

My name is Maria Gonzales, I live in Aurora and often make trips to Metro Caring to visit the no-cost food market. Last December, my daughter was laid off and we found ourselves scrambling to afford bills and food. We made a trip to Metro Caring to get some food to meet our needs. As I was waiting for our names to get called I heard one of the volunteers talk to another person about the ID vouchers and how they could redeem at a specific location to get their driver's license. This felt as God sent as my daughter had convinced me to get my driver's license. This would be the first time in my life at the age of 53 that I would be learning to drive and getting my driver's license. We approached the volunteer with my daughter as she would need to interpret for me but to our surprise, the volunteer spoke Spanish. I was able to ask in my language what requirements I needed to get a voucher. After a few more questions and information I provided I was handed the the little piece of paper. We made an appointment to take my driving test. However, two days before the driving test appointment I got sick with Covid and was unable to make it with the holidays coming up the voucher soon expired. I came back to Metro Caring in February to see if I could get another voucher to try again. Thankfully, I received another voucher and was able to take my driving test. I am now a Colorado licensed driver!

I grew up in a very poor household in Guatemala. In Colorado, I was able to work and make ends meet to make sure my family had the best life possible. I oppose this bill as someone like me did not know this program existed and it was only because of the organization and programs Metro Caring runs that I was able to access a voucher. I am afraid that if people still don't know about this program and I hope Metro Caring and their partners figure out a way for more Coloradans to access this super helpful resource. I hope that my testimony helps the committee to hold back on voting yes on this bill. The program needs to improve but I don't believe this bill has the right solutions or solutions that we needed to address the issues.

Please vote no on SB:24-211, I want to make sure more community across the state has more access to this program and we need to take longer to find the right solutions.

Thank you for your time,  
Maria Gonzales Hernandez