

May 6, 2026

**Testimony of Siobhan Standaert  
Research Analyst, Good Jobs First  
Submitted to the Colorado Senate Committee on Business and Labor  
Regarding Bill HB26-1054  
Protections for Worker Safety**

Thank you for the invitation to testify today. My name is Siobhan Standaert. I am a research analyst at Good Jobs First, a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan research center dedicated to improving economic development. My research focuses on corporate regulatory compliance and enforcement. I am testifying in favor of Bill HB26-1054 concerning worker safety protections.

In December of 2025, Good Jobs First published a report looking at federal enforcement of worker protections following the second Trump Administration's entrance into office.<sup>i</sup>

We decided to look into this given the rapid deregulatory agenda that was promoted by the administration, at the same time that federal workers were being laid off in the name of efficiency. This caused severe limitations for regulatory agencies to complete investigations and enforcement actions against companies that have broken the law.

The most noticeable change came from the Department of Labor, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In order to analyze its enforcement activity, we looked at monetary penalty amounts disclosed in the agency's Violation dataset.<sup>ii</sup>

First, we looked at the number of cases completed and the amount of penalties issued between January 1<sup>st</sup> and the end of September for all years between 2009 and 2025. We compared the average of all penalties issued between 2009 and 2024 to the penalties issued in 2025. This ensured that we were looking at the larger picture in enforcement trends rather than a single year-by-year comparison.

We found that there was a 47% decrease in penalties issued by OSHA in 2025 compared to the same time period from the previous 15 years. The caseload of the agency showed similar numbers, with a 35% decrease in completed cases for workplace safety violations. This means that 1 in 3 inspections that were previously completed before 2025 are now going unresolved.

Second, we looked at the average monthly penalties by presidential term from Obama to Trump's second term. Average monthly penalties for workplace health and safety violations issued by OSHA in the first year of Trump's second term dropped 45%. This includes Trump's first term, which remained consistent with the track records for both Obama and Biden at the agency.

When we break down the federal OSHA data to look specifically at Colorado, we see a nearly 50% drop in workplace health and safety penalties, slightly higher than the nationwide numbers. With federal enforcement activity cut in half, 1 in 2 Colorado workers in 2025 failed to receive the same protections required by federal law that they would have received just the year before.

This suggests a drastic shift in regulatory priorities at the federal level, with risks of worsening federal enforcement in the future due to proposed changes at OSHA that have not yet gone into effect.

OSHA has proposed to narrow respirator guidelines for asbestos; remove construction lighting-safety requirements; and change its General Duty Clause (the catch-all provision for safety standards) requirements to exclude activities that are "inseparable" from the work. These changes are expected to further diminish effective worker protection efforts.

In order to prevent real harms to workers, I recommend that states try to supplement where they can when it comes to workplace safety enforcement. This bill is a necessary step for Colorado to protect its workers in the face of federal deregulation and austerity.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to any questions you may have.

---

<sup>i</sup> Standaert, Siobhan. "Worker Protections in Freefall: The Collapse of Federal Labor Enforcement Under the Second Trump Administration." Good Jobs First, December 2025. <https://goodjobsfirst.org/worker-protections-in-freefall-the-collapse-of-federal-labor-enforcement-under-the-second-trump-administration/>

<sup>ii</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Violation dataset. <https://data.dol.gov/datasets/10317>

## **Testimony in support of Protections for Worker Safety (HB 1054) before the Colorado Senate Committee on State, Veterans, & Military Affairs**

May 7, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Wallace, Vice Chair Sullivan, and members of the committee,

My name is Nina Mast, and I'm a policy and economic analyst at the Economic Policy Institute. I'm here to testify in support of HB 1054, a bill to strengthen Colorado workers' right to a safe workplace and protect workers from preventable workplace injuries and fatalities.

As a national expert on state labor standards, I have had the opportunity to work on many efforts to improve state workplace laws—including in Colorado. I regularly encourage policymakers to look to Colorado as a leader in making innovative updates to its standards both through legislation and administrative rulemaking. HB 1054 is an important next step for Colorado at a time when long-standing federal workplace health and safety standards are at risk.

Unfortunately, federal OSHA today faces numerous threats including diminished enforcement capacity, efforts to block important and long-overdue new worker protection standards, and—notably—efforts to weaken the statute's general duty clause. The Trump administration's proposal to carve entire industries out of coverage under this clause could leave many workers without any federally guaranteed right to protection from known and preventable workplace hazards. Meanwhile, the administration's aggressive immigration enforcement will make workers even less likely to report unsafe conditions at work.

Given the inadequacies of current federal OSHA enforcement and the risk that existing minimum standards could soon be eroded further, it's crucial for states to step in to protect their workers.

HB 1054 not only enshrines the long-standing intention of the general duty clause into state law, but it also goes further to ensure stronger protections for Colorado workers today. Specifically, the bill creates a general duty of employers to provide "reasonable and adequate" protections for all workers and comply with all standards adopted through rulemaking. The bill also empowers state agencies to refer cases for investigation and recover penalties to be used for enforcement. And—importantly—it provides labor organizations and individuals with the option to file civil actions and pursue statutory

damages when employers violate their legal obligations. These provisions will improve enforcement, encourage reporting by workers who file complaints about unsafe conditions at great personal risk, and more meaningfully deter violations.

As a national organization that convenes a network of state policy organizations, we have been closely tracking the implications of federal actions for workers at the state level. In light of federal threats, state lawmakers have an opportunity and responsibility to take up the mantle of advancing workers' right to a safe workplace. The sponsors of this bill have shown that they take this commitment seriously, and we urge all members of this committee and the Colorado General Assembly to do the same by supporting the passage of HB 1054.

Thank you.