Voters for Animals supports any legislation that helps keep people and their animal companions together, and therefore asks for your "yes" vote on this bill.

Thank you.