

Mi nombre es María Rodríguez, soy de Chihuahua Mexico, tengo viviendo en Denver 22 años.

En mi natal Chihuahua yo siempre soñé con ser una maestra de niños pequeños, pero debido a las cuestiones económicas mi sueño nunca se realizó.

Cuando fue pasando el tiempo y por falta de oportunidades de trabajo el padre de mis hijos emigró a USA en busca de mejores oportunidades, y pensando en que no era de beneficio que la familia estuviera separada decidí emigrar yo también en compañía de mis hijos.

Cuando yo llegue aquí, empecé a cuidar una niña de 7 am a 5 pm en el departamento donde yo vivía, recibiendo un pago de \$40 por semana, y por mi falta de conocimiento yo pensaba que estaba bien ya que no conocía la ciudad, no sabía usar el autobús como para salir a buscar otro trabajo, y el cuidar de esa niña de alguna manera cumplía un poco mi sueño de ser maestra.

Conforme fui conociendo e involucrándome con gente, supe que estaba recibiendo muy poco sueldo para la enorme responsabilidad que es cuidar de un infante, y decidí buscar otro trabajo, a lo largo de estos años he desempeñado muchas labores, que van desde limpieza de casas, construcción, fábricas, jardinería, voluntaria en diferentes organizaciones sin fines de lucro, etc.

En el 2017 tuve la fortuna de conocer la Coalición Estatal de padres de Colorado, y de las clases de PASO, y pensé esta es mi oportunidad de hacer realidad mi sueño de ser maestra, pero muy pronto me di cuenta que debido a mi estatus migratorio de nuevo mi sueño se queda en el rincón de los sueños, ya que no puedo aspirar a tener una licencia para tener el cuidado infantil, debido a las leyes que requieren de un estatus legal para que puedas obtener dicha licencia.

Por mi y por tantas otras personas que están en la misma situación es que me atrevo a solicitarles su apoyo para lograr derribar estas barreras y ayudarnos a tener un trabajo donde se respete nuestra dignidad.

Me gusta pensar en esta remoción de barreras como una medida concreta de solidaridad que mira más allá de las innumerables razones por las que alguien está en este país, sin un estatus legal con un único objetivo de proporcionar un bienestar a su familia.

Muchas gracias por su apoyo.

Maria Rodriguez -

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Phill Moss, MA,LPC

Regional Operations Director/Therapist

Fort Morgan, Colorado, 80701

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities:

My name is Phil Moss. I have worked in the mental health profession in Colorado for 27 years and am a member of Center for Health Progress. I currently live and work in Fort Morgan, Colorado. I am submitting my testimony as an individual today in strong support of SB21-199 which would create more opportunities for Coloradans to access occupational licenses, including in the mental health field.

We are up against so many barriers in supporting our society to accept mental health care services - services that are life saving and life affirming. One of these barriers I have seen throughout my career is that mental health providers do not reflect the breadth and depth of diversity in our communities. We are overwhelmingly white and our clients are not. We overwhelmingly only speak English, while our patients speak so many languages. People should be able to get the care they need and deserve by providers with shared identities and languages. Seeking mental health care can be intimidating and stigmatizing for people of color. Receiving care from someone with a similar background does so much to build trust in the client-provider relationship.

While there are many efforts underway to diversify the mental health field, it requires long-term sustained change. SB21-199 would create more pathways for us to address this challenge by enabling Coloradans without documentation to become licensed mental health professionals. I would be honored to work alongside a new generation of providers who are working to ensure everyone in our state can thrive. I urge you to vote yes on SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Gabriel Duenez

CSU Pueblo Nursing Student

Pueblo, Colorado

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities:

Thank you Madame Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Gabriel Duenez and I live in Pueblo, Colorado. I am a 22 year old student at CSU Pueblo majoring in Nursing and Spanish and am a member of Center for Health Progress. I am here in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

My dad came to Colorado for more opportunities for our family, and he found good work and safety for us. My mom and I came when I was three and we stayed so our family could be together and have a better life. I was in middle school when I learned I was in a different social position than my other friends at school. They were traveling, and I asked my mom why we couldn't travel and she explained to me it was because of our status, and I began to understand what this meant for my own future, my education, and my career. When I was in high school, a program called Health Academy gave me the chance to learn more about the medical community and get involved. Making a difference in the lives of others and for my community left a big impact on me. I quickly learned how important being involved is to me, and how big of an impact I can have on the lives of others by working in health care.

When I was a volunteer at Innovage through the Health Academy, I saw firsthand how important nurses are in the lives of their patients, and how much the patients love their nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants. You see and hear them talk about how these individuals made their day, and make their week. The nurses increase their quality of life, and that is when I learned that this is what I want to do. I want to be a good nurse that helps people. Even just documenting their vitals, you can put your patient in a good mood and make a difference. I learned this is what I love to do, I told myself this is what I want to do, and if this bill passes I can.

I have DACA, and I'm going to graduate from college in two years. I was a sophomore in high school when I first applied for DACA. I had to go to Colorado Springs to get a lawyer, scheduled dates, pay \$495 and even more for a lawyer. This was almost \$1,000 total, so I could work, get a driver's license, and pay taxes. I have to do this every two years. Prove I'm paying taxes, pay that amount of money, and hope I can keep my DACA. It feels good to pay taxes and feel normal, like my other friends, but it is a grim reminder of where I am socially- in limbo. You have to live your life in two year segments and hope for the best. But this bill will help me know that even though I'll have

to keep renewing my DACA, I will have the promise of being able to become a registered Nurse after finishing my college degree.

Without this bill, all that hard work would be for nothing. Meaningless education and lost money. Letting everyone get their license means the state will have a lot more people in their careers and paying more in taxes. This can help us tear down that stereotype that immigrants are a burden to the economy. I think that is a strong case to get rid of old harmful laws once and for all.

This bill is critical for the health care workforce in my local community and our state. I can work with patients who don't speak English fluently. I help them learn what medications they need to take and answer their questions in Spanish. When I and others speak their language, they can trust you more than someone who doesn't. This bill will help more aspiring nurses like me instill more trust with our community, and more people will get the healthcare they need because there will be more people like me to help.

Thank you for listening to my experience, and I ask you please vote in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Rayna Hetlage, MPH

Policy Manager

Center for Health Progress

Denver, Colorado

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Rayna Hetlage and I am the Policy Manager at Center for Health Progress. At Center for Health Progress, we believe that health care is a right. So, we fight for laws and policies that make it possible for everyone to take care of themselves and their families. Our statewide membership is predominantly made up of people who lack access to quality, affordable health insurance, including immigrants and members of mixed-status families. That is why we are submitting testimony in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

Our organization works at the intersection of health care and immigration policy at the local, state, and federal level. We are well versed in how old and recent federal immigration policies have harmed members of our community, and are proud to be working with legislators and immigrants to improve our local policies to reduce the harm caused by antiquated and racist laws. SB21-199 is an important and meaningful step for our state to give local municipalities the authority to offer more resources to our families and neighbors who lack documentation by paving the way for cities and counties who have expressed interest in providing licensing, grants and support services to their immigrant residents. With upcoming federal stimulus dollars going directly to local communities, this bill will help remove the red tape so city and county leaders can use those resources effectively among the broader community. If we do not remove these barriers, we will continue to harm the ability of our state and communities to quickly and equitably recover from the economic devastation COVID has brought.

The anti-immigrant laws passed in special session 2006 extend beyond existing federal law, and harm all members of our communities by driving down wages and threatening public health by barring individuals from critical support to meet the basic needs of their families, and restricting their ability to make an adequate living. These laws also created a failed patchwork of state and local policies that have created so much confusion and disparities that threaten the ability of these families to lead stable lives. Since then, there has been so much misinformation and misinterpretation of these laws that

individuals have been barred from things like accessing a library card or even charity care at hospitals, which is not allowed, by those who cite these laws but are incorrectly, and sometimes illegally implementing them.

