

MEMO

TO: Joint Judiciary Committee
FROM: The Arc of Colorado | Meredith Henry, Senior Policy Associate
RE: **SB25-169 Restaurant Meals Program**
DATE: Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Meredith Henry, and I am the Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate at The Arc of Colorado. We advocate for the rights of individuals with IDD and work to ensure their full inclusion in the community.

The Arc of Colorado strongly supports SB 169 and would like to thank the bill sponsor Rep. Zokaie. We also value the work of Colorado's Blueprint to End Hunger in addressing the barriers people with disabilities face in accessing food.

Many individuals with disabilities in Colorado rely on SNAP benefits to meet their nutritional needs. However, finding employment that provides a living wage remains a significant challenge for many people with disabilities. SNAP benefits play a vital role in helping them and their families put food on the table.

In addition to food access, affordable and accessible housing is a major concern for people with disabilities. For some, having a kitchen that is accessible to their physical needs or managing cognitive disabilities that make meal preparation difficult adds another layer of difficulty.

People with IDD deserve the opportunity to live lives that offer meaningful quality of life. My colleague, Francis, an Arc of Colorado board member and self-advocate from Durango, is a SNAP recipient. She would like to be able to use her SNAP benefits at restaurants, as dining out with friends is an important way for her to stay connected to her community.

Thank you for your consideration.