



March 2025

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: HB25-1168—Housing Protections for Victim-Survivors

Dear Committee Members:

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. AAUW of Colorado represents over 700 community leaders as members around the state.

Far too often, women are the victims of domestic abuse that limits their economic resources. They may lose access to money, have their assets stolen, have their credit used without their authorization, or be prevented from working. One of the greatest impacts is their inability to pay their rent.

HB1168 provides comprehensive housing protections for victim-survivors of unlawful sexual behavior, stalking, domestic violence, and domestic abuse by expanding tenants' rights and landlords' responsibilities. This bill requires landlords to offer repayment plans for tenants who have missed rent due to experiencing violence, and prohibits landlords from terminating tenancy solely based on a tenant's victim-survivor status. The bill aims to address housing instability caused by gender-based violence and provide victim-survivors with greater safety, autonomy, and legal protections.

For these reasons AAUW is in strong support of HB1168 and urges your AYE vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden".

Hon. Su Ryden

AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

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American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

Senate Judiciary

03/31/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1168 Housing Protections for Victim-Survivors

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Starr Trujillo For themselves	<p>Honorable members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to present to you today my name is Starr Trujillo and I stand before you today not only as an advocate but as someone who has lived through the very hardships this bill seeks to address. I urge you to vote in favor of this critical legislation, which will provide essential protections for victims of intimate partner violence—protections that can mean the difference between stability and homelessness, between safety and continued harm.</p> <p>Under current law, tenants who have been victimized must provide documentation—often in the form of a police report or a protection order—to avoid eviction when their housing is jeopardized by their abuse. But we know that not all survivors have access to these documents. Many suffer in silence, too afraid to call the police, too entangled in complex legal barriers. This bill expands what qualifies as proof, ensuring that no survivor is denied protection simply because they didn't have the "right" paperwork.</p> <p>Furthermore, the bill ensures that landlords provide a repayment plan for survivors facing eviction due to nonpayment of rent—a necessary safeguard when abuse disrupts financial stability. It also suppresses eviction records for survivors, preventing an instance of abuse from following them for years and blocking their ability to secure future housing.</p> <p>But beyond the legal language, this bill represents something greater—it represents hope for families trapped in the cycle of abuse and housing insecurity.</p> <p>Let me share a story with you.</p> <p>There was a young girl whose mother was a survivor of intimate partner violence. For years, that little girl watched her mother endure abuse—physical, emotional, and financial. She herself was not spared from the violence in their home. One day, in an unimaginable tragedy, her mother's abuser took his own life in their home, adding yet another layer of trauma to their already devastating circumstances.</p> <p>With him gone, the mother struggled to pay rent. They needed to leave the home, but without protections like those in this bill, they were unable to break the lease</p>

	<p>without penalty. Eviction followed. That eviction made it nearly impossible for them to find stable housing. It took years—years of struggle, years of perseverance—before they finally secured a home again.</p> <p>But her mother never gave up. She put herself through cosmetology school, working tirelessly to build a better future. She eventually found a home in an affordable housing complex and later became a successful business owner, running two thriving salons.</p> <p>That little girl in the story? That was me.</p> <p>I was the first in my family to graduate high school. I worked relentlessly to ensure my own children would never have to endure the same painful housing instability that shaped my childhood. I serve my community as an appointed director on our local school board and my children will be the first in our family to graduate college.</p> <p>But let me be clear—it should not have taken years of struggle to recover from an eviction that was caused by abuse. I know there are many stories like mine. This is why we need this bill.</p> <p>This legislation will ensure that no survivor is punished for experiencing abuse. It will provide pathways to safe housing, financial stability, and a future free from the burden of past trauma.</p> <p>Senators, today, you have the opportunity to stand with survivors. To say that escaping violence should not mean losing a home. To say that victims should not be further victimized by eviction and homelessness.</p> <p>I urge you to vote yes on this bill. Because when we protect survivors, we protect families. We protect futures. And we ensure that no child has to grow up in the shadow of eviction simply because their parent chose to escape abuse.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Nina Petrovic For themselves</p>	<p>Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Nina Petrovic and I am a survivor of sexual violence. I am here today representing myself in support of HB25-1168.</p> <p>I was 20 years old when I first started enduring sexual violence at the hands of my ex-boyfriend. I was in this abusive relationship from 2016-2018 and lived with him for over a year. It was when we lived together that he began hurting me mentally,</p>