For years, we have heard stories from our members about not being able to get the certification they need to become a registered nurse or registered dietitian after dedicating four years to their education and careers. These stories are fraught with despair, anger, and frustration. We know that the healthcare workforce, childcare workforce, and other industries would be so much stronger if we had more individuals with language skills, and cultural knowledge and expertise as assets. But when these students meet the barriers of not being able to take a test to get a certification or license, they feel defeated and hopeless.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully ask you to cast a yes vote on SB21-199, so we can create a Colorado where every person can achieve their dreams and prosper.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Theresa Trujillo

Coalition for Immigrant Health

Pueblo, Colorado

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Theresa Trujillo and I am representing the Coalition for Immigrant Health. The Coalition for Immigrant Health brings diverse organizations together in securing the safety and wellbeing of immigrants and their families across Colorado through community organizing, education and outreach, policy analysis and change, and connecting people to services in their community. We have over 50 organizations and individuals statewide who are health care professionals, health systems, and immigrant rights advocates who are working with immigrants in their communities to ensure everyone's comprehensive health needs are met no matter where you live or how much money you make. That is why we are submitting testimony in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

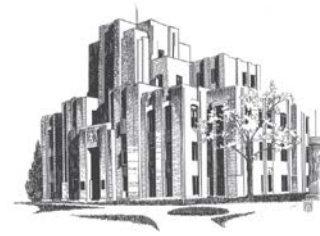
We firmly believe that legislators, public health agencies, and health care systems should view immigration policy as health care policy and show strong effective leadership on these issues. The clear anti-immigrate intention of the bills passed in the special session in the summer of 2006 has caused significantly negative impacts on immigrants and immigrant communities because of the fear and confusion it has, and was intended to incite. Since 2017, our Coalition has been working to better understand and share the negative effects of special session 06-1023. HB06- 1023 requires state and local government agencies to verify the lawful presence of applicants for public benefits including certification for professional licenses. It is not the job of local clerks to be in the business of verifying immigration status. They're role is to adequately ensure that all candidates for licensure have the proper training and experience to perform these jobs safely and correctly. Passing SB21-199 will remove burdensome and bureaucratic barriers and allow agencies to do their jobs better.

The requirement that agencies verify lawful presence certainly impacts some groups more than others. It impacts individuals that are not lawfully present and it also impacts U.S. citizens and lawfully present immigrants that do not have access to the necessary documents – homeless individuals and victims of domestic violence are other common examples. The point here is that the laws we're seeking to repeal are not any more stringent than the public benefits restrictions that exist under federal law. However, they are commonly misinterpreted in a way that restricts access to programs that receive

government funding but that do not actually qualify as public benefits. These are technical differences we cannot expect the average person to know, or the average administrator to understand. But that is the role of the legislature, and we have nearly 15 years of experience to know that the best policy move is to repeal these laws, and give our local municipalities the ability to do their jobs better.

We know SB21-199 will increase the number of health care professionals with language skills and cultural competency to serve their communities, have higher paying jobs, and bring even more tax revenue to our state. We know that passing this legislation will renew motivation and affirmation that our state is truly a Colorado for All. With that, I respectfully request you vote yes on SB21-199. Thank you.

Boulder County FACT SHEET



YES

SB 21-199: Remove Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities

(Sen. Jaquez Lewis, Sen. Winter, Rep. Esgar, Rep. Gonzales-Gutierrez)

Boulder County respectfully asks for a YES vote on SB 21-199.

Boulder County strongly supports SB 21-199 and respectfully asks for your support for the bill. In mandating that verification of lawful presence is not a requirement for public benefits, contracting, and credentialing, SB 21-199 removes an unnecessary burden on local governments and allows all immigrants to participate fully in our community, which we believe makes our community, and our economy, stronger.

Local governments are required by state law to collect a verification of lawful presence form for every person we serve and every contract we enter into. That form is not required except by HB 06S-1023. If SB 21-199 passes, we will not have to collect a verification of lawful presence form for every person we serve or every contract we enter into – between services and contracts, thousands of transactions. So, at the most basic level, SB 21-199 saves time and paperwork.

SB 21-199 also provides clarity during disaster recovery and response and will allow us to maximize federal funding for disaster recovery. Current federal pandemic disaster relief funding allocated to Boulder County – CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund and Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance – does not have provisions with eligibility restrictions based on immigration status. As long as assistance we would like to provide in the community fits within the eligibility criteria of the Coronavirus Relief Fund or Emergency Rental Assistance funds, we would not be required to verify lawful presence.

HB 06S-1023, the law requiring verification of lawful presence, includes an exception for disaster relief but limits that to short-term, noncash, in-kind. Usually disaster relief is clearer as short term due to a fire or a flood, but under the long-lasting pandemic that is more nebulous. Also, the exemption limits what assistance we can provide, whereas some communities might want to provide longer-term assistance (childcare, rental assistance) and/or cash assistance. Without SB 21-199, it is unclear if certain pandemic assistance would fit within short-term, emergency disaster relief. Local governments should be able to spend federal dollars allocated to us in ways allowable per the federal government to benefit the needs in our communities without collecting state-mandated paperwork and potentially running awry of state law. (Note that federal programs for which

undocumented immigrants are not eligible such as TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid remain so and have separate documentation and requirements to establish eligibility.)

Lastly, SB 21-199 also is about local control. Local governments will be able to decide who to serve with local funding, whereas current law restricts that. Local programs generally are not entitlements, and local governments will be able to decide budgets and program criteria regarding who is eligible to participate in locally funded programs.

When interacting with public services, seeking employment, starting a business, or otherwise being a part of our community, immigrants should have equitable access in the community. After all, immigrants pay taxes and thus invest in our communities. Boulder County has long opposed imposition on local governments of responsibility for enforcement or verification of immigration status, which is a purview of the federal government, or of requirements that limits state and local governments' ability to serve immigrants. Boulder County affirms and supports the rights for all residents, including immigrants, to work in Colorado, obtain occupational and commercial licenses, own businesses, and access public services. For the reasons described above, Boulder County strongly supports SB 21-199 and asks for your "yes" vote on the bill. Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Brenda Figueroa

Pueblo, CO

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199 Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities:

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Brenda Figueroa, I live in Pueblo, Colorado and I work as an advisor at East High School. I am also a member of Center for Health Progress, and am here in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

My mom cleans houses and my dad is a construction worker and they taught me early on how important it is to get a good education. I went to CSU Pueblo and got my Bachelor's in Social Work, so that I could help others. I wanted to use my experience as a first generation student to help others in a similar position succeed. I've had mentors who have helped me, and I am so passionate about education, that I worked and put myself through school to get a Master's degree in Higher Education. This is why it is important for me to be a role model for others and help them reach their dreams for higher education.

As an advisor, I work with students when they first start high school and continue working with them until they graduate. I am recruiting and working with students in the English as a Second Language program for college readiness classes and programs. Our program tries to recruit students to apply for college, but last year out of 300 students in our program, only one applied for college. When you talk to the students who lack the ability to verify lawful presence, it is clear that they know they will not be able to go to college because they can't afford it and do not qualify for any federal assistance or grant programs. They feel the heavy burden and bear the brunt of meeting closed doors, when their friends and peers are eligible for more support because they have the benefits of US citizenship. I have met so many parents who want to help their children succeed and go to college. They try to apply for financial assistance to help their children attend college, but they do not qualify because they are undocumented. This causes me pain because these kids are smart and have very bright futures. Passing this bill would help them realize their dreams and potential and show them that there is more for them in life.

While I have been able to achieve many of my dreams like getting multiple degrees and helping others, my husband's status has made it difficult for him to do the same. My husband came to the US when he was 9. When we got married, we wanted to buy a house but we could not because the applications required a social security number. My husband does not have a social security number, so we could not apply for a house together and could not afford it using only my income. He wants to start his own business but he can't because he can't access loans or other assistance that are available to others.

SB21-199 would make it possible for my husband and the students that I work with to achieve their goals, whether that is going to college or starting their own business. If passed, the bill would remove barriers that keep Coloradans without documentation from accessing professional and business licenses. This would mean more Coloradans can start businesses which will lead to economic growth. Immigrants are some of the primary drivers of new business growth in Colorado, and we need that now more than ever to ensure we have a chance at a strong and equitable economic recovery from COVID. The bill would also allow people to attend college and get licensed in their profession, which will increase wages for everyone, increase the local tax base and removes harmful barriers to all students and aspiring professionals from reaching their dreams.

Thank you for listening to my experience, and I ask you please vote in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.



I signed up too late for testimony today on SB21-199
Val Nosler Beck to: committees.lcs.ga 04/13/2021 03:56 PM

Can I please still submit my testimony?

Here is my testimony:

Thank you very much for hearing my testimony today.

I serve on Wheat Ridge City Council, and as a city leader, we do our best to provide the most services and resources to the community we serve.

In this recovery, Colorado towns and cities cannot afford to limit anyone from participating in our economy.

