

1 Amend reengrossed bill, page 2, strike lines 4 through 11.

2 Page 3, strike lines 1 through 20 and substitute:

3 "(a) Ensuring access to affordable energy assistance is vital for the
4 well-being of Colorado households with low-income. Many residents,
5 especially those facing financial hardship, rely on assistance programs
6 like the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) to help cover
7 essential utility costs. It is crucial that these programs are accessible to all
8 eligible individuals to promote fairness and equity.

9 (b) Protecting the privacy of individuals applying for or receiving
10 energy assistance is essential. The disclosure of personal information,
11 including citizenship or immigration status, to federal law enforcement
12 agencies can deter vulnerable populations from seeking assistance.
13 Safeguarding personal information is necessary to ensure that individuals
14 feel secure in applying for energy assistance without fear of
15 discrimination or unintended consequences.

16 (c) In order to ensure that applicants are not unduly harmed by
17 delays or denials of assistance, it is important to provide sufficient time
18 for individuals to address any application deficiencies. Setting clear
19 deadlines for submitting required documentation and fixing any
20 application deficiencies will help applicants navigate the process of
21 applying for assistance without unnecessary barriers.

22 (d) Furthermore, utility service disconnections should be paused
23 during the application process for energy assistance while an individual's
24 application is pending or in review. This measure is crucial to prevent
25 utility shutoffs for applicants who may be eligible for assistance but are
26 awaiting a final determination on their application.

27 (2) Therefore, the general assembly finds and declares that
28 protecting the rights and privacy of applicants for low-income energy
29 assistance, promoting equitable access to that assistance, and ensuring
30 protections against utility disconnections during the application process
31 are fundamental to the well-being of all Coloradans."

** **