Please SUPPORT SB19-180
Eviction Legal Defense Fund
Senator Winter & Representative McCluskie

The Problem: According to the Legal Services Corporation, 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans in 2017 received inadequate or no legal help. In Colorado, this justice gap is particularly harmful for renters.¹ Low-income tenants who are facing a possible eviction are typically unable to access legal assistance. For tenants who represent themselves in court, navigating the complex legal system of landlord-tenant laws can prove to be an impossible task. This major shortcoming in our legal process contributes to cycles of poverty throughout the state of Colorado.

The Solution: The Colorado General Assembly shall appropriate general funds to provide legal resources for low-income Coloradans who are facing an eviction.

Legal representation for low-income tenants at risk for eviction is critical, but available legal assistance is severely lacking.

- There were nearly 45,000 evictions filed in Colorado in 2017.
- According to a 2017 study by Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and Colorado Center on Law and Policy, less than 1% of tenants in Denver County were represented by an attorney during an eviction, while nearly 90% of landlords were represented. However, the very few tenants able to access an attorney were significantly more likely to remain in their homes.²
- At least half of those seeking assistance from Colorado Legal Services are turned away because of lack of resources.³
- A nationwide study found that there is one legal aid lawyer for every 6,415 people in poverty.⁴

Eviction hurts families and communities.

- One study indicated that renters who had previously experienced involuntary displacement were almost 25 percent more likely to face long-term housing challenges than renters who had not.⁵
- Housing is a social determinant of health. After an eviction, renters are pushed into less-desirable neighborhoods — where they may experience substandard housing conditions, poorer health outcomes, and increased poverty.⁶
- Housing instability for tenants with children may also destabilize family relationships, children’s achievement and community ties — disrupting children’s development and leading to poor academic performance, behavioral problems, substance abuse, and homelessness later in life.⁷

6 Id.
7 Id.

For more information, please contact:
Jack Regenbogen, Colorado Center on Law and Policy, jregenbogen@cclponline.org
Adeline Hodge, Frontline Public Affairs, adeline@frontlinepublicaffairs.com

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