Removing these licensing barriers can help small business owners stay afloat during this pandemic and streamline our local governments' processes. This will allow us to be more efficient and equitable in our local government's services while helping our community's economies and our neighbors.

Taking away access to much-needed resources is the last thing we should do right now.

This bill allows municipal leaders to provide access for residents to get back on their feet as we begin to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to the committee for your consideration and for your time.

Val Nosler Beck
303-350-0772

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Rayna Hetlage, MPH

Policy Manager

Center for Health Progress

Denver, Colorado

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities

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Our organization works at the intersection of health care and immigration policy at the local, state, and federal level. We are well versed in how old and recent federal immigration policies have harmed members of our community, and are proud to be working with legislators and immigrants to improve our local policies to reduce the harm caused by antiquated and racist laws. SB21-199 is an important and meaningful step for our state to give local municipalities the authority to offer more resources to our families and neighbors who lack documentation by paving the way for cities and counties who have expressed interest in providing licensing, grants and support services to their immigrant residents. With upcoming federal stimulus dollars going directly to local communities, this bill will help remove the red tape so city and county leaders can use those resources effectively among the broader community. If we do not remove these barriers, we will continue to harm the ability of our state and communities to quickly and equitably recover from the economic devastation COVID has brought.

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Thank you for your time, and I respectfully ask you to cast a yes vote on SB21-199, so we can create a Colorado where every person can achieve their dreams and prosper.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

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While there are many efforts underway to diversify the mental health field, it requires long-term sustained change. SB21-199 would create more pathways for us to address this challenge by enabling Coloradans without documentation to become licensed mental health professionals. I would be honored to work alongside a new generation of providers who are working to ensure everyone in our state can thrive. I urge you to vote yes on SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

To: the Colorado Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee
From: Laurel Herndon, ED of the Immigrant Legal Center of Boulder County

SB21-199 Section 6 would repeal 24-72.1, the so-called “Secure and Verifiable Identity Document Act,” an archaic, anti-immigrant and deceptively titled law which has nothing to do with the REAL ID Act.

Key Concepts behind this law: 1) It only governs state and local public services
2) Enforcement comes through threatening public employees with legal jeopardy

This “law” is a ruse; the Department of Revenue has been authorized to ignore this law by an informal AG opinion from 2014.

24-72.1-102. Definitions As used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (3)"Public entity" means an agency, department, board, division, bureau, commission, council, or political subdivision of the state.
- (4)"Public official" means an elected or appointed official, an employee, or an agent of a public entity.
- (5)"Secure and verifiable document" means a document issued by a state or federal jurisdiction or recognized by the United States government and that is verifiable by federal or state law enforcement, intelligence, or homeland security agencies.

24-72.1-103. Identity documents - verifiable

- (1) ... a public entity that provides services shall not accept...** an identification document to provide services unless it is a secure and verifiable document.
- (2) ... a public entity that is issuing a... license, permit, or official document** shall not authorize acceptance of an identification document unless the identification document is a secure and verifiable document.
- (3) The department of revenue may issue a driver's license...** in accordance with part 5 of article 2 of title 42, C.R.S., **but the license... is not a secure and verifiable document.**

24-72.1-105. Violations...

- (1) Actions taken in knowing violation of this article shall not be protected by governmental immunity...**
- (2) A peace officer who, in the performance of the officer's duties, utilizes identification that is not secure and verifiable shall not forfeit governmental immunity pursuant to this section.....**

24-72.1-106. Applicability (Does not apply if reporting a crime, accepting a crime report, conducting a criminal investigation, providing services to certain infants and children, or providing emergency medical service; Does not apply to a peace officer in the performance of the officer's duties.....)

NOTES:

- * *Boarding an airplane is a federal purpose and is in no way covered by this law.*
- * * *The law's original target was the Mexican Matricula Consular Card.*
- * * * *24-72.1-103(3) was added in 2013 when SB-251 was passed, authorizing the CO-RCSA Drivers License & ID. However, the amendment limits use of those documents to law enforcement and emergency purposes only.*
- * * * *A nonprofit disbanded its community ID card project in 2018 due to fear that a librarian, or recreation center attendant, could be sued under this law for accepting their community ID card.*

Arvada, Colorado, abril 13 de 2021

Dear Members of the Senate State and Veteran Affairs Committee,

I hope that both you and your family are doing well and that COVID 19 has not affected you. I would like to share my story with you about the barriers to which I have been exposed to in this country.

Like most of the people who migrate to the USA, we dream of arriving and having a better future for our family, that was, is and will continue to be my dream, because since I arrived in this country I have realized the great opportunity that this economy offers its residents

It is the dream of anyone who lives in Latin America, because although we work and live for a lifetime in our Central American countries, there are realities such as corruption, gangs and the violation of rights that can end the will and desires of overcoming anyone.

In my country I studied a Bachelor of Business Administration, I worked for more than 25 years in national and multinational companies, I started businesses, I had 2 houses, we educated our children with my husband, we experienced kidnapping, extortion and threats, after this we decided to migrate and forget about everything we have experienced with the sole objective of a better life.

Living in the USA, is a chicken soup for the soul, even with the different barriers and racism, we are prepared to work and get ahead. I have a son with special abilities and I have seen how his life has changed, that is why he decided to start a support group for parents with children with disabilities for the Latino community, we have been working for 3 years, we have helped many families in the Jefferson area , Denver and Aurora, to learn how we can improve the quality of life of our children, I feel useful knowing that everything I have done has helped many families, without discrimination of race or language.

We are currently holding our first annual conference, 34 families have signed up, we have spoken with people from ARC, HCP, Peak Parent Center, Thrive Center, organizations that are collaborating so that we can learn about the fundamentals of an IEP. Observing everything that has been done voluntarily and with the only resources of ourselves, is something that inspires us to do more, our barrier is legal immigration status, I have thought on many occasions about continuing to study and obtain a license, open my own business of managing social networks, studying to be a chef, making a nonprofit of the Support Group and helping the kids who need it most to go to university or college.

Mrs. Senator, there are many dreams and we want to make them respecting the laws of Colorado, but to make these dreams come true I must have a license, help us break down these barriers and be part of this thriving and entrepreneurial economy, which allows us to make dreams come true. .

For my part, I promise to continue working in that backyard, without resources, only with my hands and my dreams, but you have in your hands the possibility of changing this reality and forging a better future for people with special abilities and for the Arvada residents in Jefferson.

Thank you for your time and for considering our request.

Xiomara, Residente de Arvada.

Hello members of the Senate Judiciary committee,

My name is Lucy Guereca, and I want to thank you for listening to my story. I was born in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. I have been living here in the United States since 2005. The first time I came to Denver on vacation, I fell in love with the city. I felt a strong desire to move here and build a life. I decided to leave my accounting career to emigrate to this country knowing that I would have to start from the bottom. My first job was cleaning offices, where every time I cleaned a computer or a desk, tears ran down my face because I remembered my office, my desk, everything I had left in my country for the chance of something better for me and my family, and now I was cleaning a desk and offices that weren't mine ...

Living in this country has been difficult and very hard, we emigrated here because we want to get ahead, live the American dream, but we have faced so many obstacles in this journey, that they threaten to take away our desire, strength, and hopes of one day achieving that longed-for dream. We come from our countries to work hard, knowing that we will have to do jobs that perhaps we would never do in our home countries, and not because they are of little importance, of course not, but, our lives are different there. The person who has a career is dedicated to it, like all of you here present who have your careers, masters or postgraduate degrees, and if you studied that career it is because you feel that passion to be able to do it with love, commitment and always give your best.

We have a lot of talent, skills and expertise that are not being utilized because of draconian laws that prevent us from contributing everything we can to our communities. When we are fortunate enough to find work, we are not able to access the benefits of our labor, like workers comp, investing in retirement. If we want to start a business, we don't have access to capital like everyone else.

It is not fair that our children pay the cost of the abuse that many honest and hardworking people go through because of this country's broken immigration system and the state laws that uphold this system. By repealing these laws, we would all be working together for a fair and equitable Colorado. These barriers are holding back wages, business development, and limiting the growth of our state economy. By repealing these laws, it would help my family and the whole community feel secure in being able to have better jobs, employers to focus on finding the most qualified employees, workers would have greater access to more high quality childcare, families in need would be able to apply for the support they desperately need, and our community would no longer be one built on hate, and fear. We are 9% of the 5.6 million people in Colorado and contribute 6 billion in local, state and federal taxes. We are a diverse community since one in every 5 children under the age of 6 has at least one father born abroad and who is the head of the family, who brings the sustenance to the home, above all it would help the entire community a lot. I want to come out of the shadows to be able to offer you high quality, excellent service.

