



Chair James Coleman  
Vice Chair Tom Sullivan  
State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
Colorado General Assembly  
February 18, 2025

**Testimony of Campaign Legal Center in Support of Senate Bill 001**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Campaign Legal Center (“CLC”), is pleased to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 001, the Colorado Voting Rights Act (“S.B. 001” or the “COVRA”). CLC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing democracy through law. Through its extensive work on redistricting and voting rights, CLC seeks to ensure that every United States resident receives fair representation at the federal, state, and local levels. CLC supported the enactment of state voting rights acts in Washington, Oregon, Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Minnesota, and brought the first-ever litigation under the Washington Voting Rights Act in Yakima County, Washington.

CLC strongly supports S.B. 001 because it will allow historically disenfranchised communities across Colorado to participate equally in the election of their representatives. CLC’s testimony will focus on the various procedural benefits that S.B. 001 will provide to voters and local governments alike in enforcing voting rights and protecting historically disenfranchised communities.

**II. BACKGROUND**

States can offer new hope for voters by adopting state voting rights acts that improve upon their federal counterpart. By passing the COVRA, Colorado can reduce the cost of enforcing voting rights and make it possible for traditionally disenfranchised communities to enforce their rights. States can clarify that government-proposed remedies do not get deference as they might in federal court.

Importantly, they can also empower state courts to apply a wider range of locally tailored remedies that better serve communities of color.

Passage of the COVRA will mark a new era of voter protections for the people of Colorado by building upon the model of the federal Voting Rights Act (“VRA”) of 1965 with several key improvements. CLC’s testimony will share highlights of how filing a claim under this state voting rights act rather than the federal VRA is an improvement, specifically with vote dilution and vote suppression claims and available remedies.

The federal VRA is one of the most transformative pieces of civil rights legislation ever passed. Section 2 of the federal VRA prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in [a] language minority group. The 1982 amendments to Section 2, which allowed litigants to establish a violation of the VRA without first proving discriminatory intent, created a “sea-change in descriptive representation” across the country.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this success, “litigating Section 2 cases [is still] expensive and unpredictable.”<sup>2</sup> Plaintiffs must often collect mountains of evidence to support the totality of circumstances inquiry, which means extended discovery periods and long trials. Given the heavy burden of proving a violation of Section 2 of the federal VRA, states serve a vital role in protecting and expanding the rights to vote and participate fully in American democracy.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*,<sup>3</sup> communities across the country have faced a resurgence of voter suppression tactics. The ruling gutted the preclearance requirement of the federal VRA, enabling states with a history of discrimination to implement restrictive voting laws without federal oversight.<sup>4</sup> As a result, polling place closures, voter roll purges, and new barriers to registration have disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.<sup>5</sup> In *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, the Court

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Pitts, *The Voting Rights Act and the Era of Maintenance*, 59 ALA. L. REV. 903, 920–22 (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher S. Elmendorf & Douglas M. Spencer, *Administering Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act After Shelby County*, 115 COLUM. L. REV. 2143, 2157 (2015).

<sup>3</sup> 570 U.S. 529 (2013).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Jasleen Singh & Sara Carter, *States Have Added Nearly 100 Restrictive Laws Since SCOTUS Gutted the Voting Rights Act 10 Years Ago*, Brennan Ctr. For Just. (June 23,

further weakened the VRA by making it even harder for voters to challenge discriminatory laws in court.<sup>6</sup> This decision has made it more difficult to prove claims of racial discrimination under Section 2 of the VRA, leaving voters with fewer legal avenues to defend their rights. Meanwhile, Congress has repeatedly failed to restore and strengthen the federal VRA by neglecting to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. These developments have left millions of voters vulnerable to discrimination and suppression. In response to this national landscape, states must step in and ensure their voters have the legal tools necessary to defend their freedom to vote.

As historically disenfranchised communities continue to encounter significant barriers to exercising their rights, more states are stepping up to protect ballot access by passing their own state voting rights acts. With Congress struggling to enact reforms and courts weakening the federal VRA, state-level protections have become essential for combating discriminatory voting practices and ensuring a more inclusive and accountable democracy. These laws equip voters with tools to challenge unfair election policies while enabling local governments to implement proactive safeguards against disenfranchisement. Even if the federal VRA is restored and strengthened, state VRAs will remain crucial tools for addressing the unique needs of each state.

Momentum for state VRAs is growing. California (2002), Washington (2018), Oregon (2019), Virginia (2021), New York (2022), Connecticut (2023), and Minnesota (2024) have already enacted such protections, while states like Maryland, New Jersey, Florida, Michigan, and Arizona are working to follow suit. Colorado should take advantage of this opportunity and join these other states in ensuring all of its citizens have equal access to the democratic process.

The COVRA will apply more efficient processes and procedures to enforcing the voting rights of traditionally disenfranchised communities, saving Colorado time and money when going through voting rights litigation. It also makes it less costly for historically disenfranchised communities and local governments to collaboratively develop a remedy before resorting to expensive litigation.

### **III. REASONS TO SUPPORT S.B. 001**

The COVRA innovates on the federal VRA, as well as other state VRAs, by providing voters with stronger tools to challenge discriminatory policies and streamlining the procedural mechanisms for these kinds of claims. It creates a private cause of action for both vote dilution and vote suppression that are less costly and less

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2023), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/states-have-added-nearly-100-restrictive-laws-scotus-gutted-voting-rights>.

<sup>6</sup> 594 U.S. 647 (2021).

burdensome means of enforcing voting rights for communities or color. Additionally, its notice requirements encourage collaboration between voters and local governments, enabling tailored remedies that address the specific needs and demographics of each jurisdiction. As discussed below, the following features of the COVRA are reasons to support the bill:

- The COVRA’s pre-suit notice provisions allow jurisdictions to proactively remedy potential violations.
- The COVRA provides express statutory guidance to ensure courts interpret voting-related conflicts in favor of the right to vote.
- The COVRA provides a framework for determining whether vote dilution or vote denials have occurred that is tailored to the barriers to voting historically disenfranchised communities face at the local level.
- The COVRA prioritizes remedies for voting discrimination that enable historically disenfranchised communities to equally participate in the franchise.

**A. S.B. 001 avoids lengthy litigation by allowing jurisdictions to proactively remedy potential violations.**

As set forth in § 1-47-202 of the COVRA, a prospective plaintiff must send a jurisdiction written notice of a violation and wait 60 days before bringing a lawsuit. During that time or before receiving any notice, the jurisdiction may remedy a potential violation on its own initiative and gain safe harbor from litigation for at least 90 days. § 1-47-202(1). The COVRA recognizes that many jurisdictions will seek to enfranchise historically disenfranchised voters by remedying potential violations. In doing so, these notice and safe-harbor provisions allow jurisdictions to avoid the costs and delay of lengthy litigation.

The COVRA also provides for limited cost reimbursement for pre-suit notices, in recognition of the fact that notice letters often require community members to hire experts to perform statistical analysis, and to ensure that such expenses do not prevent people from enforcing their civil rights. § 1-47-203(3)(b). Similar provisions are already part of voting rights acts in California, Oregon, New York, Connecticut, and Minnesota.

