

Attachment B

My name is Tom Perille. I am a physician and President of Democrats for Life of Colorado. I am here in support of HB22-1253.

Democrats for Life of Colorado subscribes to the consistent life ethic. This means that we prioritize policies and programs that recognize the inherent dignity and value of every human being including those with disabilities. We work to promote equity and justice across the spectrum of human physical and cognitive abilities.

Based on a 2018 survey, adults with disabilities suffer from mental distress 4.6 times as often as adults without disability.¹ Adults with disabilities have fewer opportunities for high-quality social engagement because of physical limitations which places them at increased risk for mental distress and illness.³ Programs aimed at increasing social connectedness can reduce the large disparity in mental distress between adults with and without disabilities. Mental distress directly correlates with clinical depression. Clinical depression results in decreased quality of life, increased substance abuse, increased health care costs, decreased productivity, and under/unemployment.²⁻⁴

Travel is an important part of independent life, reflecting both business and leisure priorities. The ability to rent a car is an integral part of travel.

In Colorado, 9.5% of adults over the age of 18 have disability related to mobility.⁵ Even if adults have no current mobility disability, there is a substantial probability that they will develop one over their lifetime.

It is a safe assumption that many of these individuals with mobility disability will need some form of adaptive equipment to drive a car. This is not a fringe issue. It strikes at the core of their independence and ability to conduct business and leisure activities crucial to their identity. Therefore, HB22-1253 addresses a key unmet promise of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

By facilitating travel, 1253 will decrease mental distress in adults with disability. By following the spirit and intent of the ADA, Colorado will decrease depression and improve health, economic and social outcomes while saving the state money in healthcare costs and social safety net programs.

Please vote yes on HB22-1253.

References

- 1) Cree RA et.al., Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults by Disability Status, Disability Type, and Selected Characteristics – United States 2018; MMWR 2020; 69(36): 1238-1243.
- 2) Zhang M, A community study of depression treatment and employment earnings. Pschiatry Serv 1999; 50(9): 1209-13.
- 3) Konig H et.al., The excess costs of depression: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences 2020; 29, e30, 1-16.
- 4) Amos TB et.al., Direct and Indirect Cost Burden and Change of Employment Status in Treatment-Resistant Depression: A matched-cohort study using a Us Commercial Claims Database. J Clin Psychiatry 201879(2): 17m11725.
- 5) Courtney-Long EA et.al., Prevalence of Disability and Disability Type Among Adults – United States, 2013; MMWR 2015; 64(29): 777-783.