



## COLORADO CENTER on LAW & POLICY

Forging Pathways from Poverty

# 2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## FOOD



**SNAP for students** – We will work with the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger coalition to request additional general funds, matched by federal dollars to conduct SNAP

outreach for students and their families. Research shows that SNAP participation significantly reduces food insecurity and more than 300,000 Coloradans – many of them students – are likely eligible but not enrolled in SNAP.

## HEALTH



**Easy enrollment for health coverage** – We are working with Rep. Susan Lontine and our partners at Colorado Consumer Health Initiative and Colorado

Fiscal Institute on legislation that will use the regular tax-filing process to inform Coloradans of their eligibility for Medicaid, CHP+ and premium tax credits. Estimates show that using income-tax returns to streamline enrollment into health coverage could potentially reach 21,000 uninsured children who qualify for Medicaid or CHP+. The bill will have bipartisan sponsorship.

**Public option** – Last year, legislation tasked Colorado’s department of Health Care Policy and Financing and the Division of Insurance with developing a plan that would leverage state infrastructure to provide

affordable, quality health care and increase competition in the individual market. With the proposal completed, we’ll work with legislators on a plan that optimizes coverage for Coloradans who currently fall through the cracks.

## HOUSING



**Removing dismissed eviction records from public view** – Tenants already challenged by the state’s tight rental market should not be set back by an eviction case that’s

been dismissed by a court. That’s why we are working with the Renter’s Rights Roundtable on a bill that would suppress eviction filings from public access while an eviction case is pending and remove them from public view if they are dismissed. The bill will be sponsored by Rep. Dominique Jackson and Sen. Faith Winter.

**Manufactured housing homeowner’s rights** – Approximately 100,000 Coloradans live in mobile homes in approximately 878 manufactured housing communities. Because most people living in manufactured housing communities own their home, but not the underlying land upon which it sits, community owners can wield significant power over housing security. To protect the rights of these homeowners, we are working on two bills to amend the Mobile Home Park Act to provide more stability for these neighborhoods.

**Source of income discrimination** – Colorado’s tight housing market has become more restrictive for people living with disabilities, older adults, and families experiencing poverty. Currently, Colorado

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does not protect against housing discrimination based on a person's source of income, which shuts many Coloradans out of accessible housing, causes displacement and concentrates poverty. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia currently have statutes protecting renters from source-of-income discrimination. We are joining the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and other partners on a measure that would ensure that a person's source of income does not preclude them from accessing housing, including mobile homes. Rep. Leslie Herod, Rep. Dominique Jackson and Sen. Rhonda Fields are sponsoring the bill.

## INCOME



**Cost-of-living adjustments for TANF recipients** – Coloradans who participate in Colorado Works, the state's version of the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)

program, often have no source of income other than basic cash-assistance payments. Currently, a Coloradan with two children receives a maximum of \$508 a month in cash assistance – an amount barely enough to cover food and hygiene products, let alone rent. Recognizing that poverty can inhibit early brain development and negatively affect a child's ability to succeed in school, our partners at Colorado Children's Campaign are working with us and other partners on increasing benefits and developing legislation that would add a cost-of-living adjustment to Coloradans who receive TANF. Sen. Rhona Fields, Sen. Dominick Moreno, Rep. Monica Duran and Rep. James Coleman are sponsoring the bill.

**Expanding the EITC** – Many hardworking Colorado families still struggle to make ends meet. That's why the Colorado Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is more important than ever. It puts cash in the pockets of

Colorado's working families. We support a measure led by Colorado Fiscal Institute that will double the EITC while starting to pay the currently unfunded Child Tax Credit for parents of children under 6 who earn less than \$75,000 (for single parents) or \$85,000 (for couples). The legislation would expand the EITC by tweaking the state's tax code. Rep. Emily Sirota and Sen. Julie Gonzales are sponsoring the bill.

**Adult education partnerships** – Spring Institute is leading an effort to broaden the existing Adult Education Workforce Partnership Grant Program. This \$1 million program was created by legislation led by Skills2Compete Colorado (coordinated by CCLP) in 2014. The purpose of the 2020 legislation is to expand eligibility and funding for grants to adult education providers who partner with K-12 schools – not just those who partner with postsecondary education and employment. Currently, no adult education funding targets adult students who lack basic literacy – many of whom are parents. Sen. Rachel Zenzinger and Rep. Barbara McLachlan are sponsoring the bill.

**Higher education student emergency assistance grant** – Young Invincibles is leading an effort to establish a grant program that would provide emergency funds to post-secondary students in their final year before obtaining their credentials. Students who are parents, experiencing poverty, or who lack family financial support are often pulled out of schools to address emergency financial needs. The proposed fund would help students complete a credential in order to boost their earnings, increase their completion rates and decrease the racial gap in credential attainment. Rep. Barbara McLachlan is sponsoring the bill.



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