



February 19, 2025

Colorado General Assembly
Senate Judiciary Committee
200 E Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

Re: In the matter of SB25-020

Dear Chair Gonzales and Committee Members:

On behalf of Dominium, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the above referenced legislation. Dominium is a national affordable housing owner, developer, and manager with a regional office here in Colorado. We are fortunate to build and preserve beautiful homes for over 100,000 residents across the country. In Colorado alone, we own and manage 10 affordable communities providing almost 1,800 affordable homes. The residents who live in Dominium communities are teachers, first-responders, retail workers, retired seniors on a fixed-income, single-parents with children, folks who are disabled, and those holding housing choice vouchers. As Colorado faces an affordable housing crisis, we are eager to continue investing in communities across the state.

However, this bill as currently written makes development of affordable housing in Colorado a much more difficult and risky endeavor. SB25-020 is a bill that, although may have good intentions, will almost certainly come with unintended consequences. Specifically, **Section 5**, the establishment of a receivership mechanism, causes concern. Dominium is not only an affordable housing developer, but we also own and manage each of our properties. We show extreme care in the quality of our homes, and strive to give people a place that they are proud to call home. The establishment of a receivership mechanism puts us and the thousands of families and individuals across Colorado who call Dominium properties home at risk of losing the high standard we strive to provide.

Tenant-landlord relationships are governed by state statute and both state and local governments have existing enforcement powers that ensure landlords meet those conditions set forth. Allowing local governments to take over private property is not an effective way to uphold state law. In every contract that Dominium executes, our lenders have “step-in” rights to have an appointed receiver should they need it. There are existing mechanisms to enforce laws and compliance. Some lenders may choose to invest less in Colorado if their “step-in” rights are put in a secondary position to local governments. The receivership mechanism also creates a process that can be politicized specifically against affordable housing communities by municipalities that do not want affordable housing in their jurisdiction.

90% of affordable housing is built using the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, which already mandates significant compliance regulation and standards that must be met and are overseen by federal and state agencies. This bill would duplicate existing compliance measures, make affordable housing development more difficult, and ultimately disincentivize the development of affordable housing that the families and seniors of Colorado desperately need.



We respectfully request that the Committee vote to expand affordable housing communities for the sake of all Coloradans, rather than stymy growth and opportunity for those who need it most.

We urge the Committee to vote **NO** on SB25-020 as currently written. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with the state to address the affordable housing needs of the hard-working people of Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Austin V.D.H." in a cursive style.

Austin VanDerHeyden

Government Relations Manager

Dominium

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the Senate Judicial Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share words of support for SB25-020 Tenant and Landlord Law Enforcement. My name is Trina Griego and I am with The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding through building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. We have over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing more than two dozen faith traditions.

Typically when I write testimony from the point of view of my organization and while that is still the case, I am writing with a personal story about the importance of this bill. In July of 2024 I had to move quickly and chose a place from a private landlord primarily for the location. The first red flag occurred when she told me she did not accept the rental screening report. Next, it became apparent that the floors were not up to code and deteriorating rapidly. She had no intention of fixing them. She pressured me to pay an Xcel bill in her name immediately without seeing the full bill every month. She pressured me to sign a lease addendum to reflect this. She gave out my private information to random people she hired without my knowledge or consent and saw no issue with this.

At the time I lived there I discovered she did not appear to have a valid landlord license. She never gave me the tenant bill of rights as required by Denver law, and the final straw came when I discovered an unsecured door within my apartment that other people had access to. When I reminded her that this is an issue of the warrant of habitability she downplayed the issue and then began a campaign of harassment and intimidation to try and evict me and suggested lease termination any time I brought up an issue as means of intimidation.

Many of the laws I just mentioned that were violated, I have engaged with directly through this governing body. I knew these were violations, I reported what I could and I knew where to seek help, but I simply couldn't afford it. I had to make a choice to hold my landlord accountable or to use my limited resources to move out of a toxic and unsafe living situation. I finally accepted her lease termination and moved out at the end of September. She kept the entirety of my security deposit because I didn't provide enough notice to move out.

My case is only exceptional in that I could point to the direct statute in violation and report what I could. Knowledge of the legal system is not access to the legal system, and there are thousands of landlords that know this and count on the uneven standing of this relationship. As rents rise, whether through artificial manipulation or otherwise, resources for action diminish and we are forced to make a decision in a crisis. This was the final push out of Denver for me. A city that I was born in, where my family has lived for over 50 years when they were redlined to a neighborhood I can no longer afford.

In that crisis I relied on and am thankful for my community for providing a means of support and a way out of an impossible situation. For many, that community is their faith community. Once

again faith institutions are expected to bear the brunt of completely avoidable issues and step up to help because that is what they are called to do. They are forced to triage an emergency that should have never occurred which places them into a state of constant crisis management. This is not a sustainable or acceptable way to live for our renters, our families or our faith communities who seek stability and longevity to fulfill their personal and faithful missions in order to thrive. With that I ask this body to vote yes to ensure the pursuit of justice for renters in our state.



February 18, 2025

RE: SB25-020 Tenant and Landlord Law Enforcement—SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kate van Houten, and I am a Volunteer Lobbyist with the League of Women Voters of Colorado's Legislative Action Committee. **I am writing in support of SB25-020, on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Colorado.**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO) has been a nonpartisan organization for 105 years, encourages informed and active participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions around the state.

The LWVCO supports policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every person, and equal rights and equal opportunity for all.

Tenants in Colorado have a right to safe, habitable, and secure housing. There are well-documented cases where landlords, whether the owners or managers of the properties, have been in violation of various statutes regarding warranty of habitability matters or public safety concerns, and are reluctant to remedy such violations, in favor of paying fines when required, but not fixing the issues.

SB25-020's aim is to see to it that the Colorado Attorney General's Office has the ability under statute to file legal actions, whether civil tort or criminal, to hold the bad actors to account, and support the rights of tenants in the State of Colorado. These remedies are desperately needed as many tenants do not know of or have the means to take legal action on their own behalf.

The League of Women Voters believes in the rights of every resident to have safe, secure and habitable residences, and when there are landlords who are not acting in good faith as to the current laws, there are remedies in our Justice system to address these circumstances and force bad actors to comply with the laws.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on SB25-020. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Respectfully,
Kate van Houten, Volunteer Lobbyist, Housing
League of Women Voters of Colorado
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