



Dear Members of the House Health, Insurance, and Environment Committee,

We are here today to express our strong support in favor of HB18-1397. Exactly 10 years ago, our current Warranty of Habitability was enacted. This was a very critical step in creating more protections for renters to make sure that landlords hold up their end of the rental agreement. Today, we are still seeing countless renters across Colorado dealing with mold, bed bugs, leaks, no heat, and broken locks. This tells us clearly that the current statute is not working and we need our legislators to take a stand for renters. In a report 9to5 conducted between 2015 and 2016, 53% of respondents said maintenance issues had been a barrier to staying in housing in the past 3 years. With the housing market so tight, it is difficult for renter's to break their lease and find somewhere else to go. The process of simply getting into housing is extremely costly because of limitless application fees and deposit amounts. Every renter deserves to live in safe and healthy housing no matter where they live.

One of our members we met at her apartment in south Aurora said this: "The boiler for the whole building was in my apartment's closet which made my apartment incredibly hot," said T.S. of Aurora. "Mushrooms and thick mold grew in my hot apartment. My cat got sick and I got bronchitis from the black mold, so I had to miss four days of work -- unpaid because I don't have paid sick days at work. The worst part was that it took several weeks for the management to replace the boiler and clean it up -- and they gave me only \$150 off my rent in compensation."

HB 18-1397 will address the limitations of the with current statute and even the playing field for landlords and tenants - both inside and outside of court. Key provisions of the bill include:

- 1) Making it easier for residents to enforce the statute without involving the court through the right to withhold rent and the right to break a lease. Allowing tenants and landlords the chance to avoid costly court proceedings and to handle issues with their landlord directly and expediently.
- 2) Adds "mold" as a condition that could deem a unit "uninhabitable," as it is not in current statute and has proven to be a major hazardous health issue for renters throughout Colorado.
- 3) Eliminates a presumption in favor of the landlord when it comes to retaliation. Currently, if a landlord evicts a tenant, increases rent, or acts in any retaliatory manner after a tenant voices a

complaint or tries to enforce their rights, the presumption is the landlord acted "in good faith." Colorado is the only state in the country that has this presumption in favor of the landlord - most are neutral or actually favor the tenant.

Renters are paying exorbitant amounts towards rent - which are only getting higher and higher. In addition to being a consumer protection issue, I believe that everyone deserves to live in safe and healthy homes. Colorado is facing a severe housing crisis and we need state action now more than ever. The following Organizations have endorsed this bill. Please stand up for renters and VOTE YES on HB18-1397!

9to5 Colorado	Bayaud Enterprises
United For a New Economy (UNE)	Independence Center in Colorado Springs
Our Home Our Right	Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CCDC)	Arc of Aurora
Padres y Jóvenes Unidos	Colorado Immigrant RIghts Coalition (CIRC)
Westwood Unidos	Mile High Connects
Enterprise Community Partners	Globeville, Elyria, Swansea (GES) LiveWell
Asian Pacific Development Center	The Denver Foundation
Colorado Eviction Defense Center	Consumers United Association
Center for Work Education & Employment (CWEE)	Colorado Fiscal Institute (CFI)
Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL)	Interfaith Alliance
Metro Denver Community Rights	Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV)
United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW)	All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition (AFDC)
Re: Vision	Denver Metro Fair Housing Center (DMFHC)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)	Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Senior Lobby	Denver Democratic Socialists of America
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA)	Cultivando
Bell Policy Center	
Colorado Jobs with Justice	