



**Testimony as prepared for delivery in support of SB21-173 (Rights in Residential Lease Agreements) to the House Business Affairs & Labor Committee by Sarah Barnes, Manager of Special Policy Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign**

- Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Sarah Barnes and I am the Manager of Special Policy Initiatives at the Colorado Children's Campaign.
- Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 173, and thank you Representatives Caraveo and Gonzales-Gutierrez for your leadership on this critical bill.
- **The Children's Campaign supports SB 173** because we believe every Colorado kid and family should have a safe place to call home. Even before the pandemic, many Colorado families were facing a housing crisis.
- Colorado families need solutions to help them stay in their homes. Unstable housing has serious negative impacts on the health and well-being of kids and families.
  - **Children** who experience high rates of housing instability or homelessness have lower academic achievement and delayed literacy skills. They are more likely to be truant and more likely to drop out of school.
  - **Mothers** who were evicted have higher rates of maternal depression. This affects their children's healthy development and it also affects their ability to work and provide for their children.
- And families with children **face eviction at significantly higher rates**. A study found that families with children disproportionately receive eviction judgments in court.
- Housing security is also a racial justice issue. Due to past and current racist policies and practices that create more barriers to housing stability for communities of color, these families are significantly more likely to experience higher rates of eviction and higher rates of homelessness. **And as a result of the culmination of discriminatory policies and practices, Black women with children face the highest rates of eviction.**
- SB 173 will increase fairness in the eviction court process and reasonably limit late fees so that all Colorado kids and families can stay in their homes. I urge your support. Thank you.