

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee for making the time to hear community input and my story.

I am a Denver native, an organizer for Stand for Children, but most importantly a daughter to two hard-working immigrants.

We need you to vote yes on house bill 21-1194, in which creates the immigration legal defense fund to help families such as mine receive legal advice, counseling, and representation when they are subject to an immigration proceeding.

My parents and many other parents, sons and daughters, essential workers, and students deserve the support you all are supposed to provide for a pathway to citizenship or legal stay become a reality. Many who are not familiar with the immigration process or who have not experienced the fear of not being able to see your loved ones due to a piece of paper, do not realize that it is not easy for the process to be even begin due to funds.

My parents came to this country with the intent to work hard and provide me and my two brothers a better life. Throughout my grade school years, I always carried that fear of possibly coming home from school and not seeing my parents walk in the door after they'd get out of work. As I work with families in schools now as an organizer for Stand for Children, I feel and see that same feeling in many of the students and families.

Thankfully, my parents were both able to obtain their residency about 5 years ago.

But 7 years ago, this legal defense fund would have eliminated many of the financial barriers my family had to surpass... from not being able to buy school clothes, school supplies, having to get the bare minimum of groceries... only because most of our money if not all was being invested into the immigration proceedings of my parents. My family and I were able to make it work somehow, but undeniably, there are families out there that do not have that option no where near their future. So it is up to you all to allow that to be a reality through the creation of this immigration legal defense fund.

Thank you and I hope you all think about the countless families who contribute to the economy in your districts... it is time to give back.



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Written Testimony of Sarah Plastino, Esq., of the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) in Support of HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund

Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, April 20, 2021

Introduction

The Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) writes this testimony in support of HB21-1194 and the effort to create a Colorado legal defense fund for low-income immigrants facing deportation without an attorney.

RMIAN is a nonprofit organization located in Westminster, Colorado, that serves low-income adults and children in immigration proceedings. RMIAN promotes knowledge of legal rights, provides effective representation to ensure due process, works to improve detention conditions, and advocates for a more humane immigration system focused on ending the practice of detention given viable alternatives exist. RMIAN represents clients directly and also offers robust pro se support to litigants who are unable to hire counsel.

RMIAN's inception was driven by the lack of legal representation in immigration proceedings in Colorado. Each day, our organization bears witness to the tragedy that results from people facing immigration judges alone. RMIAN hopes that the Colorado General Assembly will recognize the tremendous value in investing in legal services that protect Coloradans' due process rights and emphasizes the importance of family unity. As a state, we must act to address this grave injustice. HB21-1194 would do just that.

Testimony of Sarah Plastino, Esq., Senior Staff Attorney, RMIAN Detention Program

Good afternoon Chairman Lee and members of the Committee. It is an honor to testify. Thank you to Senator Moreno for sponsoring this Bill. I am here to explain why you should support House Bill 1194, to create a statewide Legal Defense Fund for low-income immigrants facing deportation in Colorado.

My name is Sarah Plastino. I am a Senior Staff Attorney at RMIAN, the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network. RMIAN is the largest provider of legal services to people facing deportation in the region. We represent people in the ICE detention center in Aurora, as well as children and families in deportation proceedings in the state.

There is no right to appointed counsel in deportation proceedings, even if the person is a child, an asylum seeker, or is detained. 61% of immigrants in deportation proceedings in Colorado, including 65% of people detained in Aurora, faced the judge and prosecutor, in an adversarial proceeding, without a lawyer, simply due to poverty. Under these conditions, immigrants with a lawyer are over 10 times more likely to win their cases than those who represent themselves.

I'd like to tell you about my client, Martin, who I represent through the Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund – a similar fund, specifically for Denver residents.

Martin is 66. He was born in Mexico, but has lived in the US for nearly 50 years – 30 of them in Denver. He is married to a US citizen in her 70s, and he has had his green card for 31 years.

In 2019, ICE detained Martin out of the blue, on a day when he was supposed to go to the doctor. Without his knowledge, and without providing him a lawyer, ICE had initiated deportation proceedings against him based on Martin's single possession of codeine conviction, and had mailed the hearing notice to the wrong address. Martin did not attend his hearing, and the Immigration Judge ordered him deported in his absence.

