

Thank you Chair and members of the committee,

We are testifying in support of HB21-1011 which seeks to expand language accessibility in our statewide elections by increasing translation of ballots into multiple languages and through funding other critical interpretation resources.

The Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business, and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state. We believe that the creation of this office will build upon current efforts to successfully integrate and include immigrant and refugee communities all over Colorado; a value we continuously work towards upholding.

Passing HB21-1011 would allow community members whose first language is not English to fully participate and fulfill their civic duty; a foundational and essential value of our democracy. This bill would ensure voters have access to multilingual ballots and would allow them to have a voice in state matters and policies that affect them directly.

Colorado has 82,096 voters that are eligible to vote but are limited by their knowledge of the English language. Participating in elections is an essential aspect of our democracy, but language barriers bar eligible voters from participating in elections where their counties only offer election materials in English. Ballots include tricky and complicated language; making them incomprehensible and unreadable even if an individual has some understanding of English.

This bill provides access to a statewide interpretation hotline which will provide over-the-phone translation offered in the same languages as in the census. Specifically, it would require counties where 2,000 of their citizens over the age of 18 do not speak English and speak a different language at home to create translated copies of their ballots available by 2022. It would also require these counties to provide eligible voters the option to vote with translated ballots at a Voter Service and Polling Center by 2022.

As a state, we have the responsibility of ensuring every Coloradan that is eligible to vote has a say in what policies affect themselves, their families, and their communities directly. Voting in favor of this bill will further diminish the barriers that are presented by language limitations and ensure every citizen is guaranteed their constitutional right to vote. An individual's limited understanding of English should not limit their ability to participate in our democracy.

HB21-1011 will increase accessibility and allow Coloradans to fulfill their democratic duties by casting a vote on issues that impact our state.

We urge you to vote YES on HB21-1011. Thank you for your time.

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

80219



Written Testimony to Strongly Support HB21-1011

My name is Katherine Riley and I am the Policy Manager for the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). COLOR works to engage and empower the Latinx community to speak out about the policies that impact our daily lives.

We are committed to ensuring that Latinas and our families are able to make personal decisions about health, have access to affordable services and that we are each able to live our lives with dignity. That means that we must make sure Latinas are not only able to vote, but supported to get to the ballot box and to understand and navigate the process.

Our vote is our voice. Our vote is our chance to have a say in who makes key decisions about our health, our families and our lives. We should do more to ensure that people are able to vote, rather than allowing our right to vote to be trampled on or taken away.

The *Voting Rights Act* was enacted in 1965 after years of people of color enduring violence and mistreatment when we tried to register or to exercise our right to vote. The *VRA* was meant to prohibit the practices that were designed to humiliate and exclude people of color from voting, but the fact is that across the country we are still fighting limitations on who gets to vote - either intentionally through disenfranchisement like voter ID or voter roll purges or through a lack of attention to what true accessibility requires. These limits have a disparate impact on people of color and other folks who are pushed to the margins and silenced.

We are honored to testify in support of House Bill 1011. We can and must do more to ensure that we each have a say in who sits at the tables and gets to be in the halls of power. Ensuring that people are not pushed out of the process because they cannot read a ballot is a simple, but important first step.

Voting can be a complicated and intimidating process for anyone. For the estimated 1 in 3 Latinx voters for whom English may not be their first or primary language, this is made worse by a lack of appropriate language support, including multilingual ballots.

Every 30 seconds, a Latinx person turns 18 and becomes eligible to vote. That's about 66,000 people every month according to the Pew Research Center. This is a large block who must have a voice in the process and yet in a 2016 survey, 1 in 6 Latinx respondents reported a "lack of Spanish-language assistance or materials" as a barrier to voting.

To ignore the language needs of our communities is to ignore the right to participate in the system, plain and simple. Offering support for language access creates opportunities to make sure that, in every district, the voices of the people are heard. It means ensuring that those elected truly represent the will of the people.

A core and powerful value of a democratic process is that folks may freely and openly participate. Providing multilingual ballots and other translated election materials and a hotline for support ensures this opportunity and can create a feeling of acceptance in your district and across the state. As we wrestle with questions around guaranteeing that our political systems work for everyone and represent the needs of the entire community, this is a simple and important step forward.

