



February 20, 2024

RE: HB24-1099 Defendant Filing Fees in Evictions—SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Transportation, Housing & Local Government 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 HB24-1099 on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Colorado.**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado (LWVCO) has been a nonpartisan organization for 104 years, encourages informed and active participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions around the state.

The LWVCO supports policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for everyone, and programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

HB24-1099 is a bipartisan bill that prevents a defendant in an eviction case from being charged any fees for filing court documents. The bill also requires that courts mail any required documents on the defendant's behalf. This bill would remove financial barriers that prevent tenants from participating in eviction proceedings and avoid the stigma of requesting waivers for filing fees. According to the Fiscal Note, this bill would reduce fee revenue from eviction cases by an estimated \$191,412 per year, and mailing costs are estimated to be \$23,617 per year.

The average American renter is housing cost burdened and low- to moderate-income families are spending more than 40% of their income on housing (Moody's Analytics). In October 2023, 63,000 Colorado households were behind on rent (U.S. Census Bureau). Once a person or family is evicted, it is harder for them to find or keep a job and very difficult to find new housing. Children in displaced households experience developmental delays, food insecurity, and negative health impacts. Colorado needs to eliminate court filing fees for an Answer in an eviction proceeding to help remove barriers for a tenant to dispute an eviction.

We urge the committee members to vote YES on HB24-1099. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Respectfully,
Kathy Smith, Volunteer Lobbyist, Housing
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