ICE imprisoned him to execute this outstanding deportation order that Martin did not know that he even had. ICE sent Martin to the detention center in Aurora – still without a lawyer. There, he went to the emergency room several times, and was diagnosed with liver cancer. ICE continued to detain him, until the Mexican consulate intervened and negotiated his release.

Martin then became a client of RMIAN because we had funding to represent him through the Denver Fund. I filed a complex motion to reopen his deportation order, and we assigned him a social worker. The Immigration Court eventually reopened his case. This was a victory, but only halfway -- Martin is still facing deportation, despite that has undergone several rounds of chemo, is on the liver transplant list, has dementia and is physically disabled

If Martin had had a lawyer, the injustice of his case could have been addressed from the very beginning. A Colorado-wide fund would provide the same protections and access to justice for Coloradans all over the state. We urge you to act now, before another Colorado family is ripped apart. Vote YES on HB 1194.



International Rescue Committee

1873 S. Bellaire St., Suite 500

Denver, CO 80222

Rescue.org/Denver

March 16, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of the Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, HB21-1194

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed legislation, HB21-1194, the Immigrant Legal Defense Fund. I serve as the Legal Program Director at the International Rescue Committee (IRC)'s office in Denver, Colorado, where I oversee the Survivors of Torture program – a program designed to meet the legal needs of non-detained asylum seekers. I believe that this legislation would have a tremendously positive impact on the countless number of immigrants facing potential removal and significantly increase their chances of success.

Unlike in the criminal context, respondents in immigration proceedings are not entitled to the same right to counsel.¹ That a respondent must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to find representation is a wholly different entity, given that respondents must retain and pay for such representation.² Many respondents are unable to afford an attorney, particularly if they are asylum seekers, as they often flee their home countries with little to no resources, and are not allowed to work legally in the United States until the passage of one year.³ Yet, removal can carry devastating consequences not unlike those in a criminal proceeding. On one end of the spectrum, an unsuccessful respondent loses their home, livelihood, and family; at the other, they are forced to return to a country where they face certain torture or death. That a person may be removed to a country where they will be killed because they cannot raise sufficient capital is criminal; the rights to life and liberty should not hinge on one's personal finances.

Through my work with the Survivors of Torture program at the IRC in Denver, I have seen firsthand the seemingly insurmountable challenge which awaits my clients in removal proceedings – and these are clients who are not in detention and who reside in Colorado's metropolitan areas. As indicated by the program's name, I serve individuals who have survived torture in their countries of origin and who are seeking protection in the United States. This population is incredibly vulnerable, and I regularly see how the effects of trauma can affect an individual's ability to meaningfully participate in their legal defense from removal. For instance, many of our clients face significant mental health challenges, stemming directly from their trauma histories, that impact their ability to share their stories in the manner often required by an adjudicator. This subjects them to challenges to their credibility, an all-important factor when corroborating evidence of the claim may be non-existent. That a person would be sent back to their country of persecution for failure to credibly discuss the harm which brought them here in the first place is a catch-22 which necessitates an advocate.

¹ U.S. Const. amend XI (“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right . . . to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.”).

² INA § 239(a)(1)(e) (“The alien may be represented by counsel and the alien will be provided (i) a period of time to secure counsel under subsection (b)(1) and (ii) a current list of counsel prepared under subsection (b)(2).”).

³ “Asylum,” United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum>. *But see Casa de Maryland v. Wolf*, No. 8:20-cv-02118-PX (D.Md. 2020) (order granting preliminary injunction for specific class members).



International Rescue Committee

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Moreover, the U.S. immigration system is notoriously complex, given the intersection of its various agencies, laws, and regulations; the numerous changes to policy and procedure over the past several years have only further complicated this system, in a manner that would make anyone's head spin. Failure to navigate this byzantine system can have catastrophic consequences. For example, one of my clients was placed in removal proceedings for her failure to appear. After digging into her case, it was revealed that, through no fault of her own, she was not given proper notice of the scheduled date. An attorney was able to correct the record, get her case off the immigration court's docket, and back in front of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) where it belonged. She later won her case.

