Second Regular Session
Seventy-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

HJR22-1022

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 22-1022

CONCERNING THE CONSIDERABLE AND CONTINUING IMPACTS ON THE
PEOPLE OF COLORADO DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY FROM THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE MANY EFFORTS MADE TO
COMBAT IT.

1 WHEREAS, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global
pandemic, causing significant loss of life and impacting the lives of
billions of people worldwide, including Coloradans; and

4 WHEREAS, On March 11, 2020, with the first case of COVID-19
having already been identified in Colorado, Honorable Governor Jared
Polis issued executive order D2020 003, declaring a state of emergency;
and

8 WHEREAS, On March 25, 2020, Honorable Governor Jared Polis
issued a subsequent executive order D2020 017, which, in addition to other prior actions, began what would become many numerous steps to aggressively mitigate the spread and medical impact of COVID-19 on the people of Colorado, including stay-at-home orders, hospital and other visitation limitations, masking requirements, and business lockdowns, among others; and

WHEREAS, These mitigation efforts directed at stopping the spread of and protecting Coloradans from COVID-19 had other unwanted impacts on and required sacrifices from Colorado families, businesses, places of worship, and all residents; and

WHEREAS, The impact to those harmed by these mitigation efforts was in some cases substantial and life-altering; and

WHEREAS, Many of our seniors, including our grandparents and great-grandparents, bore, as a group, some of the greatest burdens from both the disease and the measures to curtail it; and

WHEREAS, From these mitigation efforts, some of our seniors, particularly those in nursing homes or assisted living residences, were forced to be separated for prolonged periods from family, friends, and other visitors, and were impacted more than most by reduced access to regular medical or other care; and

WHEREAS, Places of worship were deemed "nonessential" and closed, leaving Coloradans with few, if any, public outlets for prayer, worship, support, counseling, teaching, and spiritual guidance while anxiety, depression, fear, frustration, and other natural pressures were intensified by isolation, uncertainty, and loss; and

WHEREAS, From these mitigation efforts, particularly lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, many Coloradans have endured significant economic impacts, including an estimated $29.7 billion loss in total economic activity when comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020, with nearly 40,000 Colorado businesses closing between the second quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, and assuming 2019 trends would have continued if not for the pandemic, a 12.5% cost to Colorado's real GDP; and

WHEREAS, From these mitigation efforts, Coloradans have endured significant impacts to medical and mental health care access,
including the delay of important medical procedures, the unintended
discouragement of medical check-ups, and the unfortunate detrimental
effect to overall mental health for Colorado residents, including increased
suicides and overdoses; and

WHEREAS, A recent Brown University study found that babies
born during the pandemic have IQs that are significantly lower than
babies born in the decade prior to the pandemic, with the study
recognizing that the environmental changes alone, driven in part by stress,
fear, and anxiety surrounding the pandemic on pregnant mothers and
others, restrictions of access to places like doctors' offices and elsewhere,
as well as reduced social interactions with family, friends, and
community, have significantly and negatively affected the prenatal and
postnatal development of children; and

WHEREAS, Policies forcing the least vulnerable to the virus,
namely the youngest among us, to wear masks for long periods of time
have resulted in significant social and emotional delays, including
particularly adverse impacts for children with certain speech pathology
needs, tragically stunting or even reversing years of development; and

WHEREAS, From these mitigation efforts, many Coloradans have
endured significant impacts to education, including the disparate impact
to students' progress; the cancellation of important and often
once-in-a-lifetime student activities such as prom, sports, and other state
tournaments; the impact to students, parents, teachers, and administrators
from requirements of remote learning; and the overall disruption to
students, professors, and other professionals studying, teaching, and
supporting students at institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Due to forced closures, remote learning, and
classroom disruptions, a majority of public school students in Colorado
are suffering from significant learning loss and, worse, according to the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visits to emergency rooms
have increased for adolescents attempting suicide, especially girls
between the ages of 12 to 17; and

WHEREAS, Hospital policies based on government guidelines left
many people to die alone, without sufficient representation and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, The state medical board hindered the doctor-patient
relationship by discouraging doctors from providing life-saving treatments to their patients during this pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence cases surged in 2020 shortly after the start of the mitigation efforts, all while those restrictions and other measures made it more difficult for the victims to seek help; and

WHEREAS, The designation of "nonessential" forced the temporary or permanent closure of small businesses in Colorado, with the number of small businesses declining by over 40% by June 2021 from pre-pandemic levels; and

WHEREAS, Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics recently published a paper titled "A Literature Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Lockdowns on COVID-19 Mortality" in which they concluded that lockdowns "had little to no public health effects" but "imposed enormous economic and social costs"; and

WHEREAS, Countless other Coloradans have silently suffered and sacrificed from the mitigation efforts in countless other ways, all deeply personal and meaningful, and often without due recognition or even acknowledgment; and

WHEREAS, While the true cost of mitigation and other efforts may never be fully appreciated, nor the benefits ever fully understood, research is now being published that should give us pause before we approach any such situation in a similar way again; and

WHEREAS, Difficult situations sometimes require difficult decisions that may leave no great solutions or that cause disproportionate impacts and harm while intending to protect others; and

WHEREAS, While best efforts in dynamic situations can sometimes prove inadequate or even ineffective after the crisis is passed and time is available to more fully review such policies, best practices in good government should compel us to, at a minimum, acknowledge all Coloradans adversely impacted by those efforts and to commit to learn from them so as not to repeat the same; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:
That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby:

(1) Honor and extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our medical professionals, medical community, first responders, and the many Coloradans from all walks of life who served and sacrificed so much for so many over the last two years in the face of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic;

(2) Honor and extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our retail business owners, professionals, employees, contractors, and service providers, including delivery drivers and the many other in-home or at-home providers, who bravely served our communities over the last two years, as able and at personal risk, to provide families, friends, colleagues and, most often, strangers with much needed groceries, medicine, products, services, and other daily essentials during the pandemic;

(3) Honor and extend our heartfelt apology to and hereby recognize the sacrifice of the many Colorado business owners and their employees that disproportionately bore the economic burden from the measures taken over the last two years in an effort to protect Coloradans, measures that led to significant harm, heartache, and, in some cases, financial ruin for them and their families;

(4) Resolve to remain dedicated to the memory of the many Coloradans who lost their lives directly or indirectly from the pandemic and from those efforts taken to mitigate it, including our grandparents, parents, siblings, children, relatives, friends, co-workers, colleagues, and neighbors;

(5) Extend our heartfelt apology and condolences for those lost and for the significant pain endured by every Coloradan over the last two years, whether directly from the effects of COVID-19 or indirectly from the efforts taken by the state in response to it, and hereby formally recognize their sacrifices;

(6) Seek forgiveness from every Coloradan negatively impacted by the policies followed and made by the State of Colorado during this pandemic; and

(7) Resolve to learn from the mistakes made, however well intended, so as not to repeat them should a similar situation arise again during our lifetimes or thereafter.
Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to Honorable Governor Jared Polis and the members of Colorado's congressional delegation: Senators Michael Bennett and John Hickenlooper and Representatives Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Lauren Boebert, Ken Buck, Doug Lamborn, Jason Crow, and Ed Perlmutter.