

Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in support of HB23-1186: Remote Participation In Residential Evictions by Hunter Nelson, Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign

House Judiciary Committee

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Old State Library

- Good afternoon, members of the committee. My name is Hunter Nelson, and I am a policy analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign.
- The Colorado Children’s Campaign is a non-profit, non-partisan, policy, research and advocacy organization, committed to securing every chance for every child in Colorado since our founding in 1985. That includes advocating for public policies and investments that remove barriers for most impacted children and families and improve well-being for every child and family.
- I am here to testify in support of HB23-1186 “Remote Participation In Residential Evictions.”
- The Children’s Campaign supports this bill because evictions have a significant negative impact on the health, well-being and economic security of children and families.
- Families with children and families of color are more likely to be evicted, due to a history of discriminatory policies and practices.
- When a family receives a notice of an eviction, they often face significant barriers to attending their eviction hearing in person, including childcare, work schedules and transportation, especially for Colorado families residing in rural areas.
- And, if a family is unable to appear in court for an eviction hearing, they are automatically evicted through a default judgment. This access issue results in unjust outcomes and it is not an effective use of government resources.
- Research from the Arizona Supreme Court found that, when parties to an eviction proceeding were able to participate virtually during the COVID pandemic, the “no show” rate dropped from 40% to 13%. This is strong evidence that allowing families to appear remotely for an eviction hearing removes many barriers to participation, resulting in significantly fewer families being evicted through a default judgment rather than having meaningful access to the court process.
- Evictions are a destabilizing and traumatic experience for families, especially for children. Research has shown that the stress of evictions can negatively impact children’s emotional and physical development, academic achievement, and general well-being.
- Allowing remote participation in eviction proceedings will help ensure that fewer families are evicted through a default judgment, support participation in court processes and effective use of government resources, and support positive health, social and financial outcomes for children and families. **Please vote yes on HB23-1186.** Thank you.