I have seen numerous other examples of individuals who would have lost their cases but for the assistance of an attorney – an attorney whom they could not have afforded without the support of non-profits such as the IRC. The Immigrant Legal Defense Fund is a necessary increase in resources that will ensure more people are afforded the very due process that American citizens take for granted.

Sincerely,

Elise Anglin, Esq. | Legal Program Director

International Rescue Committee in Denver

[Rescue.org/Denver](https://www.rescue.org/denver)



Rose Community Foundation was created in 1995 from the proceeds of the sale of Rose Medical Center, a beloved hospital founded after World War II by the Denver Jewish community – a community of immigrants themselves. Rose’s founders envisioned a hospital built on the values of inclusion and non-discrimination and employed staff regardless of race or creed, granting hospital privileges to Jewish doctors and doctors of all backgrounds, including Dr. Edmond Noel, the first Black physician to have hospital privileges in Denver. While Rose Community Foundation is separate and independent from the hospital, the shared ethos around inclusion, non-discrimination and diversity has continued to infuse the Foundation’s work over the past quarter century as we have aimed to advance inclusive, engaged and equitable Greater Denver communities through values-driven philanthropy.

Over the past several years, as our community has been impacted by shifts in the federal immigration policy landscape, escalating discriminatory rhetoric and troubling upticks in hate crimes, Rose Community Foundation has deployed the tools we have at our disposal—our grantmaking dollars and our voice—to support organizations on the frontlines of serving our immigrant and refugee neighbors, with the aim of ensuring our community feels welcoming and safe for all. We have been proud to support metro Denver nonprofits’ recent efforts to help DACA recipients, asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants navigate an incredibly complex immigration system. Organizations and programs such as the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning’s Interpreter Network, and the Justice and Legal Aid Center, a program of Mile High Ministries, provide a wide variety of important immigrant legal protection services, from legal support for children and family members appearing in immigration court to translation and interpretation services for immigrants and refugees who are in removal proceedings or need affirmative relief to removal representation for juvenile immigrants or immigrant victims of crime. In 2018, we were also honored to help create and support the Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund, and are excited that other cities beyond Denver, could have similar support for their immigrant population because of HB21-1194.

But philanthropy alone cannot sustain the high demand for these nonprofits’ services. And the cost of inaction is simply too high—immigrants with legal counsel are more likely to be released from detention and less likely to be removed in absentia, yet, nationally fewer than 40 percent of immigrants secure representation in their removal cases, according to the American Immigration Council.

The creation of a statewide legal defense fund would help ensure that all Coloradans receive due process under the law, no matter their status, the color of their skin or where they come from. Rose Community Foundation proudly joins our partners in the business, nonprofit and public sectors who aspire for Colorado to strengthen its commitment to equality, justice and inclusion for *everyone* in our state by supporting HB21-1194.

Senator Gardner and Senator Cooke
Senate Judiciary Committee

Hannah Friedman, MD

May 20th, 2021

In support of HB21-1194: Immigration Legal Defense Fund

My name is Hannah Friedman, and I am a pediatrician in Aurora, Colorado. I strongly support HB21-1194 which would create a Statewide Legal Defense Fund for immigrants to have legal representation as they confront detainment and deportation proceedings.

I became a pediatrician to help support children and families as they navigate the ever evolving system of health and well-being in the United States. I am particularly passionate about taking care of children with medical complexity; for example, children with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or other medical conditions requiring special healthcare needs. In my clinic, I see children who are cared for by many medical subspecialists, attend several therapies each week, and require extensive daily medication regimens. It is absolutely imperative for the health of my patients that their parents are present to care for them.

Unjust immigration detention is important to me because it unnecessarily separates the children with medical complexity that I see in my clinic from their parents. My patients often cannot communicate their needs; they completely rely on their parents for their nutrition, life-sustaining medications and therapies, and guardianship. It is an undue hardship on my patients, their families, and the medical system to have parents, essential caregivers, entangled in deportation proceedings or detained. I have seen malnutrition, more frequent hospitalization, and significant emotional distress when families are separated due to immigration issues.

Having guaranteed legal representation and support through the legal defense fund would help keep the children with medical complexity I see in my clinic home with their families, instead of in the hospital. I have seen that when parents have more support during immigration proceedings, they are able to continue working, providing, and caring for their children leading to much improved health outcomes.