In contrast, no such presuit provision exists in Section 2 of the federal VRA. As a result, voters often spend considerable time and money investigating potential violations of the federal VRA, the cost of which is later borne by the taxpayer. This innovation on the federal VRA will encourage local governments to work with voters to find a solution, while saving the expense of litigation.

**B. S.B. 001 will provide guidance to Colorado State judges as they interpret laws, policies, procedures, or practices that govern or affect voting.**

The COVRA specifies that judges should liberally construe the statute in favor of protecting the right to vote. § 1-47-104. This language fulfills the promises of the Colorado Constitution’s explicit guarantees that “[a]ll elections shall be free and open; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage”<sup>7</sup> and that “[t]he general assembly shall pass laws to secure the purity of elections, and guard against abuses of the elective franchise.”<sup>8</sup>

The COVRA’s instruction to courts to construe laws in favor of the right to vote is in line with the spirit of the Colorado Constitution. This clarification provides a default pro-voter rule for judges interpreting laws, policies, procedures, or practices that govern or affect voting, which will reduce litigation costs by avoiding unnecessary arguments over statutory interpretation. State VRAs in Washington, New York, Connecticut, and Minnesota contain a similar instruction.

**C. S.B. 001 provides a framework for determining vote dilution in a way that is efficient and cost-effective for both voters and jurisdictions.**

To bring a vote dilution claim under Section 2 of the federal VRA, a plaintiff must show that: (1) the minority group being discriminated against is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute the majority of voters in a single-member district; (2) there is racially polarized voting; and (3) white bloc voting usually prevents minority voters from electing their candidates of choice. *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 50–51 (1986). If these three conditions are met, the court then considers whether, under the totality of the circumstances, the practice or procedure in question has the result of denying a racial or language minority group an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

The COVRA improves on the federal VRA in several ways: it ensures that integrated as well as segregated historically disenfranchised communities are able to influence elections and elect their candidates of choice; it provides plaintiffs an alternative to proving racially polarized voting; it sets out practical guidelines for courts to properly assess racially polarized voting; and it clarifies that coalitions made up of two or more protected classes are able to bring vote dilution claims.

Unlike the federal VRA, the COVRA does not require historically disenfranchised communities to be segregated residentially to receive protections

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<sup>7</sup> Colo. Const. art. II, § 5.

<sup>8</sup> Colo. Const. art. VII, § 11.

under the statute. Like the state VRAs passed in California, Washington, Oregon, Virginia, New York, and Connecticut, the COVRA does not demand that the minority group being discriminated against prove that it is “sufficiently large and geographically compact” before being able to proceed with its lawsuit. § 1-47-205(3). Following the passage of civil rights legislation, residential segregation has decreased in some areas of the United States, yet racially polarized voting and underrepresentation of historically disenfranchised communities persist. Thus, many historically disenfranchised communities that do not face residential segregation may still lack equal opportunities to elect candidates of choice to their local government. By not requiring minority communities to be segregated to prove minority vote dilution, the COVRA takes this reality into <sup>910</sup>

Decades of experience litigating cases under Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act have shown that that the numerosity and compactness requirements for vote dilution claims are an unnecessary barrier to remedying significant racial discrimination in voting. The COVRA will allow violations to be remedied quickly and at much less expense to taxpayers than existing federal law and make it easier for historically disenfranchised communities to vindicate their rights and obtain remedies to resolve racial vote dilution. In previous federal VRA cases in Colorado, voters have had to spend time and money defending against allegations that historically disenfranchised communities were not sufficiently segregated to meet this condition, despite evidence making it clear that voters were denied the equal opportunity to elect their candidate of choice.<sup>11</sup>

The next requirement for a vote dilution claim under the federal VRA is for the plaintiffs to show racially polarized voting. Racially polarized voting (“RPV”) means that there is a significant divergence in the electoral choices or candidate preferences of protected class voters, as compared to other voters. Measuring RPV often depends on election return data, which is sometimes unavailable, especially in smaller jurisdictions and in places with long histories of vote dilution and disenfranchisement where candidates preferred by minority voters simply stop running for office. Thus, the effect of vote dilution itself means that minority communities will often be hard pressed to find “proof” that RPV exists in actual election results.

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<sup>10</sup> Like other state VRAs, the COVRA does allow courts to consider whether a community is sufficiently compact or concentrated in determining a remedy to a vote dilution violation. § 1-47-205(3).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., *Sanchez v. State of Colo.*, 97 F.3d 1303, 1314 (10th Cir. 1996).

This is why it is critical that the COVRA has two paths to prove a vote dilution case, not just a one-size-fits-all approach. The first path allows affected voters to prove vote dilution by showing that a jurisdiction maintains a dilutive at-large or other system of election and RPV is present. §§ 1-47-106(2)(a)(I)(A), 1-47-106(2)(b)(I)(A). The COVRA also sets out reliable and objective standards for courts to apply in their assessment of RPV. § 1-47-205(1).

But where election results used to assess RPV are unavailable, the COVRA also allows affected voters to show that they are nevertheless denied equal opportunity to participate in the political process under the totality of the circumstances. §§ 1-47-106(2)(a)(I)(B), 1-47-106(2)(b)(I)(B). This path allows plaintiffs to introduce expert and fact evidence under a range of relevant factors identified by the Supreme Court, Congress, and other courts to demonstrate that the challenged map or method of election, in the words of the United States Supreme Court, “interacts with social and historical conditions to cause an inequality in the opportunities enjoyed by [protected class voters] and white voters to elect their preferred representatives” or influence the outcome of elections.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the COVRA allows two or more protected classes of voters within an election district to bring a coalition claim, so long as they can establish that they are politically cohesive. §§ 1-47-103(25), 1-47-205(1)(a)(I). Coalition claims reflect the COVRA’s spirit and intent to protect all historically disenfranchised communities from discriminatory voting rules and election systems, whether they impact one or more than one racial or ethnic group. If two or more communities vote in a bloc together, organize to elect candidates together, and tend to suffer from vote dilution together, they should be able to work together to prove it and combat it.

**D. S.B. 001 provides a framework for determining denials of the right to vote that provides clarity to courts and voters alike.**

The COVRA provides a stronger standard for proving that a challenged practice denies or impairs a protected class’s access to the ballot. Every enacted state VRA affirms the right to vote without facing discriminatory election rules and practices, often referred to as “vote denial” or “voter suppression.” While the federal VRA once provided strong protections against these tactics, the U.S. Supreme Court has significantly weakened its enforcement, making it increasingly difficult to challenge more sophisticated forms of voter suppression. The COVRA fills this gap.

Under the federal VRA, voters may challenge practices which “result in a denial or abridgement” of the right to vote because of race or color. 52. U.S.C. § 10301. The Supreme Court, however, greatly limited the kinds of claims that voters could

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 47.

make in *Brnovich*. Specifically, the Supreme Court set forth additional “guideposts” for proving vote denials that will make Section 2 claims even more costly and time consuming to litigate. *Brnovich*, 594 U.S. at 666. Furthermore, the lack of clarity provided in *Brnovich* leaves federal courts in the lurch about the appropriate way to interpret vote denial claims under Section 2.

