

**House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs**

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**HB25-1153 Statewide Gov Language Access Assessment**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
<p>Victoria Francis For American Immigration Council</p>	<p>February 10, 2025</p> <p>To: Chair Willford, Vice Chair Clifford, and members of the State, Civic, Military, &amp; Veterans Affairs Committee</p> <p>From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council</p> <p>Re: HB25-1153: Statewide Government Language Access Assessment</p> <p>Dear Chair Willford, Vice Chair Clifford, and members of the State, Civic, Military, &amp; Veterans Affairs Committee,</p> <p>My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council) and a Colorado resident. The Council works to create a more welcoming America—one that provides a fair immigration process for New Americans and adopts policies that consider the vital contributions they make to the U.S. economy.</p> <p>I am submitting this letter in strong support of HB25-1153: Statewide Government Language Access Assessment, which would require the Department of Personnel, in collaboration with the Office of New Americans, to conduct a statewide language access assessment of all principal departments. This assessment, its identification of needs, and subsequent recommendations are crucial steps in ensuring all residents of Colorado, including its immigrant residents, can meaningfully access essential government services and fulfill their full potential as residents of the state.</p> <p>Through past legislation, Colorado has already laid the groundwork for language accessibility. According to my organization’s research, dozens of immigrant-related bills or bills referencing immigrant communities have been introduced in Colorado in the last decade, with many focusing on improving language accessibility and addressing language barriers. While these bills have undoubtedly improved language accessibility in the state, a statewide government language access assessment is essential to ensure that these previous investments are fully realized. By identifying</p>

	<p>and addressing gaps in the services provided, Colorado will maximize the impact of previously passed legislation, benefiting all Colorado residents.</p> <p>To help illustrate why this issue is important and why it is imperative that Colorado work towards increasing accessibility to essential government programs, services, and information, in the state of Colorado for limited English proficiency populations, my organization conducted quantitative research using data from the 2022 American Community Survey to highlight the contributions immigrants and refugees make in Colorado. Our research shows that Colorado is home to a sizable and strong community of over 557,000 immigrants and refugees, making up about 9.5 percent—or nearly one in ten residents—of the state’s population.</p> <p>Over a third of immigrant residents in Colorado were from Mexico, making up the largest country of origin for immigrant residents, followed by India, Korea, China, and Ethiopia, which each comprised around 3.0 percent of the immigrant population in the state. Of these immigrant residents, 79.0 percent were proficient in English, meaning more than 20.0 percent could significantly benefit from language assistance to access government programs, services, and information. This linguistic diversity underscores the importance of a statewide government language access assessment to systematically evaluate and address any gaps in services for limited English-proficient populations.</p> <p>Additionally, our research reveals the striking impact immigrants and refugees have on Colorado’s economy and workforce, further illustrating the need to ensure all residents can access government services, programs, and information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colorado’s immigrant community is critical to the state’s future workforce: 82.5 percent of immigrants in Colorado are of working age (16-64 years of age) compared to 64.4 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.</li><li>• Colorado’s immigrant residents paid over \$6.6 billion in taxes in 2022 — including \$2.0 billion in state and local taxes — and held \$19.1 billion in spending power that can be reinjected back into the state’s economy.</li><li>• Over one in ten of the state’s entrepreneurs are immigrants. As business owners, immigrants are an integral part of Colorado’s diverse and thriving business community. They help create jobs and employ numerous Colorado residents.</li><li>• Immigrants comprise over one in ten workers in the state’s labor force. Colorado’s immigrant residents were crucial in numerous important industries and occupations, such as healthcare. In fact, immigrants made up 21.6 percent, or over one-fifth of the state’s health aides, 11.2 percent of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workers, and 16.4 percent of postsecondary teachers.</li></ul> <p>Colorado will take an important stride forward toward helping all its residents achieve their full potential by conducting a statewide government language access assessment. Ensuring meaningful access to essential programs, services, and information helps promote the successful integration of its immigrant residents and</p>
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	<p>further the well-being of all Coloradans. I encourage you to support the passage of HB25-1153.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Victoria Francis Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives American Immigration Council</p>
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