

House Health & Human Services

04/22/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1328 Implement Recs Direct Care Worker Stabilization Bd

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Sophie Mariam For CFI	<p>HB25-1328- Implement Recommendations Direct Care Worker Stabilization Board</p> <p>Sponsors: Sens. Duran, Sirota, Danielson, Bridges</p> <p>CFI position: FOR</p> <p>Chair Brown and members of the Committee,</p> <p>My name is Sophie Mariam, and I am a labor policy analyst at the Colorado Fiscal Institute (CFI), where we advocate for fiscal and economic policies that promote equity and prosperity for all Coloradans.</p> <p>I am here to testify in support of HB 25-1328. Colorado’s direct care workforce—primarily women, immigrants, and people of color—is the backbone of our long-term care system. Yet, these essential workers are leaving the field in droves due to persistently low wages, unsafe working conditions, and widespread wage theft.</p> <p>Care work is in crisis. Demand is rising fast—expected to grow by 27% over the next decade—but poor job quality is driving workers out. Turnover is rampant: 1 in 6 direct care workers in Colorado leaves their job every quarter. Families are increasingly left to fill the care gap themselves, sacrificing jobs and income—especially women.</p> <p>Low wages are at the heart of the problem.</p> <p>Care workers are seeing stagnant wages amid rising costs, as research suggests public funding is falling behind demand and wages lag behind the real, rising costs of care. Workers funded through Medicaid may be at a competitive disadvantage: state-funded workers earn less than private-sector caregivers.</p> <p>The median wage for home care workers in Colorado is just \$17.37—well below what’s needed for self-sufficiency anywhere in the state. Many direct care workers rely on public assistance just to survive. CFI’s analysis reveals that in 2023, over 30% of home care workers</p>

	<p>were on Medicaid—even though their work is funded through Medicaid.</p> <p>Wage theft makes a bad situation worse. Nationally, up to 1 in 5 private household workers—many of whom are home care workers—have experienced minimum wage violations. CFI estimates that wage theft costs the state more than \$45 million in forgone tax revenue each year, and the cycle of wage theft will continue without passing policies like this bill- we need training for workers to stand up for fair wages,</p> <p>HB25-1328 takes overdue steps to address this. It ensures clear communication of worker rights and protections, and establishes a minimum wage floor of \$17 per hour and a path toward \$25 by 2028—offering a roadmap to fairer compensation for our essential workers.</p> <p>This bill isn't just about care workers—it's about the sustainability of Colorado's entire care system. Supporting these recommendations will strengthen the workforce, reduce turnover, and improve outcomes for people who depend on care every day.</p> <p>I urge you to vote yes on HB25-1328. Thank you.</p>
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April 2025

TO: House Health & Human Services Committee

RE: AAUW Supports HB25-1328—Implement Recommendations of Direct Care Worker Stabilization Board

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.

As Colorado's older population increases, we face increased challenges in providing long-term care, with women making up the majority of these patients. This bill implements recommendations from the Direct Care Workforce Stabilization Board to address challenges keeping us from fully staffing these facilities.

HB1328 requires the board to investigate health-care benefits for direct care workers and establishes a comprehensive "Know Your Rights" training program with specific compliance requirements. The bill also establishes a minimum wage for direct care workers of \$17 per hour beginning July 1, 2025, and encourages the state to set the minimum wage at \$25 per hour by January 1, 2028.

AAUW of Colorado believes this bill will help solve our serious worker shortage and provide a more secure environment for our elderly. For these reasons AAUW is in strong support of HB1328 and respectfully requests your YES vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Hon. Su Ryden

AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

16699 E. Kentucky Ave. • Aurora, CO 80017 • 303.898.5797 • suryden25@gmail.com

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.



[HB25-1328- Implement Recommendations Direct Care Worker Stabilization Board](#)

Sponsors: Sens. Duran, Sirota, Danielson, Bridges

CFI position: FOR

Chair Brown and members of the Committee,

My name is Sophie Mariam, and I am a labor policy analyst at the Colorado Fiscal Institute (CFI), where we advocate for fiscal and economic policies that promote equity and prosperity for all Coloradans.

I am here to testify in support of HB 25-1328. Colorado's direct care workforce—primarily women, immigrants, and people of color—is the backbone of our long-term care system. Yet, these essential workers are leaving the field in droves due to persistently low wages, unsafe working conditions, and widespread wage theft.

Care work is in crisis. Demand is rising fast—expected to [grow by 27%](#) over the next decade—but poor job quality is driving workers out. Turnover is rampant: 1 in 6 direct care workers in Colorado leaves their job every quarter. Families are increasingly left to fill the care gap themselves, sacrificing jobs and income—especially women.

Low wages are at the heart of the problem.

Care workers are seeing [stagnant wages amid rising costs](#), as research suggests public funding is falling behind demand and wages lag behind the real, rising costs of care. Workers funded through Medicaid may be at a [competitive disadvantage](#): state-funded workers earn less than private-sector caregivers.

The median wage for home care workers in Colorado is just \$17.37—well below what's needed for [self-sufficiency](#) anywhere in the state. Many direct care workers rely on public assistance just to survive. CFI's analysis reveals that in 2023, over 30% of home care workers were on Medicaid—even though their work is funded through Medicaid.

Wage theft makes a bad situation worse. Nationally, up to 1 in 5 private household workers—many of whom are home care workers—have experienced minimum wage violations. CFI estimates that wage theft costs the state more than \$45 million in forgone tax revenue each year, and the cycle of wage theft will continue without passing policies like this bill- we need training for workers to stand up for fair wages,

HB25-1328 takes overdue steps to address this. It ensures clear communication of worker rights and protections, and establishes a minimum wage floor of \$17 per hour and a path toward \$25 by 2028—offering a roadmap to fairer compensation for our essential workers.



This bill isn't just about care workers—it's about the sustainability of Colorado's entire care system. Supporting these recommendations will strengthen the workforce, reduce turnover, and improve outcomes for people who depend on care every day.

I urge you to vote yes on HB25-1328. Thank you.