

Honorable Senate Finance Committee Members,

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to testify on SB19-173, the Colorado Secure Savings Plan. My name is Brittany Redding and I live in Aurora, Colorado, but my company — Take a Hike, a dog walking and hiking service — takes me all over the Denver metro area. I wish I could offer my testimony in person, but I can't afford to take time off to come in. Working in today's gig economy means benefits, like paid time off and retirement, aren't readily available for people like me, despite how hard we work.

During the week, I start working around 6:00 in the morning. I pick up my clients' pups, take them on mountain hikes, drop them back off at home, and then make my rounds of going house to house for additional pet walks and care. Depending on the day, I'm done between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., but a few nights a week, I don't get much of a break before I have to head out to do late-night walks or overnight pet sitting. Despite fewer hours, my weekends are much the same.

While I love being my own boss and the work I do, the drawbacks take their toll. Working all hours of the day and night and depending on each client to make or break my month means I have little time and resources to consider much beyond paying my bills. Like many other Coloradans, unfortunately, soaring costs of living only make it harder to make ends meet, let alone plan for my future.

That's why at 33 years old, I'm in my prime working years and I have nothing saved for retirement. While it's scary knowing I have no savings to lean on if I get hurt and can't work, it's also scary to think the breakneck pace I've kept up to run and grow my business might not ever end. I'm burnt out from working between 65 and 100 hours a week, and yet I still face the possibility I might have to continue this way until I die. It's depressing. So, when I do get some free time, researching and opening a retirement account that's best for me isn't always possible or probable, especially when what I need most is to recharge before another long day of work.

Having a portable system I can trust to start saving would make a world of difference. I ask you to please support studying the Colorado Secure Savings Plan. It would help many Coloradans who embody our state's entrepreneurial spirit, but who worry about what that might mean for their future.

Thank you for your time and letting me share my story today.

Sincerely,
Brittany Redding
Owner, Take a Hike
Aurora, Colorado