We recognize there may be questions on how best to fund or structure these efforts, but we urge you to find the solutions and to move forward to meet this need. Language justice is a very real issue throughout systems and sectors in our state. This barrier excludes many people and we must do better. We strongly urge you to support HB 1011. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Submitted by: Katherine Riley, Policy Manager, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), 303-393-0382

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

HB21-1011 Multilingual Ballot Access For Voters

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Adi Sadeh For Self	<p>This bill will help combat voter suppression by making ballots more accessible to eligible voters experiencing language barriers to voting. Colorado has the opportunity to create greater voting accessibility through providing voters with ballots they can read and understand, which is key to having a fair democracy.</p> <p>I come from an immigrant household where my parents' first language is not english. Though they speak english now, there are still barriers when it comes to reading ballots with ballot measures and ballot instructions that have more difficult literature. We need to ensure that everyone has equal access. Every eligible voter in Colorado should have the ability to understand what is on the ballot and what would impact the future of our communities.</p> <p>During the 2020 presidential election, I noticed the barriers to voting that occurred in Boulder, a predominantly progressive city, even for voters whose first language is English. Many people in the community struggle to understand what is on the ballot, due to long and confusing ballot measures and complex ballot instructions. For voters whose first language isn't English, or who don't speak English at all, the existing inaccessibility of this process is intensely compounded. Not having multilingual ballots available is an act of voter suppression which disproportionately affects Black communities, Indigenous communities, and other communities of color. The Ballot Access for All Citizens Act will deconstruct barriers to voting by making ballots more accessible and easier to understand for all voters despite what languages they speak.</p> <p>Reflecting on my experiences, I realized how prevalent voter suppression, disenfranchisement, and inaccessibility is. Currently, very few counties provide multilingual resources. In most areas of Colorado, ballot translation is not available. As a result, tens of thousands of Colorado voters can't understand what they're voting on. This bill would make multilingual ballots and language support services available for all eligible Colorado voters.</p> <p>Creating more opportunity for marginalized BIPOC communities and other non-english speakers to be able to understand ballots will allow for more people to be a part of important decisions in Colorado. This will strengthen our democracy and state by giving more power to marginalized communities that they should already have by virtue of</p>

	being eligible voters. Every voter should have the right to understand their ballot.
Shane Mitchell Against Self	If they do not understand English and can't read the AMERICAN LANGUAGE they should not be voting. Changing things the American way to cater to those who are illegally in this country and do not know how to read in the American language is inviting all types of fraud. I understand in 1975 voting act law referring to ballots should be available to a population that has over such and such amount of Spanish, Asian, etc occupants, that a ballot specific to their native language should be presented to them upon request to be completed. However, only citizens should be voting period. Every green card holder knows English and has worked tirelessly to achieve that. If they can prove that they are here legally it is totally acceptable to give them a ballot in their desired language. But to offer specific language ballots to anyone who request one will increase voter fraud. There is no question that this bill is an attempt to allow illegal voting by illegals in the State of Colorado. THIS CANT HAPPEN!



HB 1011 Testimony

Concerning the Expansion of Multilingual Ballot Access for Electors in The State
Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee

- Good morning Madam Chair and Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Jordy, and I am the executive director of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, the SCFD. Thank you for letting me speak today in support of House Bill 1011 to expand multilingual ballot access for voters.
- As most of you know, the district I represent provides funding to arts, culture, and science endeavors across the seven-county metro area. We do this by collecting a single penny on every \$10 in sales tax. Last year, we provided \$64 million in funding to nearly 300 organizations representing organizations from your favorite small local theater troop to regional festivals to world-class, national museums and everything in between.
- I am submitting this written testimony today because the spirit of this bill aligns with the central elements of the SCFD: Diversity and voter support.
- On voter support: The SCFD recently passed its thirtieth year as an organization. In that time, we have more than doubled the number of organizations we support and nearly tripled the funding we are able to provide. None of that would have been possible without voters.
- Over the more than three decades since the district was created by voters in 1987, voters have reauthorized – by consistently sizable margins -- the reauthorization of the district. These are voters from across the metro area, in every county in every neighborhood.
- We have voters to thank for our longevity as a national model for arts funding and a local catalyst for the vibrant cultural community we all enjoy today.
- On diversity: The SCFD has thrived because our focus is and has always been “Culture for All” The diverse offerings we support and the open access to all people has made the SCFD what it is.
- Recently, our board of directors reaffirmed this foundational commitment to “Culture for All” by passing a resolution that states: “The SCFD Board of Directors is committed to identifying and



- supporting efforts to strengthen and support diverse organizations and diverse programming to encourage cultural opportunities for all district residents, including members of historically or currently underserved or marginalized people or groups that include race, ethnicity, gender; those who are differently abled, LGBTQ, veterans, geographically underserved, socio-economically disadvantaged; technologically disadvantaged, and people of all ages; and
- Surely, the ability to access the ballot should be included in the diversity we support and encourage in our state. I know at the SCFD, we want all the communities in which we support arts, culture, and science to have the opportunity to ensure that the SCFD continues for generations to come.
- I appreciate the opportunity speak on behalf of HB 1011 and urge your YES vote.