The COVRA, however, establishes a clear, consistent standard that benefits voters, local governments, and courts. To establish a *prima facie* case of vote suppression under § 1-47-204 of the COVRA, plaintiffs must show, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the challenged actions results or will result in a material disparity between a protected class and other eligible electors with respect to voter participation, voting opportunities, or the opportunity or ability to participate in the political process. After that showing has been made, the burden shifts to the political subdivision to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the challenged action is necessary to further an important, particularized governmental interest. Even where that burden has been met, the challenged action may still be invalid where plaintiffs can show it is not the less restrictive means of achieved the identified interest—that is, where plaintiffs can show by a preponderance of the evidence that the political subdivision could comparably further the identified important, particularized governmental interest through an alternative policy that results in a smaller disparity between members of the protected class and other eligible electors.

This burden-shifting framework is modeled on a similar framework that is used in nearly all anti-discrimination statutes. This standard is an important way that the COVRA demonstrates respect for local control of elections. Unlike the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brnovich* interpreting the federal VRA, this standard gives a political subdivision an opportunity to justify the change and to respond to plaintiffs’ claims. Political subdivisions maintain local control, so long as any action that results in a material disparity furthers an important, particularized governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of doing so.

**E. S.B. 001 expands the remedies that historically disenfranchised communities can seek to ensure their electoral enfranchisement.**

Under the COVRA, if a violation under §§ 1-47-105, 1-47-106, or 1-47-107 is found, the court shall order appropriate remedies that are tailored to address the violation. This part of the bill recognizes that vote denial and vote dilution tactics take many different forms and are not solely limited to traditional methods of voter discrimination.

The COVRA also specifies that courts may not defer to a proposed remedy simply because it is proposed by the local government. § 1-47-206(2)(b). This directly responds to an egregious flaw in the federal law, where Section 2 has been interpreted by the federal courts to grant government defendants the “first opportunity to devise

a [legally acceptable] remedial plan.”<sup>13</sup> This often leads to jurisdictions choosing a remedy that only minimally addresses a discriminatory voting practice rather than fully enfranchising those who won the case. For example, in *Cane v. Worcester County*, the Fourth Circuit applying the federal VRA explained that the governmental body has the first chance at developing a remedy and that it is only when the governmental body fails to respond or has “a legally unacceptable remedy” that the district court can step in.<sup>14</sup> This is antithetical to the concept of remedying racial discrimination; courts should not defer to the preferences of a governmental body that has been found to violate anti-discrimination laws in fashioning a remedy for that body’s own discriminatory conduct. The COVRA avoids this problem by allowing the court to consider remedies offered by any party to a lawsuit, and prioritizing remedies that are tailored to address the violation.

This bill also promotes settlement through this specification that courts must weigh all proposed remedies equally and decide which one is best suited to help the impacted community, instead of giving deference to the remedy proposed by the government body that violated that community’s rights.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

We strongly urge you to enact the COVRA and strengthen voting rights in the state of Colorado. The COVRA signifies a pivotal inflection point for the state of Colorado to lead in protecting voting rights and eliminating barriers to citizens making their voices heard.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Marisa Wright*

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Valencia Richardson, Legal Counsel  
Campaign Legal Center  
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<sup>13</sup> *Cane v. Worcester County*, 35 F.3d 921, 927 (4th Cir. 1994).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*



February 2025

To: Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

**Re:** SB25-001—Colorado Voting Rights Act

Dear Committee Members,

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. More than 700 community leaders are members of AAUW branches around Colorado.

AAUW was a leading organization in securing the right to vote for women in 1919. Over time, AAUW has continued to advocate for voting rights for all eligible citizens. At the same time, Colorado has become the gold standard for making voting accessible to all voters.

SB001 adds more protections for voters who are members of Indian tribes; voters with disabilities, and voters with limited language abilities. SB001 also prohibits political subdivisions from taking any action that results in a material disparity between electors who are members of a protected race, color, or language minority group or other minority reporting group and other eligible voters. The bill expands existing requirements for the creation of multilingual ballots to include qualifying municipalities.

AAUW's focus is on equity for women and girls, and we believe SB001 is an important step toward creating a more equitable society for everyone.

For these reasons, AAUW of Colorado strongly supports Senate Bill 001 and requests your AYE vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Hon. Su Ryden**  
**AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director**

16699 E. Kentucky Ave., Aurora, CO 80017  
303.898.5797 [su@ryden.com](mailto:su@ryden.com)

*American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.*

## MEMO

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TO: Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee  
FROM: The Arc of Colorado | Meredith Henry, Senior Policy Associate  
RE: **SB25-001, Colorado Voting Rights Act**  
DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025

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Thank you, Chair and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Meredith Henry, and I am the Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate at The Arc of Colorado. Our mission is to protect the human rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and advocate for their full inclusion and participation in the community.

We strongly support SB25-001 and appreciate the efforts of the bill's sponsor, Senator Gonzalez. Strengthening the voting rights of Coloradans with disabilities is essential. Voting is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of our democracy. With over 625,000 Coloradans living with one or more disabilities, and an increasing number of individuals with disabilities and older adults in Colorado, it is crucial to provide enhanced voting rights protections to prevent further marginalization. This will also demonstrate that Colorado's commitment to disability rights, and its values of progress, liberty, justice, and equity, remains strong.

For too long, individuals with disabilities, particularly those with IDD, have been excluded from voting due to prejudiced assumptions about their abilities, as well as a lack of effective communication services and supports. The ADA, which has been law since 1990, mandates these services, including language access beyond just English as a second language.

This bill is critical in strengthening requirements for notice, plain English communications, and voting rights protections for people with disabilities. It also underscores the importance of including the ADA, particularly Title II, which addresses "effective communication" accommodations to ensure that individuals with communication disabilities have equal access to voting and the protection of their civil rights.

In Colorado, we must view the ADA as the floor, not the ceiling. While the ADA sets the minimum requirement, we must strive for more. By going beyond these basic requirements, we can create a more inclusive society and ensure full participation for people with disabilities in both our communities and our democracy.

This bill is essential to ensuring that individuals with disabilities in Colorado can fully participate in voting and have their civil rights protected.

Thank you for your consideration and support.



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## Written testimony for SB25-001

1 message

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**Linda Templin** <ltemplin@rcvforcolorado.org>  
To: committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov

Tue, Feb 18, 2025 at 3:17 PM

I am sending this as I am not sure that it was received by the online form.

"I'm testifying regarding a friendly amendment to SB25-001. My name is Linda Templin, MPA. I have served as Executive Director of RCV since 2017. The goal of this grassroots organization is to build a more robust system of elections that is fair to all concerned. Many nations, like Northern Ireland have used proportional representation to build back a stable and fair system after civil conflict. The mission of this multi-partisan organization is to identify and help implement a reliable and durable system of getting all of Colorado's voters their fair share of the say.

To this end, I have lead a team in researching peer-reviewed literature regarding voting and tally method. Our team also reviews legal precedents and implementation studies. My organization's suggested amendment is as follows: Limiting remedial voting and tally method to only fully proportional methods that that are proven to pass legal challenge. There is already suspicion of government writ large, and it is in the interest of the goals of SB25-001 that the remedy be fair to all concerned.

- 1) Semi-proportional systems are only semi-fair and falls short of supporting voters equally.
- 2) Closed List Proportional Representation (CLPR) is exotic to voters in that voters would be voting for parties rather than candidates. This would unnecessary complicate the process for voters.
- 3) Unnamed voting methods, which are currently included in SB-001 leave the door open to all manner of nonsense that has never passed legal challenge.