	<p>sexually and at times, physically. I remember the very first night we lived together and he put his hands on me. From day one, I endured suffering. For multiple nights a week, I then endured sexual assault. It came to a point where I didn't fight it. I laid there and wanted it to be over.</p> <p>Some mornings, I woke up earlier to go to the bathroom because my reproductive parts were in pain and I had to check if I was bleeding earlier than my menstrual cycle. Sometimes I was. I sat on the toilet for what seemed like hours crouched over in pain.</p> <p>I remember walking home from work each day feeling devoid of emotion, because I knew what I would be coming home to. A man who promised he would protect me from all evil. Instead he became that evil.</p> <p>Because I was far from home, I had no family to turn to. I didn't think friends here would believe me, because I was the constantly crying girlfriend of a outwardly charismatic man. I knew if I left on my own, I'd be fending for myself and possibly homeless. I never lived away from my parents until then. I had no idea had to gain access to safe housing.</p> <p>After our breakup, my ex found various ways to stalk me to the point I didn't feel safe in a new home. I had reached out to Denver police. I was told there was nothing they could do until "something actually happened." What would that "something" be? Further injury or the end of my life?</p> <p>Survivors of sexual violence deserve housing justice. They should not be punished with eviction fees or forced to stay with their perpetrator. Did we not endure enough fighting war in a place where peace should reside? There are younger Coloradans who may be in the same situation I was. Where they want to start their adult lives and learn how to contribute to their community, but are held back due to fear or economic coercion. And the law should not wait to do something to help survivors until it is too late. If we want to aid in raising the next generation, we need to help them in all avenues, starting from where they live.</p> <p>For these reasons, I strongly support House Bill 1168 and urge a 'yes' vote from the committee. Thank you for your time this afternoon."</p>
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March 31, 2025

RE: HB25-1168 Housing Protections for Victim-Survivors—SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kathy Smith, and I am a Volunteer Lobbyist with the League of Women Voters of Colorado's Legislative Action Committee. **I am writing in support of HB25-1168 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 18 local leagues operating in several regions around our state. The LWVCO supports policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for everyone and continued evaluation to provide a basis for revision and strengthening of all procedures so that equality of opportunity for access to housing can be accomplished.

This bill expands housing protections for victims of domestic violence, domestic abuse, unlawful sexual behavior, and stalking (termed "victim-survivors"). It builds on existing legal framework to safeguard victim-survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) from housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. This bill addresses rights and remedies for victim-survivors and does not change any standards of burden of proof for the other party. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), domestic and GBV is a leading cause of housing instability, especially for women. In the Denver Metro Area, approximately 11% of individuals experiencing homelessness report fleeing domestic violence. GBV often coincides with financial abuse or economic coercion, and victim-survivors often face additional barriers to housing, such as limited financial resources and discrimination by housing providers. This compounds the challenges of escaping abuse and maintaining safe housing.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on HB25-1168 to help expand housing protections for victim survivors of gender-based violence. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,
Kathy Smith, Volunteer Lobbyist, Housing
League of Women Voters of Colorado
110 16th Street Mall, Suite 1326
Denver, CO 80202
303-863-0437

Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking Testimony in Support of HB 25-1168

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the committee for the opportunity to share written testimony today. My name is Amanda Finger, the Executive Director for the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT), a Colorado-based organization dedicated to eliminating human exploitation. LCHT's role is to ensure that professionals and policymakers working to address housing and homelessness understand the connection to human trafficking and work together with anti-trafficking advocates to increase safe, stable, and trauma-informed housing options. I wish to express my strong support for House Bill 1168.

Housing insecurity is both a **cause and consequence** of human trafficking. Traffickers exploit the desperation of those without stable housing, using false promises, coercion, and threats to entrap them. Survivors escaping these situations often face eviction, further destabilizing their lives and increasing their risk of re-exploitation.

The Colorado Human Trafficking Hotline, managed by LCHT, responded to **1,000 calls last year**, with **228 callers urgently seeking housing resources while fleeing a trafficking situation**. Safe, stable housing is the most pressing need for survivors, yet an eviction on their record can create nearly insurmountable barriers to securing it.

This bill addresses three critical issues:

1. **Preventing Exploitation** – Housing stability reduces vulnerability to trafficking.
2. **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty** – Survivors need a fresh start, but eviction histories trap them in financial and housing instability.
3. **Empowering Survivors to Seek Help** – By allowing third-party documentation or self-certification instead of requiring law enforcement reports, this bill lowers barriers for survivors seeking housing protections.

Human trafficking is about an individual forcing, defrauding or coercing someone into labor or commercial sex work. There is a long list of factors that render people vulnerable to trafficking but today I have highlighted how housing insecurity and homelessness is used as a threat and form of coercion – threatening violence or damage to an individual's family or home or leveraging housing security - in trafficking situations.

In closing, what this bill seeks to do is enforce housing protections for victim-survivors by preventing further exploitation, creating an avenue for one's own agency, and supporting interventions in the cycle of poverty that we've collectively decided as a community should exist. A survivor should not be punished for the abuse they endured. This bill offers them a real chance to rebuild their lives by ensuring that past victimization does not dictate their future. Thank you to Representatives Lindsay and Espenosa sponsoring this important legislation, and I urge the committee to support House Bill 1168.