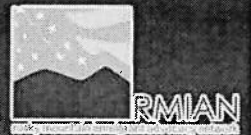


HB24-1286: Equal Justice Fund Authority

House Sponsors: Representatives Joseph and Lindsay

Senate Sponsors: Senator Roberts

Supported By:



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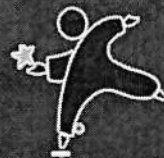
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Bill Summary

-HB24-1286 creates a special purpose authority in Colorado to oversee the equal justice fund, providing legal assistance to low-income individuals.

-It mandates a \$20 filing fee for specific court filings, with the collected fees directed into the equal justice fund annually.

-The bill aims to enhance access to legal aid, prevent discrimination, ensure fair trials, and prohibits judges from requiring indigent parties to pay docket fees for civil actions.

Issue

-Low-income Americans face significant challenges accessing civil legal aid, with 86% encountering insufficient or no legal support for their issues.

-A wide array of critical problems, including domestic violence, veterans' benefits, disability access, housing conditions, and healthcare, affect 71% of low-income families, underscoring the breadth of the crisis.

-Financial constraints lead to a lack of legal representation for many individuals navigating family court proceedings, with nearly half of self-represented litigants reporting incomes below \$20,000, highlighting the urgent need for systemic solutions to address the gap in legal aid provision.

Solution

The bill, House Bill 24-1286, aims to enhance access to justice for indigent individuals in Colorado by establishing the Equal Justice Fund Authority. This special purpose authority will manage the Equal Justice Fund, providing financial support to local organizations offering legal representation and advice to low-income individuals. To fund this initiative, the bill introduces a \$20 filing fee for certain court filings, with the revenue directed to the Equal Justice Fund. Additionally, the legislation prohibits judges from requiring indigent parties to pay docket fees for civil actions. The bill underscores the importance of access to justice, emphasizing its role in upholding the rule of law, safeguarding rights, combating discrimination, and ensuring fair trials. By creating the Equal Justice Fund Authority and implementing the filing fee, the bill seeks to address the systemic issue of limited access to legal representation for low-income Coloradans, thus promoting fairness and equity within the state's legal system.