Thank you,

Lucy Guereca, 80002

Scott Nelson, MD - 80303

I am writing in support of SB21-199. It would remove several impediments to the economic contribution of undocumented workers. Isn't this a win for all of us?

My name is Juanita Gurrola Valenzuela.

I am originally from the state of Durango, Mexico. I am 35 years old, and I am a graduate student in Secondary Education with a specialty in History.

My father died when I was 9 months old, leaving my 21-year-old mother alone and with two small children; we went through difficult times full of poverty. We lived in a small town in the state of Durango, and at age 15 I made sacrifices and left home to attend high school. I got pregnant with my first child at 18 years old during my last semester of high school. My aunt who lived in Kansas City helped me financially to process a tourist visa, and a few months later I arrived in this country for the first time. However, I still had the burning desire to study. Without a way to do it here, I returned to Mexico with my one-month-old son.

Studying was not easy for me since I had to emigrate to a city and I had my young son, so I had to wait a bit. Then in 2008, I began training to be a community teacher to obtain a scholarship that would help me pay for university. In July 2009, I entered the Escuela Normal Superior de la Laguna CR in Gomez Palacio, Durango. I paid the tuition with the help of the scholarship I obtained and worked part time as a cashier in a store.

Before starting my third year of university, a teacher recommended me to the principal of an elementary school. Thanks to the experience I gained there, they gave me the opportunity to teach 4th grade children. When I finished university, I took an exam to obtain a federal teaching position and in 2014 they assigned me to teach in Cuencamé, Durango.

In 2018, I met my husband, and in 2019 my son and I came to live with him in the United States. In 2020, my second daughter was born in Colorado. Although I miss my teaching job in Mexico, I have not thought about returning because I know that my children can have a better future in this country.

I am a teacher by vocation. I love doing that job; I miss my students a lot, and I would like to be able to practice my profession in Colorado. I feel that I contribute to the development and well-being of this state and country. Please vote YES on SB199.

Thank you for your consideration.

Juanita Gurrola Valenzuela, 80226

Senators,

I want to salute all the people who fight for the annulment of the anti-immigrant laws of 2006 in the State of Colorado and the other laws that prohibit qualified persons from participating in the growth of our Economy.

Hoping that they are in good health with their families. Also thank them and ask for their support in favor of the Removing Barriers proposal (# SB21-199).

Today I want to tell a little about my story and I know that it is also the story of many people in our community who go through this every day.

I have worked for almost 10 years in house cleaning, I have seen and felt the fear, racism, inequality and labor abuse that exists towards our immigrant community due to the fact of not having social security or a work license. It is like walking a tightrope every day.

Because of my immigration status, I am unable to buy into workers comp insurance to protect me if I get injured at work. In 2019 I suffered an accident at the work that has left me physically ill, but simply if I don't show up and don't work, they don't pay me. The salary is minimal and the overtime hours are poorly paid but we need it to be able to live and for the basic needs.

Every year I pay taxes but I cannot access or receive any kind of help or support, which is why it has been twice as difficult in the face of this Covid-19 Pandemic that we are going through; Our situation has worsened, work has decreased and it really does not reach us, but we trust and have faith that if we continue to take care of ourselves we will come out of this Pandemic well and things will change little by little.

In 2018 I had the opportunity to study in the PASO program of the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, where I obtained the knowledge as a provider of Early Childhood Education which aims to promote the school participation of children from 0 to 5 years of age, but I can't work in this important and needed field because I don't have a license or work permit.

If SB 199 is approved, we are sure that it will help our families to get ahead, to give a better future and better opportunities for our children, so that younger children can have early education, which is so important for their development and for your life in every way. It will also help more families to access services such as health that many times out of fear we do not ask for them and because the law does not allow it.

Likewise, it will help more people participate in the state's economy. For our Communities to have better resources and thus to be safer and healthier.

I thank each of you for listening to me, for your time, and for giving hope to all of us who have been excluded.

Thank you.

PH – 80204

The introduction of Senate Bill 21-199 in the state legislature is a step in the right direction to support an important sector of our economy and the small business community. The bill will allow undocumented entrepreneurs to openly participate in our economy, which is not just common sense, it's a great way to get our economy back on track during this economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

If passed, Senate Bill 21-199 will allow undocumented entrepreneurs to access commercial and professional licenses, pursue federal financing to stabilize their businesses and retain jobs while we overcome the harmful effects of the pandemic.

This is an important issue to tackle because immigrants are the lifeblood of entrepreneurship in Colorado—they work for small businesses, start small businesses and bolster our economic success. They are also twice as likely to start small businesses, and create 1 in 10 U.S. jobs. But forcing undocumented entrepreneurs to work without proper business licenses drives down wages and reduces job prospects for workers.

Our small businesses are facing an unprecedented economic crisis, and our elected officials must consider policies that will foster their recovery. The state legislature should pass this bill swiftly.

— Lindsey Vigoda, Colorado Director for Small Business Majority

My name is Juana Armijo. I am a member leader of the group Not One More Deportation, of the American Friends Service Committee.

I am from Mexico and as a child my parents were very poor. They had 15 daughters, all women, and I am the oldest. They put me to work in the fields to help support our family. I am intelligent and I enjoyed school. I'm also good at drawing. I would study for about six months and then my parents would take me out to work in the fields, then I would study again. However, I had to leave school in third grade, so I taught myself to read and write. In Mexico, I also studied to be a beautician for a year and 3 months and I graduated in 2001.

In 2002 I came to the US to have a better life. I left five sons and daughters in Mexico as I wanted to work here to pay for their studies in Mexico. It was very difficult to leave them there.

I wanted to open a beauty salon in Denver. Although I studied cosmetology, I cannot work in that field or have my own salon here because they ask for a Social Security number, and I am undocumented. So I worked in housekeeping in hotels and then in agriculture as it is something I had experience in as a child. It is very heavy work. Then I met my husband here, he is a US citizen.

I also studied massage and could work here as a massage therapist, but I don't have a Social Security number.

In order not to lose my cosmetology skills, I volunteered at the Humanitarian Center and did free haircuts as a volunteer. But the Center closed due to the pandemic.

I have an adult daughter who lives here. She graduated as a nurse in Mexico, but cannot work here due to lack of a Social Security number. Also, I am now studying English. I am also studying now to start a food business, such as a restaurant or lunch spot. People enjoy my cooking.

If I had my own beauty business, I could help my family more. I would also be paying taxes to the state. Also, I could employ other people and they could give a better life to their families and they would also be paying taxes.

Many people could benefit if I could start a business.

Thank you.

Dear Chair Gonzales, Vice Chair Coleman, and members of the Senate State, Veteran, and Military Affairs Committee,

I'm writing today to urge you to vote YES on Senate Bill 21-199, Remove Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities. I thank Senators Jaquez Lewis and Winter for co-prime sponsoring this essential legislation that will help to create a Colorado where every resident can prosper.

I regularly remind my children how lucky they are to live in Colorado. In addition to our remarkable scenery and fantastic weather, we have wonderfully diverse communities that make our state stand out. Unfortunately, legislation from 2006 prevents our undocumented neighbors from fully accessing all the state has to offer.

Senate Bill 199 will open opportunities to apply for occupational and commercial licenses in Colorado, opportunities to apply for grants, contracts and loans, and access to basic public support services at the state and local level if funds are available. I believe that Senate Bill 199 will help to create a Colorado where every resident can prosper.

The Colorado Children's Campaign has highlighted how barriers to public services and quality child care leads to poor health outcomes, increased learning gaps and lower wages over a child's life. Moreover, undocumented individuals are now forced to make the unconscionable choice between working in unsafe, or outright dangerous, conditions during a pandemic with limited or no access to benefits, or facing financial instability or eviction.

Undocumented community members make important contributions to our state, including \$156.5 million in state and local taxes and \$272.8 million in federal taxes each year. With new federal stimulus dollars going directly to local communities, Senate Bill 199 removes the red tape from city and county leaders, enabling them to implement those dollars effectively to a broader community. I hope you will vote yes on this essential legislation.