By creating a statewide legal defense fund, you are not only creating a program to offer basic legal assistance, but you are also supporting the health and wellbeing of thousands of mixed status immigrant families across Colorado. I urge the committee to pass HB21-1194. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Hannah Friedman, MD

Senator Gardner and Senator Cooke
Senate Judiciary Committee

David Keller
1332 Elizabeth St.
Denver CO 80206

May 20th, 2021

In support of HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund

My name is David Keller MD and I am a pediatrician currently practicing in primary care pediatrics in Aurora. Our practice cares for many children with family members at risk of deportation for a variety of reasons; I have seen the ways in which a child's physical and mental health are affected by detainment and deportation. I strongly support HB21-1194 which would create a Statewide Legal Defense Fund for immigrants to have legal representation as they confront detainment and deportation proceedings.

I became a pediatrician because I believe that every child deserves the right to develop to their maximal potential. Every day, I work with families to assure that their children are ready for school with appropriate housing, nutrition, immunizations and medications. Over the past decades, I have seen many children suffering from sleeplessness, anxiety and depression because of the deportation of one of the adults in their lives. I recently treated a young lady with crippling anxiety, because her father has been sent to Mexico and she cannot convince herself that her mother, a US citizen, will not be deported as well. These are not problems that can be solved by a prescription or a referral. When the family suffers, the child suffers. In order for my patients to grow to be all that they can be, we need to ensure that our immigration processes conform to the legal standards prevalent throughout the rest of our legal system. Legal representation for all engaged in navigating our complex legal system is essential to minimizing the harm to a generation of young Americans.

By creating a statewide legal defense fund, you are not only creating a program to offer basic legal assistance, but you are also supporting the health and wellbeing of thousands of mixed status immigrant families across Colorado. I urge the committee to pass HB21-1194. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

David Keller MD, FAAP
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Senator Gardner and Senator Cooke
Senate Judiciary Committee

Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH
brianna.morgan@cuanschutz.edu

May 20th, 2021

In support of HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund

My name is Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH and I am a pediatric resident working in Denver and Aurora, Colorado. I strongly support HB21-1194 which would create a Statewide Legal Defense Fund for immigrants to have legal representation as they confront detainment and deportation proceedings.

I became a pediatrician because I love being a trusted figure in the lives of children and families. In my career, I have developed a passion around improving outcomes for children through early intervention. With a supportive family unit and quality community care, children can be extremely resilient in overcoming systemic inequities. For young kids, health is far more than physical wellbeing and is intrinsically linked to the socio-economic conditions of the parents' lives.

While working with mixed status immigrant families, I've seen how the current immigration system breeds constant fear and unsafety in families. When a parent is deported, children may experience unresolved trauma that negatively impacts their development through the lifespan. Furthermore, many families entangled in immigration proceedings do not have the funds for legal representation. These parents have to choose between a chance to keep their family together and putting food on the table. Almost always, my patients will choose to feed their children and risk the longer term consequences of trauma on the child. This dilemma should not exist. For the families I work with, passing this legislation would create space for parents to be the best caregivers they can possibly be. This bill is a question of health equity. By preventing unnecessary removal of a parent figure from the life of a child you are securing the child's future ability to thrive emotionally, behaviorally, physically, and mentally.

In passing a statewide legal defense fund, you are not only implementing a program to offer basic legal assistance, but you are also supporting the health and wellbeing of thousands of mixed status immigrant families across Colorado. I urge the committee to pass HB21-1194
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH

Senator Gardner and Senator Cooke
Senate Judiciary Committee

Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH
brianna.morgan@cuanschutz.edu

May 20th, 2021

In support of HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund

My name is Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH and I am a pediatric resident working in Denver and Aurora, Colorado. I strongly support HB21-1194 which would create a Statewide Legal Defense Fund for immigrants to have legal representation as they confront detainment and deportation proceedings.

I became a pediatrician because I love being a trusted figure in the lives of children and families. In my career, I have developed a passion around improving outcomes for children through early intervention. With a supportive family unit and quality community care, children can be extremely resilient in overcoming systemic inequities. For young kids, health is far more than physical wellbeing and is intrinsically linked to the socio-economic conditions of the parents' lives.

