



March 23, 2021

Dear members of the Senate State Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee,

I write on behalf of Colorado Nonprofit Association to express our support for HB 21-1054 and thank Senator Gonzales and Representative Jackson for bringing this bill forward. Colorado Nonprofit Association represents over 1,400 nonprofit organizations statewide. Our mission is to lead, serve, and strengthen Colorado's nonprofit community to improve the quality of life throughout our state.

We support HB 21-1054 because it eliminates the statutory requirement that state government agencies *must* verify the lawful presence of applicants for state housing assistance. If a state agency determines that lawful presence should be verified in applications for certain housing assistance programs, then it *may* require applicants to provide needed information.

When state agencies enter grant agreements or contracts with nonprofit organizations to provide housing assistance, then those nonprofits are typically required to verify the lawful presence of applicants for assistance under state law. This puts nonprofits in the uncomfortable position of requesting and sometimes retaining personal information from applicants. Nonprofits also pay the costs of performing these verifications from private donations if the agreement or contract does not provide additional resources to reimburse these expenses.

These verification requirements can also deter people who are lawfully present but foreign-born, or with foreign-born family members, from applying out of fear of negative ramifications for the legal status of themselves or family members. HB 21-1054 allows state agencies to forego unnecessary lawful presence verifications that can keep eligible people from applying.

Our understanding is that 1054 would not affect federally-funded housing programs that require lawful presence verification, whether those programs are delivered by state or local government agencies or nonprofit grantees or contractors.

We ask you to vote yes on HB 21-1054 and please contact me with any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Turner".

Mark Turner,
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