Sincerely,
Jacinta 'Jacy' Montoya Price
jacy@jacymontoya.com

It's very important to have everyone in our community vaccinated with one of the COVID-19 doses. By requesting identification on undocumented members of our community we will have a bigger gap of members not being vaccinated and our number on COVID cases will continue to increase. Sen. Simpson, I hope you see the importance that everyone receives the public benefits. Basic needs should be met for everyone.

Olga Montano - San Luis Valley

Dear Chair Gonzales, Vice Chair Coleman, and members of the State Senate, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee-

The Children's Campaign supports Senate Bill 199. It is an important and meaningful step for our state to expand access to economic opportunity and give local communities the authority to support our immigrant and undocumented neighbors. Tens of thousands of Colorado residents who cannot verify legal presence—or live in a household with someone who cannot—are unable to access critical services or fully participate in our economy due to anti-immigrant legislation passed in 2006. The 2006 laws go beyond existing federal law and ultimately harm all members of our communities by driving down wages and threatening public health by barring individuals from utilizing basic benefits and impeding their right to make an adequate living. Barriers to public services and quality child care leads to poor health outcomes, increased learning gaps and lower wages over a child's life. Moreover, undocumented individuals are now forced to make the unconscionable choice between working in unsafe, or outright dangerous, conditions during a pandemic with limited or no access to benefits or facing financial instability or eviction.

We urge members of the Senate State, Veteran, and Military Affairs Committee to pass SB199: Remove Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities.

- Colorado Children's Campaign

Please support Senate bill 199 which would remove barriers and red tape which holds down wages, and limits business development and growth in our State. The public benefits, especially for undocumented families who support benefits that they themselves aren't eligible to receive, could would begin to address this inequity. Already vulnerable populations, who have suffered disproportionately under COVID, do not have access to viable employment options or basic benefits they deserve and need!

Elena Bacmeister - 80501

I am reaching out to urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities when it is heard by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee on April 13. Senate Bill 199 will open opportunities to apply for occupational and commercial licenses in Colorado, opportunities to apply for grants, contracts and loans, and access to basic public support services at the state and local level if funds are available. I believe that Senate Bill 199 will help to create a Colorado where every resident can prosper. We are specifically looking forward to having more child care programs who would benefit from a culturally responsive program and owner as well as for many of our families who could have upward economic mobility through business ownership.

Undocumented community members make important contributions to our state, including \$156.5 million in state and local taxes and \$272.8 million in federal taxes each year. With new federal stimulus dollars going directly to local communities, Senate Bill 199 removes the red tape from city and county leaders, enabling them to implement those dollars effectively to a broader community. I hope you will vote yes on this essential legislation.

Lisa Jansen Thompson - 80260

This is Kathy Hall, resident of Longmont and member of the Longmont Early Childhood Community Coalition. This coalition is focused on ensuring that all Longmont children ages 0-5 are in safe, healthy, affordable and developmentally appropriate settings on a daily basis.

I am asking you to support SB21-199.

More than 50% of the children in our area, and throughout the state, are cared for by FFN providers, that is Family, Friends and Neighbors who have little or no access to licensing options and public funds which are available or have been allocated to bring high quality services to our children. This puts our children at risk and impacts both the families needing child care assistance and those willing to provide it. This situation impacts our entire economic structure and growth by severely limiting affordable childcare options for everyone and excludes individuals from being eligible to receive benefits they have paid for. This situation needs to be remedied and SB21-199 will go a long way to that end.

I have 4 children but my oldest daughter is in high school and in that school, there is a program that they can study to be a nursing assistant but due to her legal status they told her that if she studied it they would deny her any possibility of practicing in any hospital since she was not a citizen. She is working hard, and should be allowed to practice what she is training to become. We need more healthcare professionals. Please vote YES on SB 199.

Jazmine Flores- 80260

I plead for your help in support of Bill 199. As an Early Childhood Professional in Boulder County for 35 years I have worked with , lived in communities with and have supported the need for our undocumented care givers to be able to obtain a State License. The support for these small business entrepreneur's is vital to the economy and to bridge the gap in school readiness. By removing these barriers we as a State can make the change and send the message of equity!

Toni Green - 80503

April 12, 2021

Re: SB 21-199

Dear State Affairs Committee:

My name is Richard Garcia and I am a member of the Boulder Valley School District Board of Education. Our BOE will be acting on a resolution supporting the passage of SB 21-199. I support this bill because we have a number of students who are DACA recipients and other students that are US citizens but have parents who are undocumented. Some of our DACA students will be graduating with certificates that require state licenses and this bill will enable them to acquire the licenses to enter into a profession or occupation that will pay a living wage. The same thing applies to the undocumented parents of our students that need professional licenses. The passage of SB 21-199 will make our state a more equitable state that supports the working families and their children. Please pass this bill SB21-199.

Thank you,

Richard Garcia

Board member

BVSD

My name is Tere Garcia and I am the executive director of Engaged Latino Parents Advancing Students Outcomes (ELPASO). We work with undocumented parents who work hard to provide for their children, feel they belong, contribute to the prosperity of their communities, therefore, the passage of this bill will allow them to increase that contribution and support to a better Colorado. The immigrant community is a very strong pillar of every city, town and neighborhood. The passing of this bill will make Colorado a stronger state because of the full participation of immigrant families.

Tere Garcia - 80516

AS a concerned citizen and parent in Longmont, I would like to express my support for the relaxation of SB21-199. This bill will have many ramifications within our community and would primarily affect women who are parents of pre-schoolers as well as those women who provide early childhood education to pre-schoolers in family friends and neighbor environments. The pandemic had a significant affect on both the mothers as well as providers of day care. If we care about the mothers being able to return back to work, our community needs to be able to supply more alternatives for day care within our community. If providers who are not documented can be a source of good pre kindergarten preparation, they will be able to take advantage of existing state programs that can assist them financially as well as preparation to provide the the needed education preparation of pre-schoolers who will eventually be educated within our school systems. Studies have shown that children who have received high achieving early-childhood education in help reduce incarceration rates along with low income housing assistance. I again support the relaxation of SB21-199.

Thank you, Linda Davies - 80503

My name is Sandie Weathers. I live in Lakewood and I am a daughter of an immigrant.

In May 2006 there was a march in support of immigrant rights on the State Capitol. I remember watching the news the night before. It was expected that there were going to be 7,000 to 12,000 participants. This number was severely underestimated. I will NEVER forget the look on the faces observing us that day. No one had expected 75,000 Latinos marching on the streets of Denver. Marching made me feel pride. It gave me hope. I felt our voices were being heard.

It was to my chagrin that only a couple months later that the state legislature passed the most oppressive laws against immigrants in the country. Immigrants are an important part of our community. They contribute to our economy and the PAY TAXES. Our current laws make it extremely difficult for the immigrant community to contribute and have access to healthcare, a basic human right. SB21-199 helps undo the damage caused by the 2006 special session. Please vote with your conscious as support this bill.

I have attached a link to a Denver Post article on the 2006 march for anyone who may have missed it or has forgotten.

<https://www.denverpost.com/2006/05/01/day-of-protest-arrives/>

Thank you for your time and consideration.

We hope this licensing proposal is passed to our immigrant community for both licenses and business, and support services. We should have access to the benefits we help support through the taxes we pay. Please vote YES on SB 199.

Ana Silvia Vanegas - 80226

My name is Mayra Guerrero, I am 51 years old. I have 4 children. We are originally from Guadalajara Jalisco Mexico, except for my oldest son who is an American citizen. Eight years ago we came to this country for personal reasons. I studied English and took a course to take care of older adults, while studying I worked as: waitress, dish washer, cleaning etc. I finished the GED at 46. And I continue studying, my 17-year-old daughter is in her last year of high school at APS, she is a sports girl and very dedicated to her studies, full of dreams, goals and illusions. My daughter was taking beautician classes at Pitkens Technical institute. When they asked for an SSN to which my daughter replied that it is in process and the teacher "suggested" that without a SSN could not have a license to work as a beautician who left the class. For my daughter, these words were very hurtful. She was very enthusiastic about working and continuing her university studies. They knocked down her dreams. That is why I am sharing our story so that something is done for these people who like my daughter want to improve themselves and contribute to this great country, without being a burden they just want an opportunity. I ask you to support this SB199 so that people like my daughter can work and study and get a license. I know they will take us into account and I thank you in advance.