While working with mixed status immigrant families, I've seen how the current immigration system breeds constant fear and unsafety in families. When a parent is deported, children may experience unresolved trauma that negatively impacts their development through the lifespan. Furthermore, many families entangled in immigration proceedings do not have the funds for legal representation. These parents have to choose between a chance to keep their family together and putting food on the table. Almost always, my patients will choose to feed their children and risk the longer term consequences of trauma on the child. This dilemma should not exist. For the families I work with, passing this legislation would create space for parents to be the best caregivers they can possibly be. This bill is a question of health equity. By preventing unnecessary removal of a parent figure from the life of a child you are securing the child's future ability to thrive emotionally, behaviorally, physically, and mentally.

In passing a statewide legal defense fund, you are not only implementing a program to offer basic legal assistance, but you are also supporting the health and wellbeing of thousands of mixed status immigrant families across Colorado. I urge the committee to pass HB21-1194
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brianna Morgan, MD, MPH

Senate Judiciary

HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Beth Utton For Self	<p>Immigration is not a criminal offense; it is a civil offense. And yet immigrants are detained in what are effectively prisons without the possibility of bond. Even immigrants with valid legal claims to be in the United States are picked up off the streets and thrown into detention without due process.</p> <p>They are then faced with arguing their cases without representation by attorneys. Immigration law is a special sector of law and is extraordinarily complex. A person without an immigrant attorney has zero to negligible chance of not being deported, no matter how strong their case might be.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the detained immigrants are separated from their families. They are unable to work to even stand a chance of hiring an attorney to represent them.</p> <p>HB21-1194 could provide detainees access to funds to aid them in legally supporting their claims.</p> <p>Vote YES on HB21-1194.</p>
Peggy Leech For League of Women Voters of Colorado	<p>Testimony HB21-1194 Immigration Legal Defense Fund</p> <p>Dear 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, with membership in 19 local leagues that span the state.</p> <p>LWV is in support of HB-1194.</p> <p>The League believes that all persons should receive fair treatment under the law. We also believe that, until comprehensive immigration reform is enacted at the federal level, unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity should not be deported.</p> <p>Currently, immigration proceedings are the only legal proceedings where someone has no right to an attorney if they cannot afford one. Having legal representation dramatically increases an immigrant's ability to successfully navigate a difficult legal process.</p>

	<p>HB-1194 sets up a legal defense fund, to be administered by the Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) with minimal funding from the General Fund. CDLE will be allowed to seek or accept gifts, grants, and donations from private or public sources. They will then make grants to organizations who will represent indigent individuals during immigration proceedings.</p> <p>Please support HB-1194, Immigration Legal Defense Fund.</p> <p>Thank you, Peggy Leech League of Women Voters of Colorado</p>
<p>Chaer Robert For Colorado Center on Law and Policy</p>	<p>Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Member:</p> <p>My name is Chaer Robert. I am Legislative Director for Colorado Center on Law and Policy. CCLP stands with diverse communities across Colorado in the fight against poverty.</p> <p>We support HB1194-Immigrant Legal Defense Fund. We thank the sponsor – Senator Moreno for bringing this bill forth.</p> <p>CCLP promotes policies which enhance family economic security. Few events turn a family’s economic and psychological security upside down more than sudden detainment for deportation action. Whether a key wage-earner or an essential caregiver for a family, being removed from home, family and a job leaves a collapsing hole. The proceedings can not only remove someone from their job and family, but the country they are living in. For many, the difference between resolution and deportation can depend on legal representation. Not being able to afford a lawyer should not be the primary reason someone who should be able to remain in the US is instead deported, disrupting their family and community.</p> <p>This modest investment of \$100,000/yr can help ensure that a Coloradan is not deprived of liberty, removed from their family and their community without a real chance to make their case.</p> <p>Today, we ask for your support of HB1194- Immigrant Legal Defense.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Morgan Royal For New Era Colorado</p>	<p>New Era Colorado strongly supports HB21-1194. New Era Colorado is a local nonpartisan nonprofit organization that works to mobilize and empower the next generation to participate in democracy and move our state forward to become a better place for us all. Young people - especially young people of color in Colorado - have shown time and</p>

