

My name is Rick Block. I'm here to testify for HB 17-1230. I work in the tech industry. We often do not have the ability to hire enough skilled workers, so rely on bringing in workers from other countries using H1-B visas. I have worked with individuals from India, Pakistan, China, Russia, Iran, and many other countries - all extremely intelligent, hard working, and willing to come to the US. Many of these immigrants never have any intention of returning "home", but instead go on to apply for green cards and ultimately end up US citizens.

What I'm describing is, of course, legal immigration so you might be wondering how this pertains to this bill. What this bill does is say that Colorado will not participate in any federal "overreach" attempts to profile people by immigration status or religion or country of origin, or create databases with this information, etc. With the current President, and current US Congress, such things are (regrettably) distinctly possible. The threat of being put on a "list" or tracked in any way creates a huge fear among people like many of my friends who might be considering immigrating to the US under H1-B and other legal immigration programs. This means tech companies in Colorado will have even more trouble finding the highly skilled workers they need. Although it doesn't change anything at the national level, this bill rightly puts a stake in the ground saying Colorado will not be a hostile environment for immigrants. In discussions with my now fellow citizen friends, many have said they would have definitely considered state laws like this when deciding specifically where to immigrate to.

It is quite simple. States that provide a welcoming environment will be able to attract more highly skilled, highly intelligent immigrants than states that do not. These people generally make good salaries, and pay significant taxes. I encourage you to let this bill come to the full Senate for a vote.

Thank you.