All of these sub-optimal voting and tally methods create a larger fiscal note for SB25-001 because the Office of the Secretary of State will need to promulgate new rules for the interpretation and tally of ballots.

The bill should identify the local options available to be

- 1) Open List Proportional Representation (OLPR)
- 2) Single Transferrable Vote (STV), which is more popularly known as Proportional Ranked Choice Voting (p-RCV)  
STV provides the most voice for voters of all viewpoints. It has been used in the U.S. since 1915 and is cited in The Conservative Case for RCV. The state already uses single-winner RCV (aka IRV) in some municipalities. Including Boulder which ran a risk-limiting audits. The Office of the Secretary of State has already promulgated rules for the administration of STV. It is contained within Rule 26 Ranked Voting Method. Risk-limiting audits have already been run in the delegate-count version of the tally in STV presidential primaries in Nevada, Hawaii, and Kansas.

Not every community is currently comfortable with ranked ballots. To support local needs, we suggest the use of OLPR, which uses a pick-one ballot. It is second-best only to STV when it comes to serving voters. The delegate-count version of OLPR is currently used in Colorado's Presidential Primaries, albeit with a delegate-count. The Office of the Secretary of State would need to promulgate rules for the tally of OLPR. It would use the same risk-limiting audits used in Colorado in all other pick-one ballot-types. I thank the honorable Senators for their attention."

Thanks for your help in making sure that my testimony is received.

- Linda  
Linda S. Templin, MPA  
*Executive Director*  
[RCVforColorado.org](http://RCVforColorado.org)

Ranked Choice Voting for Colorado  
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[www.RCVforColorado.org](http://www.RCVforColorado.org)

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for allowing me to testify today.. My name is Sierra Rodriguez, and I'm here personally and on behalf of Young Invincibles. Young Invincibles is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure that all young people have the opportunity and access to fully participate in our nation's political process and have the economic opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

I am a resident of Arvada, Colorado, pursuing a master's degree at CU Boulder. I've been a passionate advocate for voting rights since my high school days in Texas, where I first witnessed the detrimental effects of voter suppression.

As many of you are aware, the rise of extremists in Congress and state legislatures across the country, has led to our elections and the fundamental right to vote being under attack, including here in Colorado. The right to vote is the most sacred right of Americans. During these challenging times, many of us, myself included, seek strong leadership from this body. That begins with the passage of SB:001, The Colorado Voting Rights Act, to solidify national voting rights within our state law and broaden voter access.

I'm a transplant from Texas. This is relevant because I've witnessed voting rights under attack my entire life. Since high school, I've been dedicated to expanding voting protections through activism work, opinion pieces, and voter registration in the 100-plus-degree Texas heat. I devoted many years to this cause, sacrificing the typical high school and college experiences my peers got to enjoy. Why? Because I've seen firsthand the destructive impact voter suppression has on communities, especially young folks. Some examples of this suppression include in person voter registration, in person voting requirements, and photo ID laws.

With the introduction of national bills like the SAVE Act by a Texas legislator,, the threat of disenfranchisement looms large, potentially impacting millions of voters in Colorado, including married women whose names have changed. This act is a clear example of the authoritarian tactics that can strip citizens of their voting rights which endangers our ability to have a representative democracy.

Now is not the time to sit on our hands and wait and see. Now is the time to protect *ALL* Coloradans. The time to pass the Colorado Voting Rights is now. I urge a yes vote on this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Tuesday, 2/18/2025

Hello members of the State Military and Veteran Affairs Committee,

My name is Isabel Molina and I am the Environmental Justice Policy Manager for the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, the political voice on the environment here in New Jersey.

New Jersey LCV is proud to support state-level VRAs across the country as we pursue enacting our own New Jersey Voting Rights Act.

You may wonder why an environmental organization is getting involved in voting rights and access. Simply put, we can't enact good, strong environmental policies – or any good policy for that matter – without the shepherding of good candidates – and every vote and every voice matters.

It is an understatement to say that federal voting rights have and are being threatened and eroded. The gutting of the most essential portion of the federal VRA in the 2013 court case *Shelby county vs. holder* – preclearance – is one important piece of context for why we need to enact state level VRAs. This federal administration is actively willing to dismantle voting rights, from the executive branch at the Department of Justice, to the legislative branch with threats to pass the SAVE act. To meet this moment, we need state level action and protections; we need state VRAs.

Voting is a fundamental right as part of a stable democracy. We believe every voter should be able to exercise their right to vote without onerous or discriminatory barriers. A state VRA – at its core – restores protections to voters and establishes more balanced access to the ballot. We urge you to support the Colorado VRA as part of this growing movement, but most importantly, for the voters in your state.



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To Committee Members:

My name is Kristina Ericson and I am a disability policy advisor, a former Access and Functional Needs Coordinator for Denver County, and the daughter of disabled parents. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 25-001.

I proudly work for the State of Colorado's Developmental Disabilities Council - a 24 member, governor appointed, Council that advocates for systems change for Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Mandated under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act, we work to help make Colorado more accessible and inclusive, and to help Coloradans with disabilities live a meaningful life.

Coloradans with disabilities, of all types, frequently face barriers to voting. So often, voters with disabilities will discover that their polling locations are inaccessible, accessible ballots are not available in their region, election judges are not trained to help with accessibility accommodations, and more. I stand in support of this bill's commitment to requiring public entities to post accessibility accommodation information, to help make voting processes more accessible to disabled Coloradans.

Thank you for your consideration and your work in this space. Colorado is a national leader in accessibility, and I look forward to working with you to address the access barriers that our residents continue to face.

In community,

**Kristina Ericson**, MSW, CPACC, ADAC (she/her)

Director of Policy and Outreach

Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council

Phone: (720) 703-5101



Colorado Developmental  
Disabilities Council



February 13, 2025

Senator Pelton,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Town Clerk for the Town of Windsor to express my concerns regarding Senate Bill 25-001, particularly with respect to its impact on the way municipalities conduct their elections. As a municipal clerk responsible for the administration of local elections, I strongly support the fundamental premise of the bill—that elections should be fair, equitable, and free of barriers for all eligible voters and candidates. However, I believe this bill presumes, without evidence, that municipal elections are inherently unfair or inequitable, a claim that is both unfounded and demonstrably incorrect.

The American Community Survey referenced in the bill fails to provide accurate data for smaller municipalities, specifically regarding the percentage of individuals over the age of 18 who speak a language other than English. Additionally, the current procedures used by counties to notify non-English speaking voters about available language assistance at voter service and polling centers are not applicable to my municipality. These centers do not exist in Windsor, and as a municipal clerk, I am legally unable to provide the services typically offered at these centers.

The bill also suggests that low voter turnout in municipal elections, which are not coordinated with county-run elections, can be addressed by shifting all elections to November of both even- and odd-numbered years. From my experience, low voter turnout in Windsor is a reflection of voter interest rather than voter suppression. Moreover, Colorado state law already provides a mechanism for voters to determine whether to change their election dates, and such a decision is best made by local elected officials in consultation with their constituents, rather than imposed by the state.

