

Senate Health & Human Services

05/02/2024 01:30 PM

HB24-1431 Stable Housing for Survivors of Abuse Program

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Ariane Frosh For Colorado Poverty Law Project	<p data-bbox="565 373 1214 411">Thank you, Madam Chair and Committee Members.</p> <p data-bbox="565 449 1438 634">My name is Ariane Frosh, and I'm a housing attorney at the Colorado Poverty Law Project. I often represent victim-survivors of intimate partner violence who face housing instability as a result of their abuse. I'm here today to voice my strong support for HB 24-1431 and its protections for victim-survivors.</p> <p data-bbox="565 672 1466 898">Too often, victim-survivors are left to navigate housing instability after their abuser initiated or caused eviction proceedings against the victim-survivor, ruined the victim-survivor's credit and financial stability through economic coercion, or isolated the victim-survivor such that they are unable to rely on support networks or services to vindicate their rights.</p> <p data-bbox="565 936 1458 1163">In my experience representing tenants who have endured domestic and sexual abuse, stalking, and unlawful sexual behavior, the law provides reasonably effective remedies to help a tenant leave unsafe housing, but leaves victim-survivors in the cold when they seek new housing. We know that the difference between a victim-survivor securing shelter and being unhoused is often several thousand dollars.</p> <p data-bbox="565 1201 1409 1348">This bill provides essential money to support the most marginalized victim-survivors as they seek safe housing. A dedicated infusion of funding for victim-survivors can help tenants fleeing abusive homes efficiently find and move into safer housing options.</p> <p data-bbox="565 1386 1461 1612">Safe and stable housing is essential to a victim-survivor's ability to sever the abusive relationship: often, an abuser relies on coercive emotional, physical, and financial control to prevent their victim from leaving their shared home. In addition to the tangible benefits shelter provides, a stable and independent home also contributes to a victim-survivor's sense of autonomy and psychological and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p data-bbox="565 1650 1450 1797">Funding housing resources for the most marginalized victim-survivor tenants makes clear that Colorado values and respects these victim-survivors' experiences and is committed to true housing stability for all Coloradans. I strongly urge you to support this legislation. Thank you.</p>



**Testimony as submitted in support of HB24-1431 “Stable Housing for Survivors of Abuse Program” by Sarah Barnes,
Senior Director of Policy at the Colorado Children’s Campaign**

**Senate Health & Human Services Committee
May 2, 2024, 1:30pm
SCR 357**

Dear Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Barnes and I am the Senior Director of Policy at the Colorado Children’s Campaign. The Children’s Campaign is a non-profit, non-partisan, policy, research and advocacy organization, committed to securing every chance for every child in Colorado since our founding in 1985.

I am pleased to submit testimony in support of HB24-1431.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), known here as Colorado Works, is the primary cash assistance program for families with children when they face a crisis or have very low incomes. TANF cash assistance helps families with children pay for rent, utilities, and other necessities. The program supports parents who aren’t currently able to work for pay or are experiencing extreme poverty — many of whom experience housing instability, especially during periods of crisis, including having to flee from domestic violence.

For children, poverty can inhibit early brain development and development of social-emotional skills, and brain development in areas critical to cognitive processes as children get older. Housing instability and homelessness also places children’s safety, well-being, and healthy development in jeopardy.

Cash assistance to low-income families, on the other hand, is proven to have a positive impact on immediate and long-term child outcomes.

Using a portion of Colorado’s TANF funds to provide rental assistance payments to families in crisis who are eligible for TANF is one way we can help these families afford rent and prevent housing instability and homelessness.

Colorado should continue to prioritize cash assistance as a use of our state’s TANF funds. It is a critical component of the TANF program that helps families afford basic necessities so they can get their feet under them, find and maintain employment, and move toward financial self-sufficiency.

HB 1431 is one example of a way to use Colorado’s TANF funds to provide critical assistance to eligible families in crisis through rental assistance payments. I urge your support.

Thank you,

Sarah Barnes
Senior Director of Policy
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