

Good morning members of the committee. My name is Trina Griego. I am with The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. Thank you for allowing me to share some perspective in favor of HB23-1099, regarding portable screening.

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado is an interfaith public policy and advocacy organization that was started in 1998 by a group of five pastors who wanted to see common values across faith traditions represented in public policy. We have over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing over a dozen faith traditions. Interfaith promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding by building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. It is with this focus that I request your support of HB23-1099.

When individuals or families struggle, they often reach out to their faith communities for support. In this way, congregations are at the forefront of whatever issues a community is struggling with. So many of our congregations have been working to address the affordable housing crisis here in Colorado because this issue is front and center for families.

As an organization, we work together with congregations to explore any and all solutions in order to meet the needs of communities. This work has involved hosting unhoused individuals and families within churches, taking up collections to help pay rent, as well as larger scale solutions like the Safe Outdoor Spaces, the Congregation Land Campaign, and the Housing Equity Campaign. We work continuously with our congregations and various community partners to eliminate barriers to housing for all Coloradans.

The creation of a portable screening report will directly address the issue of potential renters having to pay repeat screening fees just to be considered for housing. We understand the need for property owners to conduct appropriate screening prior to renting to an individual or family. However, it is possible for the appropriate screening to take place without having an extra and undue financial burden placed on the renter. These repeated fees diminish the resources the renter has to pay for housing and can vary so vastly as to mimic the cost of rent for an applicant without them having actually secured a place to live. Simply put, the fees and costs associated with finding housing in Colorado can actually prevent families and individuals from securing housing. This is wrong and contributes to the housing crisis in our state. For this reason, we support the passing of HB23-1099 in order to eliminate unnecessary barriers for individuals and families seeking housing, a basic necessity to thrive.

This bill removes barriers to securing housing by allowing potential tenants to avoid repeatedly paying costly fees associated with tenant applications and screenings.

This bill promotes transparency and helps applicants identify inaccuracies on their background reports that may impact their ability to secure housing.

This bill will impact the financial situations of many who cannot afford to spend money on numerous application fees in order to secure housing.

From Alamosa to Denver, families are feeling the squeeze associated with housing unaffordability. The last thing needed is for the screening process itself to also be unaffordable. Tenant application fees typically start at around \$50 per applicant and can easily swell to hundreds depending on the property. When you consider that most applicants have to apply to multiple properties for consideration, as well as the fact that each adult applicant is required to pay separate screening fees, the cost of finding a home in the state of Colorado is actually contributing to homelessness.

Colorado's housing crisis requires that we assess all opportunities and barriers to solving the problems faced by Colorado families. It requires creative, and in some cases, common sense action to enable families to avoid homelessness..

HB23-1099 is a straightforward, common sense way to directly affect the financial bottom lines for many households. Removing barriers and unnecessary burdens to housing are just as important as increasing housing inventory.

I ask the members of this committee to join the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado in supporting this bill as part of the much needed, comprehensive effort to address our housing and homelessness emergency, as well as to ensure all Coloradans can have a chance to thrive.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.