

Dear Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jack Regenbogen, and I am the Deputy Executive Director of Colorado Poverty Law Project. We are a nonprofit that works to prevent homelessness through free legal assistance, housing and navigation. I am writing to respectfully express our opposition to House Bill 25-1104.

While we acknowledge the importance of protecting property rights, this proposed legislation raises significant concerns regarding its potential impact on vulnerable Coloradans and the criminal justice system.

Firstly, the bill introduces the crime of squatting as a strict liability offense, punishable by substantial fines and possible imprisonment for repeat offenders. This approach fails to consider the complex socio-economic factors that often lead individuals to occupy vacant properties without authorization. Many individuals who resort to squatting are experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, or economic hardship. Criminalizing their actions without addressing the root causes of their circumstances is likely to exacerbate their vulnerabilities and perpetuate a cycle of poverty and incarceration.

Moreover, the bill mandates law enforcement to remove individuals from a property within 24 hours upon the presentation of legal title by the landowner, without the need for a court order. This provision could lead to hasty evictions without due process, potentially displacing individuals who may have legitimate tenancies or who are unaware of legal proceedings against them. The absence of judicial oversight in such removals raises concerns about the protection of individuals' rights and the potential for misuse of authority.

As a legal aid provider, we know how often misunderstandings can occur and the importance of having due process in court for both sides to share their perspectives, which this bill would eliminate.

Additionally, the imposition of fines up to \$2,000 per offense, along with daily fines of up to \$1,000 for continued occupancy, places an undue financial burden on individuals who are likely already in dire economic situations. For repeat offenses, the prospect of up to six months in jail further strains our criminal justice system and diverts resources from addressing more serious crimes. This punitive approach does not offer a sustainable solution to the underlying issues of housing insecurity and may lead to increased recidivism.

Furthermore, the bill absolves landowners from liability for damages occurring during the removal of individuals convicted of squatting. This provision could inadvertently encourage aggressive eviction tactics, potentially resulting in harm to individuals and property, without holding landowners accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, while the protection of property rights is essential, House Bill 25-1104 adopts a punitive approach that fails to address the root causes of unauthorized occupancy and would upend vital due process safeguards. We urge the committee to vote no on this bill and to consider alternative solutions that focus on providing support and resources to vulnerable Coloradans,

such as affordable housing initiatives, mental health services, and economic assistance programs. By addressing the underlying issues contributing to squatting, we can develop more compassionate and effective strategies that uphold property rights while promoting social welfare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jack Regenbogen, Esq.  
Deputy Executive Director  
Colorado Poverty Law Project

**House Judiciary**

**02/04/2025 01:30 PM**

**HB25-1104 Squatting Prohibited**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Jim Robertson For themselves	<p>Fully support owners' rights. This country was founded on property ownership. Far too long have owner rights been infringed and undermined in favor of unlawful occupants who should have no rights in these situations.</p> <p>Fines and liability should be severe enough to deter this crime Enforcement must be immediate. Justice must be swift and meaningful to stop these crimes.</p>
Linda Workman For themselves	<p>I support this House Bill 25-1104 by Rep Rebecca Keltie. I have a rental, and my tenant did not keep his agreement and pay rent for 2 months. By the time I posted the demand for compliance, notice to quit, and make two court dates (which was a total of 2.5 months, I finally got the Writ of Restitution after an additional 48 hours. After I gave the writ of restitution to the Sherriff's department, I found out that they could not execute it for at least 10 days. This gave the squatters a total of 90 days after the eviction process started before they could be forced out. This is too much time. They destroyed my house, knowing that they would eventually have to move. The damage was at least \$60,000.00. This is why I support this bill to have a quicker response to a move out time and to give the landlords more rights to evict their tenants in a timely manner.</p> <p>Thank you Linda Workman</p>
Jeany Rush For themselves	<p>TO: House Judiciary Committee RE: HB25-1104 Squatting Prohibited Sponsor: Keltie 2-4-25 FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs Concerned Constituent VOTE: YES</p>

	<p>Not one person should fall prey to squatters in their homes, commercial properties, or any other property they own. For too long our citizens have been terrorized by criminals, illegal invaders' and others with mischief, outright crime, on their agenda. We the people have certainly suffered enough from the crimes against innocent homeowners by people who do not respect our laws, our rights.</p> <p>It is beyond high time that our law enforcement is enabled to protect the rightful owners of property from criminals who literally game' the system at all of our expense. No community can sustain decent living conditions, when criminals can have loopholes to steal our rights.</p> <p>Allowing over 40,000 illegal invaders into Denver is certainly not a good idea. However, whether these people squatting are from another nation, or whether they are scam artists' looking for a free spot, it is totally wrong, and should never have been allowed in the first.</p> <p>I applaud this bill for giving some relief for decent, rightful owners. Landlords, public records are certainly a way to verify who is rightfully occupying a property.</p> <p>Now see, this could be a serious life and death situation, and might even be a potential Safety Clause Item.</p> <p>Thank you for your considerations on this one!</p>
<p>Kristine Garofalo For themselves</p>	<p>I support Rep Rebecca Keltie House Bill 25-1104 (HB25-1104) for many reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* private property is the basis of America's free and fair society and we should protect it at all costs</li> <li>* current laws unfairly give squatters the upper hand in occupying private property (this is absurd!).</li> <li>* landlords are exiting the rental industry bc no one wants to deal with the financial and legal risks associated with squatters; this exasperates the already challenging (affordable) housing market</li> <li>* resources could be reallocated towards (real) criminal threats rather than wasted on (rightfully) protecting private property</li> </ul>

	<p>It's absurd that we are even having this conversation. Squatters should have no rights to other people's private property PERIOD.</p>
<p>Brian Moody For Cougar Holdings llc</p>	<p>I've done over 600 real estate transactions as an investor in El Paso county. The current squatting rules are unconstitutional, unfair and destructive to real state market values. This bill proposed by Keltie would do much to reverse the harm that's being caused by existing legislation. As many transactions as I've done, I'm still just a regular citizen, raising a family, trying to make a living. Please make owning a rental more fair by passing this bill!!!</p>