

Prohibit Housing Discrimination Source of Income (HB20-1332)

Testimony to the House Finance Committee

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Tyler Jaeckel, the director of policy and research at the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

The Bell Policy Center supports HB20-1332, which would add discrimination based on source of income as a type of unfair housing practice. Housing vouchers, student loans, and other housing grants programs are critical to solving Colorado's affordable housing crisis. **Discrimination based on the use of these forms of payment exacerbates inequities, limits opportunities for Coloradans, and unfairly discriminates against tenants of certain backgrounds.**

Action cannot wait. Housing vouchers and other forms of rental subsidies may be one of the only solutions to the eviction/rental crisis that is occurring and will be likely to increase in the near future. Allowing discrimination to continue to occur could have drastic consequences in preventing Colorado and Coloradans from recovering from the pandemic.

The [COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project project's](#) recent estimates of eviction risk in Colorado make the immediacy clear:

- By September, nearly 420,000 Coloradans living in 181,000 households will be at risk of evictions, having accumulated nearly \$765 million in rental debt.
- [Communities of color](#), undocumented residents, and low-income families will be especially vulnerable to evictions.
- The eviction crisis is likely to see its greatest increases starting in August, as expanded unemployment insurance benefits end and cost-burdened renters (those paying more than 30 percent of their income in rent), are unable to keep up with rental payments.

Action was needed before COVID-19. [It is well documented](#) access to affordable housing is extremely important to health, economic viability, and future success. Twelve states and the District of Columbia, as well as many municipalities, have passed laws that prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of source of income. [When source of income discrimination is eliminated](#), it leads to decreased centralized poverty, greater housing voucher utilization, and increased chances for families to secure quality housing:

- A 2001 HUD study found voucher recipients in jurisdictions with laws that bar discrimination based on source of income were **12 percentage points more likely to succeed in using their voucher** than those who lived in jurisdictions without such laws. [This was again confirmed in a 2011 study of utilization rates.](#)
- Source of income discrimination often prevents voucher holder from being able to take advantage of the voucher as well as prevents them from [being able to move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods.](#)

It is time for Colorado to provide fair access to the housing market for all Coloradans. It will help with our current affordable housing challenges and help provide opportunities for future Coloradans.