

Bill Number: HB17 – 1055

Bill Title: Create New Tax Check-off for Urban Peak

House Sponsor: Representative Leslie Herod

Senate Sponsor: Senator Bob Gardner

## **HB17 – 1055: Create New Tax Check-off for Urban Peak**

Urban Peak is a non-profit organization in Denver and Colorado Springs that provides services for youth ages 15 through 24 experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Services provided include:

- Overnight shelter
- Daytime Drop-in center
- Street outreach
- Education
- Employment programming
- Supportive housing

HB17-1055 creates the Urban Peak Housing and Support Services for Youth Experiencing Homelessness fund in the state treasury. A voluntary contribution line for the fund will appear on the state individual income tax return and, in a 2-year period, the fund is required to achieve a minimum contribution amount of \$50,000 per year. Once that threshold is met, the fund will remain on the income tax form for a total of 5 income tax years.

Youth homelessness is an ongoing problem on the streets of Colorado. Consider these facts:

- 3,175 homeless youth in Denver county and 2,015 in El Paso county (2015)
- 34% of youth served by Urban Peak self-identified as LGBTIQ, a population particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking
- 65% served by Urban Peak are younger than 20 years old
- Colorado's homeless youth are 23% black, 9% multiracial, and 4% US Indian
- 28% of those served by Urban Peak are of Hispanic ethnicity

Nearly half (46%) of homeless youth report physical abuse in their home environment causing them to flee and 49% report involvement with child welfare or foster care.

In the short term, the Urban Peak check-off bill will ease those shortcomings and empower Colorado's youth to forge brighter futures for themselves through education, housing, resources, and mentorship. In the long-term, the Urban Peak check-off bill will decrease chronic homelessness as these individuals become adults and assimilate back into the community as contributing members of society.

Vote yes on HB17-1055 and help Coloradans create better pathways for the estimated 921 youth sleeping on the streets each night.