Mayra Guerrero - 80010

Otro testimonio es que para obtener una licencia de manejo se nos ponen muchos obstáculos, son exagerados en los requisitos y de todas maneras que le dan a un indocumentado, una licencia marcada que nos pone al descubierto y nos perjudica de todas maneras ojalá y nos ayuden a que se nos de una licencia que no nos discrimine y seamos perjudicados. Gracias quien corresponda bendiciones.

Gloria Chavez - 80601

Yo nunca e calificado para asistencia médica, por ser ilegal como portadora de impuestos merecemos asistencia médica.

Pineda - 80216

Yo e visto las injusticias de mi condado y la nesecidades de licencias de conducir y licencia para cuidado de Niños como indocumentados nesecitamos nuestro estado legal

Nancy Lamb - 80205

Yo como proveedora de cuidado de niños en el hogar, quisiera obtener mi licencia de trabajo, ya que quiero trabajar por el bienestar de mis hijos, pero no tengo documentos no puedo ejercerse como profesional al cuidado de niños.

Joselyn Lima - 80226

Yo estoy tomando un curso para cuidado de niños y necesito una licencia,esto es muy necesario para poder avanzar mas y llegar a lograr mas metas como seguir especializandome,tambien me he visto afectada para los programas de salud para mi y mis hijas que son ciudadanas.Necesitamos ayuda y apoyo por favor!!!

Edin Aguirre - 80219

Mi testimonio es donde mi hija estudia la directora me ofreció trabajo para ser ayudante de maestra en un pre-kinder entonces no pude aceptar su propuesta de trabajo por ser inmigrante.

Jocelyn Escobedo - 80219

Soy mamá soltera de 4 hijos y bueno a mi me a afectado mucho el no tener estatus legal ya que me han despedido de mi trabajo por Falta de documentos legales, trabajaba en un restaurante de nombre top-gol y era mi sustento de vida y el mis hijos

Jazmin Flores - 80260

Cuando yo estaba en high school aplique para seguir estudiando despues de graduarme de high school pero la universidad que aplique me dijeron que por lo menos tenia que ser residente para ser aceptada

Jacqueline Guzman - 80223

Ami me vinificaria que las personas indocumentadas tengan licencias para que puedan conducir sin miedo y traiga seguridad en caso de un accidente grave.

Laura Alvarez- 80022

Yo tengo mi compañero de vida y el tiene problemas para todos los trámites de placas, salud, crédito de todo porque no tiene un Social nunca puede hacer tramites de un buen trabajo por no tener seguro creo que sería muy bueno autorizar un seguro marcado así como la Licencia de Colorado deberian tener un social marcado porque eso ayudaria a poder tener todos losbeneficios basicos que necesitan los seres humanos, la Ley es para todos por ahora son descrminados.

Reina Elizabeth Cuellar - 80012

Tengo un testimonio de una chica de high-school que estudio su clase de CNA y no pudo ejercer x no tener su estatus pues la chica nacio en Mexico y Era tan intigente que gano una beca par ir a la casa Blanca y por el mismo motives no pudo tomar la beca.

Reyna Garcia - 89249

Yo como proveedora de cuidado infantil creo que es de suma importancia tener acceso a una licencia para el cuidado de niños ya que esto es una ayuda para todos como comunidad.

Myriam Jimenez- 80301

Hay gente inmigrante muy preparada pero sin documentos , no pueden ejercer y aportar al sistema!

Adriana Martinez - 80013

Tengo a mi hija que estudia hischool, ella fue seleccionada junto otros compañeros que tienen alta calificación para una beca la cual consistía en llevarlos de vicita a la casa blanca, pero debido a su estatus migratorio le negaron esa beca y esa vicita a la casa blanca

Jazmin Flores - 80260

Hola yo me gradué de maestra de cuidado infantil a mi en lo personal me afecta esta propuesta porque trabajo con niños pequeños y no puedo sacar mi licencia del estado ni registrar mi negocio Los padres latinos se sienten confiados con personas que hablen su mismo idioma y que tengamos las costumbres similares para la crianza de sus hijos ellos me preguntan algunas veces que si tengo licencia que si tengo programas que les pueda ayudar a pagar con el cuidado de sus hijos y muchas veces a si me los dejan porqué ellos confían en personas que son responsables que amamos nuestro trabajo.en cambio si pudiera acceder a una mis niños a mi cuidado tendrían los beneficios de cualquier ciudadano En cuanto a ayudas para poder pagar los costos por cuidarlos en inspección del lugar donde yo les brindo cuidados y enseñanza a su corta edad.

Eufemia Vargas - 80226

As a member of the Immigration Justice Task Force at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Lafayette, I urge all of you to support SB 21 - 199. The bill which removes lawful presence in the state as a requirement for important state benefits will insure that hard working community members who pay taxes and contribute to the welfare of our state are treated fairly. Access to important services will also insure the well being and safety of all residents of our state.

Jean Nuttall - 80504

Arvada, Colorado, abril 13 de 2021

Dear Members of the Senate State and Veteran Affairs Committee,

I hope that both you and your family are doing well and that COVID 19 has not affected you. I would like to share my story with you about the barriers to which I have been exposed to in this country.

Like most of the people who migrate to the USA, we dream of arriving and having a better future for our family, that was, is and will continue to be my dream, because since I arrived in this country I have realized the great opportunity that this economy offers its residents

It is the dream of anyone who lives in Latin America, because although we work and live for a lifetime in our Central American countries, there are realities such as corruption, gangs and the violation of rights that can end the will and desires of overcoming anyone.

In my country I studied a Bachelor of Business Administration, I worked for more than 25 years in national and multinational companies, I started businesses, I had 2 houses, we educated our children with my husband, we experienced kidnapping, extortion and threats, after this we decided to migrate and forget about everything we have experienced with the sole objective of a better life.

Living in the USA, is a chicken soup for the soul, even with the different barriers and racism, we are prepared to work and get ahead. I have a son with special abilities and I have seen how his life has changed, that is why he decided to start a support group for parents with children with disabilities for the Latino community, we have been working for 3 years, we have helped many families in the Jefferson area , Denver and Aurora, to learn how we can improve the quality of life of our children, I feel useful knowing that everything I have done has helped many families, without discrimination of race or language.

We are currently holding our first annual conference, 34 families have signed up, we have spoken with people from ARC, HCP, Peak Parent Center, Thrive Center, organizations that are collaborating so that we can learn about the fundamentals of an IEP. Observing everything that has been done voluntarily and with the only resources of ourselves, is something that inspires us to do more, our barrier is legal immigration status, I have thought on many occasions about continuing to study and obtain a license, open my own business of managing social networks, studying to be a chef, making a nonprofit of the Support Group and helping the kids who need it most to go to university or college.

Mrs. Senator, there are many dreams and we want to make them respecting the laws of Colorado, but to make these dreams come true I must have a license, help us break down these barriers and be part of this thriving and entrepreneurial economy, which allows us to make dreams come true. .

For my part, I promise to continue working in that backyard, without resources, only with my hands and my dreams, but you have in your hands the possibility of changing this reality and forging a better future for people with special abilities and for the Arvada residents in Jefferson.

Thank you for your time and for considering our request.

Xiomara, Residente de Arvada.



Colorado Consumer
Health Initiative

Dear Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative's support for SB 199. Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization that works to ensure all Coloradans have equitable access to quality and affordable health care. Based on feedback from our membership and staff, we support SB 199 because we believe removing barriers to opportunities for immigrants is essential to promoting health equity and building a more diverse, culturally responsive health care system for Colorado.

Prohibiting occupational licensure to DACA recipients and undocumented health care workers is hurting our communities and economy. With the coronavirus pandemic straining our already burdened health care systems, there is an urgent need to bolster the health care workforce. Allowing these workers to access appropriate licensure is one potential solution for worsening labor shortages in health care and expanding access to health care for Coloradans as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colorado Health Care Labor Shortage

Colorado is critically short of health care professionals. Currently, the state is experiencing an annual shortage of at least 500 nurses with four-year BSN degrees, and this figure is expected to grow to a cumulative shortage of 4,500 nurses with BSNs by 2024.¹ This trend will undoubtedly continue as 17% of the state's health care workers retire over the next 10 years. In addition to replacing retiring health care workers, Colorado will face a rapidly increasing demand for health care during the coming decade because the state's population will expand by one million and there will be 389,000 more adults over 65.²

The surge of hospitalized patients during the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the urgent need to address the health care workforce shortage. Colorado hospitals dealt with the shortage by flying in travel doctors and nurses from around the country to help with the influx in COVID patients. Not only is this expensive, but it perpetuates health inequities by shifting the health care worker supply to more affluent areas, leaving poorer and rural areas understaffed.