The Colorado Constitution reserves the right of initiative and referendum to both the state and municipalities. Municipal elections stemming from these processes often result in 'special elections,' and municipalities are the only level of government that regularly conducts such elections. Mandating that all elections take place in November would delay the timely resolution of important matters,

particularly in cases of recall elections, thus infringing upon the rights of Windsor's citizens to resolve their concerns promptly.

Furthermore, the bill is contradictory in nature. It mandates that municipal elections be conducted in accordance with state statutes and local ordinances, while simultaneously introducing the possibility of legal action against municipalities that follow these very laws through the bill's right of action provisions. The most concerning aspect of this bill is the assumption that municipalities have committed wrongdoing before any such claim has been substantiated, which could expose towns like Windsor to lawsuits over matters beyond their control.

Additionally, the bill disproportionately targets municipalities by exempting the state, school districts, and special districts from its provisions, while failing to address the conduct of statewide elections.

The Colorado Municipal League (CML) has been actively engaging with proponents of this bill to ensure that the core principles regarding voter and candidate eligibility are maintained without imposing undue burdens on municipalities. To date, no evidence has been presented to substantiate claims of voter or candidate discrimination in municipal elections. I encourage continued dialogue between CML and the bill's proponents to safeguard municipalities' rights to manage their own elections, as enshrined in the Colorado Constitution.

I am confident that a resolution can be reached that upholds the bill's core principles while allowing municipalities to continue conducting elections in a fair and equitable manner, as they have done for decades. I trust you will support this ongoing dialogue.

Respectfully,

Karen Frawley, MMC  
Town Clerk  
Town of Windsor  
301 Walnut Street  
Windsor, CO 80550  
(970) 674-2404  
[kfrawley@windsorgov.com](mailto:kfrawley@windsorgov.com)

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301 Walnut Street  
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Khoa Nguyen  
Testimony on SB 25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act  
February 18, 2025

Dear Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you. My name is Khoa Nguyen. I am here today to represent Young Invincibles as one of their young advocates. Additionally, I have the unique background of being a first-generation immigrant and now a U.S. citizen in the country that I have come to call home. I take my voting rights seriously as I know not everyone is given these endowed rights. My journey in growing up within this country and balancing two different cultures, demonstrates how important improving language access for elections and voting is to a multicultural society. Today, I am encouraging the committee to **pass** SB25-001 - Colorado Voting Rights Act.

My family takes our right to vote seriously. We have voted for every local, state, and federal election that we were able to. However, over the years, I personally had to sit down with my parents to translate their ballots for them and explain the issues that were being voted on. This involved hours to days on end of looking up issues together and discussing them. I encourage every member here to close their eyes for a moment and imagine what it would be like if they had to have a 10-year-old try to explain complex voting issues to them. How about a 12 year old? Or a 14-year-old? This is an endeavor that I have had to conduct every election to ensure my parents understood what was on their ballot and what they wanted to vote for. Additionally, imagine having to read a document in a different language on a serious subject matter that you have no idea how to interpret. Voting should not have to be this difficult and time-consuming. Per the Colorado Health Institute, one in six Coloradans spoke a language other than English at home. According to the Office of New Americans, 9.8% of Coloradans are foreign-born. These statistics make it clear that we are not the only family that experiences this issue.

I recognize that over the years, the state of Colorado has enacted various measures to improve language access for ballots and elections. HB21-1011 mandated the provision of multilingual ballot access in counties meeting specific criteria. Counties with at least 2,000 citizens aged 18 or older who speak English "less than very well" and share a common minority language, or where such individuals constitute at least 2.5% of the county's eligible voting population, are required to offer minority language sample ballots and in-person ballot options. However, the challenge with this lies in the fact that counties are significantly larger than municipalities, and certain ethnic groups may be diluted when accounting for the county population. As of the latest data per the state government, 20 counties, including Adams, Alamosa, Arapahoe, and Denver, are mandated to provide Spanish-language ballots. Expanding language access for voting to include relevantly spoken languages in different municipalities would address this language barrier so that every U.S. citizen, no matter their background, can continue to practice their constitutionally endowed right to vote.

The Colorado Secretary of State's office also launched a Language Assistance Hotline in October 2022. This service offers real-time interpretation of ballot content in multiple languages, including Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese, with additional languages

Khoa Nguyen  
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February 18, 2025

available upon request. In a world of mobile phones requiring network connectivity, Colorado is working on further improving its cellular and broadband infrastructure, notably in rural and mountainous areas, as stressed by the General Assembly's Cell Phone Connectivity 2024 Final Report. However, how will individuals in those areas be able to access this hotline for translation assistance with their ballots when they do not have a connection in the first place? Requiring multilingual ballots in different municipalities will bridge this language disparity and ensure that every Coloradan gets the right to vote.

The COVRA inspires me to work to improve and protect our right to vote for different populations. Our right to vote and speak our truth is crucial, now more than ever. Through the COVRA, we can ensure the following:

1. Bridge existing language disparities for the conduct of Colorado elections.
2. Provide as many Coloradans as possible the opportunity to better understand the contents of their ballot through accessible multilingual ballots.
3. Ensure that many Coloradans can practice their constitutionally endowed right to vote.

I implore every committee member here today to **pass** SB25-001 - Colorado Voting Rights Act. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

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3. Ensure that many Coloradans can practice their constitutionally endowed right to vote.

I implore every committee member here today to **pass** SB25-001 - Colorado Voting Rights Act. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

**Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs**

**02/18/2025 02:00 PM**

**SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Cory Gaines Against himself	<p>Hello, the below is the text of an op ed I wrote on this bill for Complete Colorado. It was published on 1/22.</p> <p>I urge a no vote on the bill because, as I say below, I think it will create more problems than any that it would solve.</p> <p>The story of the creation of the first laser, which like much of physics lore is likely apocryphal, is that it was a solution in search of a problem.</p> <p>I thought about that when I read the Democrats' first senate bill of the legislative session, SB25-001, which creates the "Colorado Voting Rights Act."</p> <p>To quote what my county commissioner Jerry Sonnenberg said of the bill when I shared it with him, "I would love to know what problem they [the sponsors] are trying to solve."</p> <p>There's not a lot a reasonable person could disagree with in the bill summary. Who would want to disenfranchise any eligible voter in this state? Who in their right mind would seek to hamper the ability of a fellow Coloradan to (quoting the bill) "...participate in the political process, elect the candidates of their choice, or otherwise influence the outcome of elections"?</p> <p>The verbiage indicates that it is intended to prevent or stop voter suppression, voter dilution, and voter qualifications relating to someone's gender status, but neither the summary or the legislative declaration in the bill give a sense of where things like this are actually happening in Colorado.</p> <p>I did actually put some thought into it, having to force myself to abandon the cartoonish image that first came to mind. Namely a fat southern sheriff and his deputies standing outside a Front Range polling location with a sign telling minorities and transgendered people to go home.</p>