April 20, 2021

Senate State, Veteran, and Military Affairs Committee,

My name is Terrance Carroll and I'm the Executive Director of Unite Colorado. I'm also a former Speaker of the House. Unite Colorado is a group of Democrats, Republicans, and Unaffiliated voters committed to bridging the growing partisan divide in order to tackle our largest challenges and leave a better state for future generations. We do this by focusing on initiatives that make our democracy more representative and functional.

Unite Colorado believes that in a truly functional democracy all voters have equal access to the "ballot box." To be more precise, no citizen should be effectively disenfranchised because of limited command of the English language. It is for this reason we support HB21-1011.

The framers of our state Constitution understood this and adopted German and Spanish language versions of our Constitution. Like our early state leaders, this body, with the passage of HB21-1011, has the opportunity to ensure all Coloradoans are able to fully participate in the democratic process.

Unite Colorado urges you to vote yes on HB21-1011. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. D. Carroll".

Terrance D. Carroll
Executive Director

HB21-1011 Expansion of Multilingual Ballot Access

Good afternoon Chairman and committee members. I am Jean Nofles, volunteer state president for AARP of Colorado and its 660,000+ members.

AARP strongly supports HB21-1011 and I am happy to testify in support of this bill.

I live in Aurora, Co, the most diverse city in the state. When I speak to a stranger, I never know what accent I will hear. I love that. These are my neighbors.

HB21-1011 is a bill that helps the very diverse CITIZENS of my city, who speak limited English, to understand their ballots. It provides a **process** for these citizens to become educated voters, to understand ballot issues through the lens of their most familiar languages, to make considered choices and reflect those choices on their ballots.

This bill is even more important as we watch at least 43 states cobble together over 250 bogus “election integrity and security” bills that are designed to diminish votes in communities of color by erecting discriminatory restrictions on voting protocols and election processes.

Voting is the hallmark of a democratic society. Inclusion of all eligible citizens is the furtherance of democracy¹. AARP deeply believes in free and unfettered voting and strongly supports extending the privilege, the right and the duty of voting to all citizens.

HB21-1011 meets the letter of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, supports the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the For the People Act of 2021 (stalled in the Senate) and the John Lewis Voting Advancement Act of 2019. It expands voting options for citizens of Colorado. This is the overarching law of the land, to extend the vote to all eligible citizens of this country, including my neighbors.

AARP’s policy is that **“Policymakers should encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process. They should adopt voter registration and voting systems and procedures that expand the range of voting choices.”**²

That is what this bill does...develop a voting system with multi-lingual ballots, that expands the range of voting choices.

¹ System of government in which citizens vote directly in or elect representatives to form a governing body, sometimes called “rule of the majority”; Merriam-Webster

² [AARP Electronic Policy Book](#)

AARP supports this bill and I encourage you to strongly support it with a **“YES”** vote.

Thank you for listening

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

HB21-1011 Multilingual Ballot Access For Voters

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Adi Sadeh For Self	<p>Colorado has the opportunity to create greater voting accessibility through providing voters with ballots they can read and understand, which is key to having a fair democracy.</p> <p>I come from an immigrant household where my parents' first language is not english. Though they speak english now, there are still barriers when it comes to reading government documents, especially ballots with ballot measures and ballot instructions that have more difficult literature. If we live in a true democracy, we need to ensure that everyone has equal access. Every eligible voter in Colorado should have the ability to understand what is on the ballot and what would impact the future of our communities.</p> <p>During the 2020 presidential election, I noticed the barriers to voting that occurred in Boulder, a predominantly progressive city, even for voters whose first language is English. Many people in the community struggle to understand what is on the ballot, due to long and confusing ballot measures and complex ballot instructions. For voters whose first language isn't English, or who don't speak English at all, the existing inaccessibility of this process is intensely compounded. Not having multilingual ballots available is an act of voter suppression which disproportionately affects Black communities, Indigenous communities, and other communities of color. The Ballot Access for All Citizens Act will deconstruct barriers to voting by making ballots more accessible and easier to understand for all voters despite what languages they speak.</p> <p>I realized how prevalent voter suppression, disenfranchisement, and inaccessibility is. Currently, very few counties provide multilingual resources. In most areas of Colorado, ballot translation is not available. As a result, tens of thousands of Colorado voters can't understand what they're voting on. This bill would make multilingual ballots and language support services available for all eligible Colorado voters.</p> <p>Creating more opportunity for marginalized BIPOC communities and other non-english speakers to be able to understand ballots will allow for more people to be a part of important decisions in Colorado. This will strengthen our democracy and state by giving more power to marginalized communities that they should already have by virtue of being eligible voters. Every voter should have the right to understand their ballot.</p>

