

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to provide this testimony today. My name is Dorothy Jones and I am the director of public affairs for the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. I am here today on behalf of the Chamber, our 3,000 members and their 400,000 employees, to express our opposition to House Bill 1191.

This bill would hinder a business's ability to create a safe and healthy work environment and potentially cause non-compliance when certain standards direct them to require vaccinations for their employees. Furthermore, it opens the door for unnecessary and costly litigation as it creates a private right of action against businesses that choose to utilize vaccine requirements with their workforce.

COVID vaccinations are critical in certain businesses where other vaccinations are required for employment. Healthcare providers in particular have a responsibility to protect their staff and their patients. Patients who are immunocompromised could be exposed to dangerous diseases if medical staff are not properly vaccinated. It's irresponsible to allow employees who choose not to receive immunizations to potentially put other employees, patients, families and the general public at risk.

Additionally, preventive care, like immunizations, is a documented way to help lower the cost of health care. Influenza, a vaccine-preventable disease, costs the country \$10.4 billion annually. Over the last 20 years, the CDC estimates vaccinations will save nearly \$295 billion in direct costs and \$1.38 trillion in total costs to society. By protecting against diseases with immunizations, billions of dollars could be saved.

These vaccinations are vital in allowing Colorado businesses to re-open and remain open, and various chambers have played a critical role in the rollout of the mass vaccinations in the hopes of expanding vaccine access.

House Bill 1191 undermines Colorado's existing public health infrastructure, which has been in place for decades to improve vaccination rates and protect communities from preventable disease.

We urge you to vote no on this bill.