

House Finance

02/13/2023 01:30 PM

HB23-1008 Food Accessibility

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Michael Neil For themselves	<p>Thank you Chair Snyder, Vice-Chair Joseph, and esteemed members of House Finance. Thank you, Representative Weissman for bringing this bill to us today. My name is Michael Neil and I rise in strong support of HB23-1008 on behalf of myself. It is clear that our lowest income Coloradoans cannot afford nutritious food. Even before the pandemic, a survey done in 2018 comprising more than 3,000 students at Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, University of Colorado Denver and the University of Denver participated in the 2018 study, which found 40% of respondents experienced food insecurity in the 30 days before taking the survey, while 55% faced housing insecurity within the previous year and 18% were homeless during that same timeframe. This survey emerged, of course, before COVID and its economic aftermath which, as we know, greatly disrupted incomes, especially for those individuals on the margins. I have not seen a second study that would reveal current numbers, but it could be easily assumed that food insecurity is much higher. Second, I would like to address the stresses for individuals with disabilities in a more qualitative way. Not only have we seen housing and apartment prices greatly increase, but we have also seen much higher expenditures for personal care assistance due to the well-established health-care shortage. These two spiraling expenditures have pushed many people with disabilities who were already on the economic margins to fall short of actually being able to consume nutritious food. Furthermore, I appreciate that the increased tax burden appears to be spread widely between individual taxpayers and corporations.</p>