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Vice-President of Government Affairs

Testimony: HB19-1058 Income Tax Benefits for Family Leave  
House Finance

January 31, Upon Adjournment

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I'm Mizraim Cordero, Vice-President of Government Affairs at the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, an organization representing over 3,000 businesses and their 300,000 employees.

We are here today to speak in support of House Bill 1058.

We have had countless conversations with our members and cannot find a single member who does not offer some form of paid leave to their employees.

From vacation and sick leave to paid time off to short-term disability benefits, our members run the gamut in what they offer their hires. But they all offer something because they view these benefits as complementing and increasing their competitive advantage in what they consider one of the biggest challenges for businesses of all industries: how to attract and retain staff in this low unemployment business climate.

But we feel it is important to recognize what the proponents are trying to achieve with this bill. This bill incentivizes businesses who haven't done so yet, to invest in a family and medical leave savings account for their employees and furthermore incentivizes employees to contribute to their own accounts so they're better prepared when a medical or family situation arises that keeps them from work.

For businesses that could not afford to do this otherwise, it is good policy for the state to help facilitate the adoption of family and medical leave benefits by enabling and rewarding the employee and employers when they jointly invest in a medical leave program.

The program proposed by the bill is also voluntary, and it does not punish companies that are already providing similar or better programs to their employees. Our members are very concerned that compelling employers who already have a rich leave plan in place to also participate in a state mandated plan will in effect diminish the overall quality of leave for working Coloradans.

Our members support the flexibility this legislation gives to businesses while also encouraging them to provide a program of this kind to their employees.

And we urge you to vote **YES on House Bill 1256**.