	<p>time again that we're a constituency that continues to show up and fight for the issues and communities that we care about. Last election, young people in Colorado shattered records - turning out to vote at 70% and making up 27% of the vote share.</p> <p>We believe that HB-1194 is a critical and urgent step that our state can take to support immigrants in Colorado by bringing more equity, fairness, and access to the legal representation process. The legal process is complicated and met with many unnecessary and unscrupulous barriers, impacting the most marginalized Coloradans. This bill will take the necessary steps to create a statewide legal defense fund while investing back into our state and communities. The Colorado Fiscal Institute, released a recent report demonstrating how a statewide immigrant legal defense fund would have a positive impact on both local and state economies.</p> <p>Young people strongly hold values rooted in equity and justice. Fair trials and the right to due process are only possible with access to legal representation, however unfortunately that's not the case for many immigrants facing deportation proceedings due to the many barriers that prevent access to legal counsel. This bill is extremely urgent as we've seen that immigrants without legal representation face a higher likelihood of being deported - even when they shouldn't be. Studies have shown that immigrants with representation are 10 times more likely to have successful outcomes than those who are unrepresented. New generations serve as a renewal force for our society, demanding that our country and state live up to its espoused values of equality and justice. At New Era, we believe that everyone deserves the right to a fair trial and due process. We also believe that immigrants make our communities stronger. As Coloradans we need to provide the necessary support for our communities and this bill aims to do so by increasing justice and access. We strongly urge you to support this bill.</p>
<p>Carolina Diaz Questions Only Self</p>	<p>I am Carolina Diaz, I live in Durango Colorado, I support the HB 1194 campaign. We arrived in Durango Colorado, fleeing the war in Colombia, I worked as a journalist, my father was assassinated and we had to leave the country for safety. I had already been to Durango Colorado on vacation and I fell in love with this place so I decided it would be a good place for my family while we found the time to return to Colombia.</p> <p>In 2018, ICE did a lot of damage in this region, arresting people who had never committed any crime, unfortunately Ice stopped us in January 2019 and that's where our horror movie began, of fear and uncertainty. After telling Ice's officer why he was living in Durango he allowed us freedom, however, we had to pay a lawyer and go to court to defend ourselves from deportation. Unfortunately we did not have the \$6,000 dollars that the lawyer charged us for his fees, so we had to work from Sunday to Sunday in shifts of more than 12 hours a day, our baby was only two years old; I was in the care of a babysitter and my daughter started calling the babysitter "mom" ... this time of my life is marked by sadness, despair, and the frustration of thinking about deportation and</p>

	<p>seeing how my daughter did not recognize me. With the help of friends and family we were able to raise the money and thank God the lawyer represented us well. Sadly many of my friends did not have this luck, they were detained by ICE and only those who did not have the opportunity to pay a lawyer could not be saved from deportation. Those who, while in the Aurora detention center, were able to pay for a lawyer and are still here in the United States today. Therefore, I think that the HB1194 campaign is vital for a person detained by Immigration because it gives a bit of equity to people, and provides an opportunity to have an adequate legal defense. Please, I ask you to support the campaign and with this give us a little of how much immigrants do for this country.</p>
<p>Lizzy Stephan For Self</p>	<p>"Good afternoon Chairman Lee and members of the Committee. Thank you Senator Moreno for bringing this bill forward.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm here to voice my support for House Bill 1194. My name is Lizzy Stephan and I live in Denver, and I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of myself.</p> <p>I believe everyone should have access to proper legal representation in our courts. It's time to close this gap, as it is harming some of the most vulnerable members of our community. I think we all agree that our federal immigration system is broken—and it must be fixed. Asking individuals to face this complex system alone without representation is unjust. Those with representation have been found to be 10 times more likely to win their cases, so we know that representation is effective. Colorado needs to do our part to guarantee legal representation to individuals facing detention and deportation—especially because of the racism and xenophobia that persists in our legal system. Our legal system needs to ensure dignity and due process for everyone—anything short of that standard undermines our community's trust in that system. This is one critical way we can make an improvement.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and talk to you about why you should support House Bill 1194 to ensure everyone has a day in court with access to proper legal representation.</p> <p>"</p>
<p>Kyla Roschke For Self</p>	<p>Good afternoon Chairman and members of the Committee.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity submit my testimony in support of House Bill 1194, which would authorize a statewide legal defense fund to ensure every person has access to legal representation.</p> <p>My name is Kyla Roschke. I live in Aurora, Colorado. I work as a home visitor for a local nonprofit, and I am a volunteer with multiple organizations that support immigrants in our community.</p> <p>Before the beginning of the pandemic, I volunteered doing in-person visits with immigrants detained at the GEO detention center in Aurora.</p>

