

Honorable Representatives of the Transit, Local Government and Housing Committee. I am writing to you today as a Denver Public Schools teacher and member of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association as well as the Colorado Education Association. I am writing in support of HB 23-1255 to Regulate Local Housing Growth Restrictions.

Colorado is experiencing an acute housing crisis. Studies have estimated that we are as many as 175,000 units short of meeting our needs. The crisis is not just happening in Denver, Vail or Fort Collins. It is happening across the entire state. It requires that each community plan and participate to provide the needed housing people need and that no communities decline to provide housing.

I see the impacts of the housing shortage on my teacher colleagues both in and out of Denver. Teachers in Colorado's mountain towns as well as in Jefferson County and Denver are staying with "host families" in order to have a roof over their heads. For decades teachers have had to commute into high demand urban areas like Denver and Boulder to serve the students who live there. Today, many of my colleagues in DPS who want to live in Denver simply cannot and must commute 45 minutes to an hour from Arvada, Thornton, Westminster and Aurora taking more time away from their day and personal lives for an already demanding profession.

I work at Bryant-Webster on Denver's Northside. Communities to our west that have imposed growth limits are increasing the housing pressures we experience here on the westside. Prices are rising and families are forced to move to find a home they can afford.

This housing crisis is a shared crisis in Colorado. All our cities and towns must join together to address it so people can live, enjoy and stay in Colorado. This means ending anti-growth laws that effectively lock out those with less. I believe our communities need to be open and affordable to the people integral to a thriving school community. The teachers, the paraprofessionals, the occupational therapists and facilities managers should all have the chance to find a place to call home in communities they serve. Let's make that possible. Please support HB23-1255 and invite every city and town of Colorado to work together in addressing the housing crisis.