	<p>Closer to reality, the only examples that might possibly come close are a flap over Weld County's redistricting, and perhaps someone requiring ID that has a transgendered person's previous identity on it (but I've not heard of actual cases here). The Weld County case just recently went in front of a "skeptical" Colorado Supreme Court. In other words, an alleged case of gerrymandering is already working its way through our existing system of checks and balances. It's getting reviewed. With regard to transgendered Coloradans, I don't see how the language of the bill would prevent the sort of problem I mention above.</p> <p>But it gets worse. Even before its creation, the way a laser works was pretty well understood. I wish I could tell you the same about SB25-001. It's a mess of ill-defined terms that any lawyer hungry to start racking up billable hours would love.</p> <p>I read things like "polarized voting," defined in the bill as "voting in which there is a divergence in the candidate or political preferences, or electoral choices, of members in a protected class from the candidate or political preferences, or electoral choices, of other electors in the political subdivision." Outside of this being specially for what the bill sponsors deem protected classes, they just described nearly every election I've voted in.</p> <p>If they were allowed to, I bet Boulder Republicans ( a lonely political minority) would love to join the "protected" class and use this law to seek relief from a judge for electoral dysfunction. Per the law, polarized voting is something a judge would be using to help determine things like whether or not there is voter suppression or dilution.</p> <p>Over and over in the summary, and in the bill, it mentions intent. Intent to suppress voters. Intent to dilute them. This is great on paper, but not so much in reality. In reality one must confront questions such as "how do we establish intent?" Since no human can read minds, intent must be established in court. That means lawsuits. That also means uncertainty, money, and time.</p> <p>This law opens the door wide to a whole lot of legal wrangling both by allowing for arguing about intent, but also by telling judges to "liberally construe" the law itself (put sarcastically, this means allowing the judge to follow their heart instead of the text of the law).</p> <p>On top of this, there are a series of requirements for accessibility and ballot language that will be tough to implement for smaller counties like mine which are already struggling to pay for previous state mandates.</p> <p>A problematic solution</p>
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	<p>The sponsors of SB25-001 clearly have good intentions. I, like other reasonable Coloradans want every eligible elector to be able to vote and make their voice heard. At the same time, the sponsors seem to have little sense of how to effect their goals. They also seemingly have little sense of how their policy would play out in reality across the hundreds of electoral districts across our state. Outside of being another chance to divide us all along along lines the progressive sponsors think are appropriate, this bill will complicate the hell out of elections, raise costs to hold them, and mainly serve to benefit trial lawyers.</p> <p>This particular solution in search of a problem is quite problematic.</p>
<p>Mackenzie Heneger For themselves</p>	<p>Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Mackenzie Heneger. I volunteered on my first campaign in 2016 and have been in political organizing professionally since 2020. Over the course of my work I have personally knocked thousands of doors, and had hundreds of conversations with voters both in Colorado and across the country.</p> <p>Through these conversations, I've seen firsthand how access to clear, accurate information about voting can be the difference between someone participating in our democracy or sitting out an election.</p> <p>One conversation from the 2024 election stands out to me. I spoke with a voter who believed they couldn't vote because of their legal status after serving time in the justice system. When I explained that here in Colorado, their right to vote had been restored, they registered and cast their ballot that year. That moment was powerful—a reminder that our democracy is strongest when everyone who is eligible knows their rights and has a clear, accessible path to participate.</p> <p>Colorado has long been a national leader in protecting and expanding voting rights. By passing SB25-001, we reaffirm that commitment and ensure that no eligible voter feels disenfranchised or excluded. This bill not only strengthens protections but sends a clear message: every voter's voice matters in this state.</p> <p>Expanding voter protections isn't just about policy; it's about people. It's about ensuring that when someone is ready to participate in our democracy, they aren't met with unnecessary barriers or confusion. The Colorado Voting Rights Act builds on our existing system, making our elections more inclusive, more transparent, and more reflective of our diverse communities.</p> <p>I urge you to support this bill and help ensure that Colorado remains a place where every eligible voter can cast their ballot freely and fairly. Thank you.</p>
<p>Ingrid Moore</p>	<p>I am strongly in favor of this bill am asking you to please vote to pass it from this committee.</p>

<p>For themselves</p>	<p>This bill is particularly important in with the pending threat of federal legislation that has been reintroduced as H.R. 22, the SAVE Act, which will disenfranchise millions of voters.</p> <p>The bill will strengthen and clarify voting laws in Colorado, where we actually want more people to vote and want it to be as easy as possible while being secure and fair.</p> <p>I urge a YES vote for this bill.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
<p>Amelia Federico For themselves</p>	<p>Mister Chair and members of the committee,</p> <p>My name is Amelia Federico and I am a member of The Student Advocacy Council (TSAC) at Metropolitan State University of Denver and I am writing in full support of the Colorado Voting Rights Act. Having access to the right to vote is something that I take very seriously-- it is a form of political power to exercise my voice. The federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 is being stripped away and with threats to its future as a means of combating discriminatory election practices, Colorado has the opportunity to protect voters rights at the state and local level, strengthen our elections, and ensure our elections are accessible for all Coloradans.</p> <p>The Colorado Voting Rights Act expands access to multilingual ballots in local elections. While also creating protections for LGBTQ+ voters, by making it a violation of the CORVA to impair individual's rights to vote based on their gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. Above all, the Colorado Voting Rights Act ensures the rights of harmed voters and civil rights groups to take action to defend their rights as voters. The Colorado Voting Rights Act needs to be passed to protect the right to vote at all levels here in Colorado.</p> <p>These are all components that I deeply care. I, along with The Student Advocacy Council (TSAC) fully endorses this bill and we urge your support as well.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>

<p>Michael Neil For themselves</p>	<p>Testimony for SB25-001</p> <p>Thank you, Chair Weissman, Vice Chair Sullivan, and members of Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs. Thank you Senator Gonzales for bringing this very important bill. My name is Michael Neil and I rise in strong support of SB25-001 on behalf of myself. I will make this brief. SB25-001 does many things, all of them good, including reinforcing language access to voting and making accessibility requirements in voting clear. In particular, in the interest of people with disabilities in Colorado, the bill imposes a requirement on covered entities, defined as entities that provide state-funded services primarily to individuals with disabilities, to publicly display notices related to voting in advance of statewide general and primary elections. This may seem like a small requirement, and, in many ways, it is, but any move that increases chances at participation in elections and government is a good one. We often say that Colorado has gold-standard election procedures, and we do, but we can always improve. This bill represents one step of that improvement, and I ask for an aye vote.</p>
<p>Joshua Rivero Amend Town of Parker</p>	<p>Thank you Mr Chair, members of this committee and the sponsors of this bill. My name is Joshua Rivero and I have the honor being Mayor of the Town of Parker. I am here speaking on behalf of the Parker Town Council and the people of Parker and we are in an amend position. It is important to state that Parker supports the premise of the bill, that all elections should be fair and equitable and should not be a hindrance to anyone eligible to vote. Unfortunately we believe this bill presumes that municipal elections are not fair and equitable, and that ladies and gentlemen is simply wrong.</p> <p>We are unsure as to why this bill does not include state elections, school districts or special districts elections and thus seems to focus or even target municipal elections. Colorado's municipalities have always provided elections that are fair and equitable and ensured that all voters have access to the political process. If the bill were to include state and/or coordinated elections our interest would be minimal.</p> <p>Lastly and most importantly we believe there is language in this bill that is written in such a way that it threatens the nonpartisan institution that are municipal elections. Bringing the parties to the local level will have detrimental effects. Party politics don't belong at our level. Party interest brings party dollars that would do the exact opposite of what I believe the intent of this bill is after. I believe Rahm Emanuel once said "I can't plow a street as a Democrat or a Republican, I simply have to plow the street." That sums it up. I cannot pave a road as a partisan. Hiring police officers, mowing soccer fields, and moving stormwater are just some examples of what our cities, towns and villages do and have done without the influence of party politics.</p>