Educational Investment & DACA Recipients

MSU Denver educates the largest number of DACA students in the state of Colorado. There are currently 399 DACA and undocumented students that qualify for in-state tuition, however, as

¹ [Westminster Chamber of Commerce](#)

² [Colorado Nursing Center](#)



students often underreport their status, research has shown that that number could be closer to 500 students. Roughly 60 DACA students at MSU Denver are enrolled in 7 majors related to the health care field and commonly require professional licensing.

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) has documented significant numbers of immigrant college graduates with health-related degrees facing skill underutilization. Many of these professionals are working in low-skilled jobs - registered nurses working as health aides - or are out of work. This skill underutilization, often referred to as brain drain, affects 263,000 immigrants in the United States with college degrees—a workforce whose talents could be tapped amid the pandemic and the workforce shortage. Passing SB 199 would give all of our community members the opportunity to use their skills to support their families, communities, and our state.³

Diversifying the Health Care Workforce

There is a persistent lack of diversity among health care professionals in the US. According to census data, the U.S. population is projected to become a majority-minority in 2045⁴, thereby increasing the need to prepare and train health care professionals who are culturally responsive and equipped to provide quality care in a multicultural society.

To ensure the highest quality patient care, there is a pressing need to have a health care workforce that represents the growing diversity in our communities, yet only about 9% of current physicians identify as Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). This speaks to a history of systemic oppression, where immigrants and people from minority groups that have been oppressed for generations in the US are underrepresented as physicians. People who are part of underrepresented groups may face obstacles in the healthcare workforce, including discrimination, fewer job offers, and uneven promotion opportunities, as well as challenges accessing the quality education and licensing requirements they need to enter the field. Moving forward, it will be necessary for employers to understand current healthcare demographics and the barriers and challenges faced by BIPOC, and immigrant populations.⁵

Increasing the diversity in healthcare organizations benefits both those organizations and the populations they serve. Health disparities stem from a complex system of racial and ethnic inequality that has developed over generations and that, among other issues, makes access to healthcare resources more difficult or even impossible. Compounding these systemic barriers to health care and good health is medical racism, which exacerbates health disparities and has a

³ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrant-health-care-workers-united-states-2018>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>

⁵ <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/diversity-issues>



real human toll in our current health care system. Evidence shows that that most healthcare providers across racial groups have implicit racial/ethnic bias. Immigrants and BIPOC are generally less satisfied with their interactions with healthcare providers and may not receive the same quality of care that white patients receive. Furthermore, where there is a lack of representation, there is also a lack of diverse thought. Research shows that diverse groups are more effective problem solvers than homogenous groups.⁶ Drawing from a broader talent pool, particularly those with lived experience in health disparities, is an important part of building a more equitable, accessible health care system. By providing diverse groups of immigrants access to occupational and commercial licensing, we give Colorado more tools to solve one of our state's pressing issues and eliminate needless barriers to opportunity for a broader segment of our community.

Benefits of Multicultural Patient Care

Diversity in healthcare has measurable benefits for both healthcare professionals and the communities they serve. Advantages of recruiting and maintaining a more diverse health care workforce include:

- Providers are more comfortable treating patients from different backgrounds
- Increased understanding of coworkers' and patients' value sets
- Improved communication: The vast majority of immigrant healthcare workers, about 69 percent in the country, spoke both English and at least another language in 2018. Patients can more effectively communicate with providers who speak their language and receive better care. Patients with limited proficiency in English report higher rates of medical errors and worse clinical outcomes.⁷
- Patient trust: BIPOC are more likely to seek preventive care when adequately represented by health care providers
- Reduction of health disparities: Improved cultural competence and ethnic and racial diversity can help to alleviate healthcare disparities and improve healthcare outcomes in diverse patient populations
- Improved employee retention and satisfaction: People are proud to work for organizations that positively impact their communities. Employee retention is crucial when there is a shortage of health care workers.⁷

Expanding Access to Occupational Licensure & Opportunity

⁶ <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/diversity-issues>

⁷ <https://hpi.georgetown.edu/cultural/>



Colorado Consumer
Health Initiative

Immigrants make up a significant percentage of the workforce and are undoubtedly vital to our health care system. When building a robust health care workforce, removing barriers to opportunities will be critical in order to improve patient outcomes, build stronger communities, and increase employee satisfaction.

Staffing shortages exacerbated by the pandemic have created the pressing need to address the licensing barriers for undocumented workers. If Colorado is to maintain its capacity to deliver healthcare services, let alone expand it to meet a growing population, we must significantly expand the health care workforce. Allowing access to occupational licenses for undocumented immigrants and DACA recipients would meet the demand for Colorado's health care professionals and assist with a successful pandemic recovery. By removing these harmful barriers to opportunity in our state, Colorado would reach untapped talents and expertise within the immigrant community. This would also increase the state's advantage in attracting qualified professionals, thus enhancing the state's competitiveness for new talent.

For these reasons, and many others that will be illustrated by the diverse coalition of stakeholders that is pushing this important bill forward, we believe that SB 199 is an important step forward for Colorado's health care system and to ensure that all Coloradans are able to reap the full benefits of what their taxpayer dollars should afford them.

We respectfully ask you to vote yes on SB 199. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Isabel Cruz, Policy Manager for CCHI, at icruz@cohealthinitiative.org.

Best,

Isabel Cruz
Policy Manager
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

CIRC Testimony in Support of SB21-199

Thank you, Madame Chair Gonzales and members of the committee,

We are testifying in support of bill SB21-199 which would expand all professional licenses to all immigrants in Colorado by removing the previous requirement asking individuals to provide lawful presence verification and clarify legal ambiguity for local jurisdictions to open up access to public benefits by repealing HB1023.

The Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business, and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state.

CIRC believes firmly that removing this barrier to professional licensing and public benefits will allow more individuals to access better economic opportunities and advance racial equity in our state. This pandemic has highlighted how deeply our state relies on immigrants who have served on the frontlines as essential workers throughout this health and economic crisis. This past year has also been extremely trying for immigrants and mixed status families who have faced barrier after barrier to accessing the economic support and other critical resources needed to provide for themselves and their families during an unprecedented crisis. Despite their countless contributions to our state, immigrants have not yet been given the same respect and access they need and deserve.

It is time for Colorado to take the next step towards justice and equitable access by removing the barriers to professional licenses and public benefits that have kept immigrants and their families from having equal access to wealth building and opportunities to thrive in our state.

Immigrants are an integral part of our state and deserve access to the same opportunities as every Coloradan. We urge a YES vote in favor of SB21-199.

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
80209



To the Members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

My name is Christina Walker and I am the director of policy and advocacy at Clayton Early Learning. Clayton supports a whole child, whole family approach to the earliest years. We directly serve approximately 500 children, birth to Kindergarten entry, and their families across the state of Colorado. We believe that healthy early childhood development offers one of the most powerful levers for ending inequality and creating thriving communities. I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 199.

Currently, tens of thousands of Colorado residents who cannot verify legal presence or who live in a mixed-status family are unable to fully participate in our economy due to anti-immigrant legislation passed in previous years. Colorado's laws create additional obstacles and go far and above existing federal law, barring individuals from utilizing basic benefits that would support their families and impeding their right to earn livable wages that contribute to our state economy. Additionally, the laws have created a patchwork of state and local policies that create confusion and disparities around key resources and information that constantly threaten undocumented families' ability to lead stable lives. It is also important to note that the majority of [undocumented families pay taxes](#), hereby contributing to the same programs that they are not eligible to access. [Children of immigrants are also overwhelmingly U.S. citizens](#). In Colorado, [nearly one in four children](#) lived in an immigrant family as of 2018. More than ninety percent of these children were themselves citizens; however, 47 percent of these children lived with parents who were undocumented.

As an early childhood provider serving Early Head Start and Head Start-eligible families, the passage of SB21-199 has severe implications for the families we serve. At Clayton, more than one-third of the children we serve are dual language learners. We do not require, nor do we document, the immigration status of the children or families receiving Head Start or Early Head Start services. We believe the experiences, development, and education of children of immigrants are consequential for our entire country and the state of Colorado. If we do not remove these barriers, we will continue to harm the ability of Colorado businesses to thrive and to lead healthy lives and engage in meaningful work to support their families. We can create a Colorado where every resident can prosper.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 199. I appreciate your consideration.

