

# SUPPORT HB23-1308

## Access to State And Local Government

Sponsors: Rep. Ortiz, Sen. Danielson

### Background

Even with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, many individuals with disabilities are denied access to, and participation in, government at all levels. During the 2023 Denver Mayoral Debate, mayoral District 10 Councilman Chris Hinds was forced to scoot off and on the stage to preserve his campaign's eligibility for funding. Buildings with the lack of accessibility should seek to improve their access, as many persons with disabilities are not able to fully participate, let alone equally, such as caucus meetings held in inaccessible places or committee meetings where there is no access to remote testimony.

### What the Bill Does:

- **Access to ballots for candidates:** Candidates will have access to all ballot results and debates, and must allow candidates to participate via a video conferencing platform unless the meeting is held in a location lacking broadband service.
- **Video Conferencing in Court Proceedings:** Within 5 years of passage all courts are required to allow a person to appear via video conferencing, with certain stipulations of exception.
- **Accessibility of Public Meetings of Public Bodies:** Within 6 months of passage, all public meetings must be live-streamed, or held with a video conferencing option if the meeting has any option of public testimony, combined with other auxiliary aids, and must postpone the meeting if such auxiliary aids cannot be supplied in time for the meeting.

### Why do we need this?

- Provide **BASIC ACCESS** to individuals with disabilities in all levels of government, and improved access for the general public and the press.
- Promotes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through representation of all identities wanting to participate within government.