	<p>Please help ensure the integrity of our 271 Colorado communities and exclude municipalities from SB 001. Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Joshua Rivero                  Mayor                  Town of Parker, Colorado</p>
<p>Joshua Bapple                  For                  themself</p>	<p>Date: 2-18-2025</p> <p>RE: support for 25-001</p> <p>Members of the Committee, and Mr. chairman,</p> <p>My name is Joshua Bapple, common citizen and I am writing to express support for 25-001</p> <p>This bill mainly concerns ensuring equality within the State to further cement citizens Rights in regards to voting, as well as increase accessibility, as well as creating a statewide election database and information office, that would handle Election-related data collection.</p> <p>To be frank, I'm of the personal belief that voting is not a right, but a serious civic responsibility. To not vote, is to not do your part in serving the country, if you'll pardon the expression. Many people that I know personally have not voted. They have neglected or forgotten, due to accessibility, to vote. Or they simply feel that their vote is not counted, but were affected all the same. To add an office that provides transparency to our voting procedures can only help us all, at a time when trust in our institutions is shaky.</p> <p>This is why I urge your YES vote on bill 25-001. Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Joshua Bapple</p>
<p>Jeany Rush                  Against</p>	<p>ATE COMMITTEE ON STATE, VETERANS, &amp; MILITARY AFFAIRS</p> <p>RE: SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>Sponsors: Gonzales, Bacon, Joseph 2-18-25</p> <p>FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs Constituent</p> <p>VOTE: No and NO and NO</p> <p>Creation of this Act, already violates current laws, federal, and multiple protections for "ALL" classes of citizens in the United States of America.</p> <p>"On January 28, President Trump signed two significant Executive Orders, declaring his intent to return our country to true and ethical standards regarding sex.</p> <p>Under the first order, Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, he affirms two (and only two) distinct biological sexes: male and female.</p> <p>Under the second order that will protect children with gender dysphoria while Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation, hospitals across the country will be required to suspend any gender interventions on individuals under the age of 19. This Order states that it will neither fund, sponsor, promote, assist, nor support medical interventions such as puberty blockers or surgeries meant to "so – called transition" a child to the opposite sex."</p> <p>By: Doctors Protecting Children Coalition, American College of Pediatricians</p> <p>We already have laws to not discriminate. Codifying (or making gender dysphoria, an ideology) a protected class is not just wrong, it sets up one group to have special rights, over others. We do not need equity games, we need equality based society based on the representative Republic by constitution, which we already have. This body should not be allowed to create a Legal Class to file/make more avenues for law suits, which currently may not even exist, simply to push an ideological agenda.</p> <p>Indian Tribes can certainly help create their needed voting mechanisms. We also already have ADA which will protect those citizens with disabilities. As for language problems, minorities and majorities' languages, I believe we are the United States of America, and the official language is English. We are not a nanny state', and while I feel for anyone needing to learn a language, with all due respect, I had to come from another country, and I just plain had to go to the 3rd grade, learn, and eventually I did. No one really did much to help, and if I wanted to speak, etc. I learned. We also already have accommodations for many languages, as we are perceived a melting pot. My family had to take responsibility for my learning the language. You don't go to China, Russia, etc. and demand accommodation for all languages to conduct legal affairs. You hire a translator. Families must take some of this responsibility.</p> <p>We don't need anymore STATE run data bases, which can be corrupted like our current voter rolls.</p> <p>We already have identification cards, methods. You can actually vote with just a utility bill. This I find insane! Legal citizens should have real identifications.</p> <p>The SOS should not be making determinations when, where to put multi-lingual ballots, etc. The ballots should be only in English. Sec. 1.5-906 - Let's not forget the immense costs this would create in another over – government controlled division/department.</p>
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	<p>The state should dictate local elections in terms aligning with federal elections. The State should stay out of the local elections. No more Over Reach. No including all the various confusing descriptions like At-Large, Alternative Method, or attempting to squeeze in Open Primaries, Rank-Choice voting, all of which actually robs all parties of their ability to determine their party candidates, or</p> <p>Nominate their own candidates. NO WAY</p> <p>STRIKE all of the gender identity language, and that is even more polarizing with the manipulations and additions of the racial slurs, gender orientation in creating yet another class in America, when all citizens are already FREE to Vote as they choose! Have any of you heard of Rick Grennell?</p> <p>Material disparity is yet another manipulation of language to create another way to be divisive, in our election systems, which are open to all Human Beings who are citizens. The state should not be dictating any of this type of reverse Racism” or whatever other form of discrimination this represents.</p> <p>Whether this language violates the new executive orders, or not, it also violates what we already have by law, and so the SOS is over reaching again into our elections to further disrupt and manipulate our Voices, for all parties.</p> <p>The language, policies, location, etc. creates a nest egg for lawyers by actually spelling out how to and what is litigational fodder! It is actually an assault on our Election Process, and sets up a GESTAPO like landscape, and more government agencies, and more interference in the local communities. We already have a legal system ad nauseum to confound our rights as supposed FREE PEOPLE!</p> <p>This whole bill should go the way of the “DODO Bird.”</p>
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## Board of County Commissioners

Dear Chair Weissman and members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

I write today on behalf of the Boulder County Commissioners to respectfully ask for your yes vote on SB25-001, Colorado Voting Rights Act.

As our nation approaches the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Boulder County appreciates that Colorado has the opportunity and responsibility to ensure voting protections for all Coloradans. SB 001 comes at a time when there are efforts throughout our nation that attempt to restrict access to voting. Boulder County supports the Colorado Voting Rights Act as it ensures the rights of all eligible voters to fully participate in elections.

In Boulder County, we are committed to creating and adopting fully inclusive, anti-racist, and culturally responsive policies. We are dedicated to eliminating systemic discrimination against people in all protected classes, and for that reason oppose any efforts to impede the voting rights of eligible citizens due to their color, ethnicity, or LGBTQ+ identity. Also, we have made many efforts to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and the linguistic needs of those whose primary language is a language other than English, steps we take to ensure that our residents can fully access and participate in their local democracy.

In closing, I'd like to thank Sen. Gonzales for bringing SB 001 forward, and again, on behalf of the Boulder County Commissioners, respectfully ask for your yes vote on this bill.

Regards,

Nick Robles, Policy Analyst, Boulder County Commissioners Office

**Claire Levy** *County Commissioner* **Marta Loachamin** *County Commissioner* **Ashley Stolzmann** *County Commissioner*

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 471 • Boulder, CO 80306 • [www.BoulderCounty.org](http://www.BoulderCounty.org) • [commissioners@bouldercounty.org](mailto:commissioners@bouldercounty.org)



# INTERFAITH ALLIANCE OF COLORADO

PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

February 18, 2025

RE: Support for SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act

Chairperson Weissman and members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act. The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding through building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. We are an interfaith public policy and advocacy organization with over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing over two dozen faith traditions.

At the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, faith for democracy is a key pillar of our work. Promoting civic engagement, protecting voting rights, and confronting threats to our democracy from religious extremism are foundational to securing religious freedom.