	<p>After the beginning of the pandemic, the program became a penpal program, which I am still participating in.</p> <p>I have met many immigrants and I will be sharing very limited details of their stories, as they are not mine to share. However, what I can tell you is that I have met many immigrants without access to a lawyer, who likely have been deported only for that reason. Many of those immigrants were people who had arrived in the U.S. as children, some with children of their own, who are now living separated from their families. Most immigrants also receive a 10-year ban from the U.S. when they are deported, meaning that there is no chance for them to be reunited in the U.S. for at least 10 more years. One friend expressed to me that he could never have his children come visit him in his country, as it is far too dangerous, so he will have to wait 10 years before he can see them in person again. Many have also been deported to countries where their lives are in danger.</p> <p>Immigrants are 10x more likely to win their cases with a lawyer. However, most immigrants can't afford the costs. There are wonderful organizations out there like RMIAN that provide free legal representation to some immigrants, but they are unfortunately not able to serve everyone.</p> <p>HB1194 would be a huge step in increasing equity for immigrants fighting their cases in our country. So many people who have been deported would likely have won their cases and still be here if they had had access to a lawyer. This bill would help to ensure that all immigrants have a fair chance at winning their cases.</p> <p>I ask that you vote YES on House Bill 1194.</p> <p>Thank you for your time."</p>
<p>Sarah Lake For Self</p>	<p>Mister or Madam Chair members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Sarah Lake, and I am writing to support the immigrant legal defense fund, because I believe every person deserves the right to legal representation as required under U.S. law, and I have personally seen the devastating implications for immigrants of not having access to legal representation. As a visitor to asylum seekers detained within the Aurora ICE facility, I have heard countless stories of how challenging it is to navigate the legal system and immigration trial without legal representation. Being new to the country, and a non-native English speaker can make it nearly impossible to have a fair chance in court without legal representation.</p> <p>With access to legal representation, asylum seekers would have a more fair chance of escaping persecution, violence, warfare, and torture in their home countries. And their presence in my community makes our community stronger.</p>

Senate Judiciary

	<p>Please support the creation of the legal defense fund to give all people the right to legal representation Thank you for your time. Sarah Lake Denver, Colorado</p>
<p>Jamie Thompson For Self</p>	<p>Mister or Madam Chair members of the committee,</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Jamie Thompson, and I am from Lakewood, Colorado. I support this bill because I support my undocumented neighbors, who enrich my community. As such, I must also support them. In our current system, access to legal representation is a necessity guaranteed to everyone except undocumented immigrants. This is wholly unfair, and it serves to perpetuate racist criminalization and deportation policies against black and brown communities. This is not what I want for my neighbors or my community; I want to be part of a diverse, humane community where all members are invited to live and thrive without threat of criminalization or removal due simply to immigration status. Legal defense for undocumented immigrants is an integral step towards building a community of which I want to be a part. Vote YES on House Bill 1194.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and for considering my testimony.</p> <p>Jamie Thompson</p>
<p>Ceiturin Thomas For Self</p>	<p>Mister or Madam Chair members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Ceiturin Thomas, and I am writing to support this bill because I care a lot about our Immigrant community, and making sure their rights are upheld and respected. It's unethical that immigrants facing deportation don't have full rights to legal counsel and representation, and they should be given every opportunity to fairly and justly fight for their case to remain in a country they contribute untold amounts to. Thank you for your time, again my name is Ceiturin Thomas, and I live in 80134. If you need to contact me, you can email me at ceiturin.thomas@gmail.com.</p>