



February 13, 2023

RE: HB23-1120 Eviction Protections for Residential Tenants - SUPPORT

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kathy Smith, and I am a Volunteer Lobbyist with the League of Women Voters of Colorado's Legislative Action Committee. **I am writing in strong support of HB23-1120, on behalf of the League's Legislative Action Committee.**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO) has been a nonpartisan organization for 103 years, encourages informed and active participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions around the state.

The LWVCO supports policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every person. According to the fiscal note for this bill, there were over 38,000 evictions in Colorado during 2018-2019. Over 87,000 Coloradans receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits per month, and nearly 67,000 Coloradans receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). According to the Department of Human Services, 11,669 Coloradans received Colorado Works benefits (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF) in 2021.

Tenants with disabilities face additional barriers to finding housing that meets their accessibility requirements, and tenants who receive cash assistance face additional barriers to finding housing that is affordable on a fixed income. Only one in four people who qualify for rental subsidies receives them.

This bill requires mediation between a landlord and a residential tenant in an eviction proceeding if the tenant discloses that they receive supplemental security income, federal social security disability insurance, or financial assistance from the Colorado Works program. Prelitigation mediation facilitates communication between tenants and landlords and can result in reasonable alternatives to eviction. Keeping people housed and preventing evictions saves taxpayers money by reducing public spending and saves property owners from incurring expenses from legal fees, vacancies, and resident turnovers.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on HB23-1120. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Respectfully,
Kathy Smith, Volunteer Lobbyist
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