Religious freedom cannot exist without democracy. A democratic system protects individual rights, promotes pluralism and allows everyone, regardless of their faith, to practice their religion without fear. In a flourishing democracy, different ideas and beliefs are considered and respected. Different faiths, traditions, and practices coexist and enrich our communities, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

Our nation's history reflects the promise of securing political equality through voting, along with, unfortunately, efforts to undermine political equality by denying the vote. At a time when religious extremists are mounting a campaign against church and state separation that threatens religious freedom and our democratic values, it is vital that we take action to protect those values and the promise of political equality within our state.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you support SB25-001 and vote Yes to advance it from the committee with your favorable recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shara Smith, Chief Executive Officer  
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

2/17/25

Testimony SUPPORTING SB25-001. Colorado Voting Rights Act

Sponsors: Senator J. Gonzales (D), Rep J. Bacon (D), Rep J. Joseph (D)

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

I am Janine Reid, a volunteer lobbyist with the League of Women Voters of Colorado. We are a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We currently have 1800 members in 17 chapters throughout Colorado.

The League of Women Voters strongly supports this bill.

I live in Hotchkiss, Delta County, Colorado. With two voting centers in a county of 30,000 people spread over 1,149 square miles, we have challenges to voting. The County Clerk and Recorder works hard to provide accessible voting centers and drop boxes for voters. Nevertheless, in an area with no public transportation, 12% of the population identified as disabled, 20% living in poverty, and 30% of the population over 65, accessibility to voting is a concern.

The Colorado Voting Rights Act (CoVRA) would strengthen protection for all voters. In addition, provisions in CoVRA provide for election-related data collection through creating a state-wide election database. Data is important to the League for several purposes, including identifying opportunities to assist voters in the registration and voting processes, as well as providing voter education tailored to our voters' preferences (format, language, etc.).

The League of Women Voters of Colorado supports this bill and urges you to vote yes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Janine Reid

Dear Editor,

Voting rights are under attack at the federal level, and we must act now to safeguard the right to vote in Colorado. That's why (organization) has been working in coalition with 30+ other equity-centered organizations to draft the Colorado Voting Rights Act (CoVRA), which was introduced as SB25-001 on January 8.

Colorado can build on the power of the federal Voting Rights Act by extending new protections to LGBTQIA+ voters, voters with disabilities, and those living on Colorado's reservations. The CoVRA will also expand multilingual ballot access to those who speak English less than very well and will strengthen Colorado's redistricting processes through additional data collection and maintenance, including demographics and voting information.

A true democracy requires that all voters, regardless of their race, income level or other identities, have an equal ability to vote and to elect leaders that represent their needs and values. The Colorado Voting Rights Act will empower our state to monitor and enforce these common sense standards to help us build a more equitable democracy for all.

Colorado has led the nation in making elections more accessible for all by transforming our state's election system to the model voters know and love today. Let's continue to expand voting rights by setting clear standards to ensure all of our election practices, including local elections, are fair.

Sincerely,

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Dear Editor,

Colorado leads the nation in secure, accessible elections. We've passed reforms that have broken down barriers to voting for historically disenfranchised communities. We've equalized our redistricting processes. We've made it easier for Coloradans to make their voices heard in our government. Yet federally, voting rights continue to be challenged, and our state must be prepared.

The Colorado Voting Rights Act (COVRA), introduced on Jan. 8 as SB25-001, will protect the access Colorado voters have today, shielding us from the dismantling of the federal Voting Rights Act, federal and state administration changes, and any future attempts to undermine our fair and accessible elections. The COVRA will reinforce, and build beyond, the protections offered by the Federal Voting Rights Act, both by creating stronger protections for communities of color and by ensuring protections for all voters. It will give the Attorney General power to enforce voting rights – power that currently resides only with the US Department of Justice – and will build a pathway through the Colorado Courts to challenge discriminatory election practices and ensure our Courts can effectively remedy these practices.

A true democracy requires that all voters, regardless of their race, income level or other identities, have an equal ability to vote and to elect leaders that represent their needs and values. The Colorado Voting Rights Act will empower our state to monitor and enforce these common sense standards to help us build a more equitable democracy for all.

Please encourage your state legislators to pass SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act!

Sincerely,

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee, My name is Rev. Leta Behrens, I am a part of the ELCA and representing The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. Thank you for allowing me to share some thoughts in support of SB25-001 Colorado Voting Rights Act.

The act of voting is the simplest and most important way we exercise democracy as a society. It must be protected and accessible to all eligible citizens. Without our democracy and the essential democratic elements that make up our republic, we would not enjoy all of the freedoms granted and this includes religious freedom. Religious freedom in its purest sense means that we are all free to practice our own faith and that no one faith can infringe on the rights of others. The preservation of this essential liberty is only safe as long as our democracy and our rights to vote are safe.

This becomes especially important as we consider the faith traditions of those who experience religious marginalization and become vulnerable to not having a voice in our systems. There is an old and good saying from my tradition that whenever we draw a circle around one set of people in particular, God is always standing on the other side advocating for those that we left out. I believe in freedom for all religions and faith traditions and freedom for those who choose not to claim any religious tradition.

This country was founded on people that escaped religious persecution, our founding fathers considered it so important that it was the first amendment in the Bill of Rights. In preserving, protecting and expanding the accessibility to the right to vote, we are protecting our very democracy and all the rights we hold sacred. With that I ask for a yes vote. Thank you.

## **Testimony in Support of the Colorado Voting Rights Act (SB25-001)**

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Laura Light-Kovacs, and I serve as a City Councilor in Loveland, Colorado. My testimony also reflects the views of Mayor Jacki Marsh and councilor Erin Black; however, I want to be clear that I am here today speaking in my personal capacity, not on behalf of the City of Loveland or its council. I currently sit on our municipal Legislative Policy Committee, where local control is a priority and is something that I take very seriously.

I'm here to support the Colorado Voting Rights Act. For the last several years, Federal voting protections have been significantly weakened, and enforcement of those protections is increasingly uncertain. We can no longer rely on federal oversight alone to protect access to the ballot. Colorado must act now to ensure that every voter has strong, state-level protections against discrimination.

Despite our reputation as a leader in voter access, Colorado still has one of the widest racial turnout gaps in the country—a nearly 20-point difference in 2020 between white voters and voters of color. While this discrepancy isn't solely due to voting access, this bill ensures that all Coloradans, regardless of race, language, or disability status, have fair access to the ballot.

This legislation does not take away local control. Municipalities will continue to run their elections as they do now—this bill simply sets clear, common-sense standards to ensure voting remains fair, transparent, and free from discrimination. Local governments will retain their authority while voters gain stronger protections.

COVRA also ensures that the Attorney General has the authority to act against discriminatory election practices should the need arise. Additionally, it expands access to multilingual ballots in municipalities that meet established language thresholds. It's important to recognize that over 15% of Coloradans speak Spanish, and of those speakers, about a third of those voters have limited English proficiency.

Colorado has the opportunity to lead by enshrining these protections in state law. This is about ensuring that every voter, no matter where they live or what language they speak, has an equal voice in our democracy. I urge you to vote yes on the Colorado Voting Rights Act.

Thank you.