Christina Walker
Director, Policy & Advocacy
Clayton Early Learning

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Brenda Figueroa

Pueblo, CO

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199 Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities:

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Brenda Figueroa, I live in Pueblo, Colorado and I work as an advisor at East High School. I am also a member of Center for Health Progress, and am here in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

My mom cleans houses and my dad is a construction worker and they taught me early on how important it is to get a good education. I went to CSU Pueblo and got my Bachelor's in Social Work, so that I could help others. I wanted to use my experience as a first generation student to help others in a similar position succeed. I've had mentors who have helped me, and I am so passionate about education, that I worked and put myself through school to get a Master's degree in Higher Education. This is why it is important for me to be a role model for others and help them reach their dreams for higher education.

As an advisor, I work with students when they first start high school and continue working with them until they graduate. I am recruiting and working with students in the English as a Second Language program for college readiness classes and programs. Our program tries to recruit students to apply for college, but last year out of 300 students in our program, only one applied for college. When you talk to the students who lack the ability to verify lawful presence, it is clear that they know they will not be able to go to college because they can't afford it and do not qualify for any federal assistance or grant programs. They feel the heavy burden and bear the brunt of meeting closed doors, when their friends and peers are eligible for more support because they have the benefits of US citizenship. I have met so many parents who want to help their children succeed and go to college. They try to apply for financial assistance to help their children attend college, but they do not qualify because they are undocumented. This causes me pain because these kids are smart and have very bright futures. Passing this bill would help them realize their dreams and potential and show them that there is more for them in life.

While I have been able to achieve many of my dreams like getting multiple degrees and helping others, my husband's status has made it difficult for him to do the same. My husband came to the US when he was 9. When we got married, we wanted to buy a house but we could not because the applications required a social security number. My husband does not have a social security number, so we could not apply for a house together and could not afford it using only my income. He wants to start his own business but he can't because he can't access loans or other assistance that are available to others.

SB21-199 would make it possible for my husband and the students that I work with to achieve their goals, whether that is going to college or starting their own business. If passed, the bill would remove barriers that keep Coloradans without documentation from accessing professional and business licenses. This would mean more Coloradans can start businesses which will lead to economic growth. Immigrants are some of the primary drivers of new business growth in Colorado, and we need that now more than ever to ensure we have a chance at a strong and equitable economic recovery from COVID. The bill would also allow people to attend college and get licensed in their profession, which will increase wages for everyone, increase the local tax base and removes harmful barriers to all students and aspiring professionals from reaching their dreams.

Thank you for listening to my experience, and I ask you please vote in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

Senator Julie Gonzales

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs

Gabriel Duenez

CSU Pueblo Nursing Student

Pueblo, Colorado

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

In Support of SB21-199: Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities:

Thank you Madame Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Gabriel Duenez and I live in Pueblo, Colorado. I am a 22 year old student at CSU Pueblo majoring in Nursing and Spanish and am a member of Center for Health Progress. I am here in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

My dad came to Colorado for more opportunities for our family, and he found good work and safety for us. My mom and I came when I was three and we stayed so our family could be together and have a better life. I was in middle school when I learned I was in a different social position than my other friends at school. They were traveling, and I asked my mom why we couldn't travel and she explained to me it was because of our status, and I began to understand what this meant for my own future, my education, and my career. When I was in high school, a program called Health Academy gave me the chance to learn more about the medical community and get involved. Making a difference in the lives of others and for my community left a big impact on me. I quickly learned how important being involved is to me, and how big of an impact I can have on the lives of others by working in health care.

When I was a volunteer at Innovage through the Health Academy, I saw firsthand how important nurses are in the lives of their patients, and how much the patients love their nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants. You see and hear them talk about how these individuals made their day, and make their week. The nurses increase their quality of life, and that is when I learned that this is what I want to do. I want to be a good nurse that helps people. Even just documenting their vitals, you can put your patient in a good mood and make a difference. I learned this is what I love to do, I told myself this is what I want to do, and if this bill passes I can.

I have DACA, and I'm going to graduate from college in two years. I was a sophomore in high school when I first applied for DACA. I had to go to Colorado Springs to get a lawyer, scheduled dates, pay \$495 and even more for a lawyer. This was almost \$1,000 total, so I could work, get a driver's license, and pay taxes. I have to do this every two years. Prove I'm paying taxes, pay that amount of money, and hope I can keep my DACA. It feels good to pay taxes and feel normal, like my other friends, but it is a grim reminder of where I am socially- in limbo. You have to live your life in two year segments and hope for the best. But this bill will help me know that even though I'll have to keep renewing my DACA, I will have the promise of being able to become a registered Nurse after finishing my college degree.

Without this bill, all that hard work would be for nothing. Meaningless education and lost money. Letting everyone get their license means the state will have a lot more people in their careers and paying more in taxes. This can help us tear down that stereotype that immigrants are a burden to the economy. I think that is a strong case to get rid of old harmful laws once and for all.

This bill is critical for the health care workforce in my local community and our state. I can work with patients who don't speak English fluently. I help them learn what medications they need to take and answer their questions in Spanish. When I and others speak their language, they can trust you more than someone who doesn't. This bill will help more aspiring nurses like me instill more trust with our community, and more people will get the healthcare they need because there will be more people like me to help.

Thank you for listening to my experience, and I ask you please vote in support of SB21-199, Removing Barriers bill.

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

SB21-199 Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Shane Mitchell Against Self	<p>This bill is clearly unamerican but i would like to go into detail as to why its completely unamerican. Here it states"The bill repeals existing provisions that require a person to demonstrate the person's lawful presence in the United States to be eligible for certain public benefits and requires that lawful presence is not a requirement of eligibility for state or local public benefits" Ok so who pays for this? Not only in this state are people wanting to raise taxes, now people are making it easier for illegals to gain access to public benefits that even residents of the state have a hard time getting. Shouldnt we be focused on fixing the issue with the lengthy process it take for americans to get public assistance than trying to give illegals benefits that americans deserve anyways? This is completely unamerican. Not only is this bill saying let any illegal come in regardless of status or identity and allow them to use american benefitis " Your bill wants to strike down "statutory provisions that still require lawful presence to clarify acceptable documents to demonstrate eligibility."</p> <p>First off is this the United states of mexico or the united states of america? As i last remember the mexican american war was fought in regards to territoriality and we won that territoriality in a bloody war not to reverse course and try to combine the space we took and give back to the mexican government. If we were just going to give it right back why fight for it? This bill makes no sense and is not only federally illegal but extremely wrong. What i need to know is how does this help americans? to me this bill is putting ITS OWN CITIZENS SECOND and putting illegals first which wiil never go down in any other country. This is ANTI-AMERICAN! I am against this illegal bill. This can not continue to happen. We demand law and order and not the trampling over our own american citizens at the expense of emotion. It is not our responsibility to care for illegals who come across the border illegally. To put forth things that are completely illegal to begin,with just spits on Colorados constitution which is completely being torn every year. When does it stop? We need to fix the immigration issue federally,close the border, fix things will mexico and south america and we will not have the crises we have now, going on, on our southern border. We can not allow the trampling of our citizens anymore. LOWER TAXES! And get illegals off of our public assistance programs.</p>
Bob Norris For	It is unconscionable that we would deny benefits that are not denied by Federal law to essential workers who risked their lives during the pandemic and for those who have paid taxes for decades

<p>Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and Boulder County Sanctuary Coalition</p>	<p>Many undocumented workers are skilled professional who could more effectively serve the community if they could obtain an appropriate professional license. As an example there are many well trained and experienced childcare providers who can nit obtain a license and thus find better paying work,</p> <p>It is time to end the period of 15 years of unfair treatment</p>
<p>Peggy Leech For League of Women Voters of Colorado</p>	<p>Testimony SB21-199 Removing Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities</p> <p>Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members,</p> <p>My name is Peggy Leech, and I am representing the League of Women Voters of Colorado. The League is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions of the state.</p> <p>LWV is in support of SB-199.</p> <p>The League supports policies and programs designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase job opportunities • Increase access to health insurance • provide support services such as childcare and transportation • provide opportunities and/or incentives for basic or remedial education and job training <p>SB-199 is designed to remove barriers to accomplishing those policies and programs for our immigrant community. That community is a vital part of Colorado’s economy and our society, which has become even more apparent during the pandemic.</p> <p>Please support SB-199, Removing Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities.</p> <p>Thank you, Peggy Leech League of Women Voters of Colorado</p>