

Senate Local Government & Housing

04/13/2023 Upon Adjournment

HB23-1068 Pet Animal Ownership In Housing

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Chau McAusland</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>Good morning!</p> <p>My husband and I volunteer at our local shelter, and we support various dog rescues in the country, so we've seen an increasing number of families forced to surrender their pets due to restrictive policies that make it difficult to find housing. "No pets" policies, restrictions on breed and weight of a pet, high pet deposits, and monthly "pet rent" are housing barriers that have a devastating impact on families, especially renters and lower income households. Often I see posts on social media from people trying to rehome their pets because of these same issues. I cannot imagine having to choose between a beloved pet and a place to live - not to mention the strain it puts on our shelter system.</p> <p>Our shelters were created to support our community by providing services to keep pets with their families, and for looking after and finding homes for injured or stray animals. This is no longer possible in many cases because shelters are beyond capacity, bursting at the seams. When shelters are overwhelmed, this can lead to the following consequences: euthanasia rates soar due to lack of space; injured and stray animals do not get adequate care, and in many cases are turned away because resources are limited; and shelter staff and volunteers become physically and emotionally strained, compromising their mental health.</p> <p>Families that have loved their pets for many years are forced to surrender them to shelters that are already crowded from the effects of the pandemic. No one should have to decide between giving up a beloved pet, and safe and secure housing. Please support this bill in favor of pets staying with their families.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>

<p>Amber Kelley</p> <p>Amend themselves</p>	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am a small scale housing provider with one property consisting of 24 units in Fort Collins, CO.</p> <p>In regards to HB23-1068 Pet Animal Ownership in Housing;</p> <p>I have the following concerns;</p> <p>In the bill you state that the intent of the general assembly is as follows ;</p> <p>e) It is the intent of the general assembly to encourage housing developers, owners, landlords, insurers, and other operators to increase pet-inclusive affordable housing in Colorado.</p> <p>My question is; “ How is limiting the ability to pay for the damage that animals cause going incentivize increasing the supply of pet inclusive affordable housing?”</p> <p>Secondly, I agree that evictions are hard on animals and there should be provision made for them. Another way that you can help with this problem is to help us to avoid evictions all together. The way that we avoid evictions is through the ability to not renew a contact that has naturally come to an end. If 1171 passes as it is written there will be more animals in this situation.</p> <p>Third, if insurers are not allowed to have policies that mitigate risk for them, my premiums will go up and it all eventually leads to rent increases or reduced inventory as private investors sell and reinvest in different states due due to the increased operating expenses and regulations.</p> <p>Please amend this bill to only make provision for animals that are displaced due to eviction and please consider protecting animals by helping us avoid eviction altogether by allowing contracts to come to a natural end.</p>
<p>Ashlee Andersen</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB-1068 because animals need all the help they can get.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dogs are members of our families and without these changes, they are taken out of loving homes and put into shelters. Or worse. 2. We are taking a good living situation for these animals and making it very bad one. And for what benefit?

	<p>3. I volunteer for a local animal rescue, and they rely solely on fosters, they do not have any shelter facilities. They often lose talented and much needed fosters to changes in housing situations.</p> <p>I support HB-1068 because housing and insurance are already hard.</p> <p>1. I own a rental property in Lakewood and allow all pets. I am penalized by insurance companies and may not have adequate or affordable homeowners' insurance. Even though I am opening my home to more families.</p> <p>2. I have multiple friends that have recently left Denver and moved back to Kansas City or the Midwest after dozens of bidding wars and getting squeezed out of housing. Rules regarding dogs only complicate and already very tough process.</p> <p>Lastly, I support HB-1068 because I have a pit-bull.</p> <p>1. Her name is Rey and she is a dream. My rock. She is the best girl in the world. She brings me more peace and joy than almost anything. I love her so much.</p> <p>2. If something happen to my job or my ability to work and I was pushed into another housing situation I could endure it if my family was safe and together.</p> <p>3. If I had to leave Rey behind it would break me and my husband. We rather be homeless.</p> <p>4. It would be like if your house burnt down. It would be ok if everyone got out safe. It's a totally different story if someone doesn't make it.</p>
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April 14th 2023,

Good Afternoon, Madame Chair and members of the committee, thank you so much for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Trina Griego. I am a Program Coordinator with the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado and the former Community Liaison for the Dumb Friends League San Luis Valley Animal Center. I am here today to share my thoughts and experiences as to why I am urging you to vote yes on HB23-1068 Pet Animal Ownership in Housing.

During my time as Community Liaison for Dumb Friends League I was tasked with connecting to the community, sharing all the services DFL has to offer, running education programs, forming partnerships with service providers, community organizations and various governmental jurisdictions. I put some serious miles on our Honda Pilot, traversing all areas of the valley and I-25 corridor to connect with families and communities. I visited high school job fairs in Antonito, schools in La Jara, every single festival in Alamosa, senior centers, story time at the library, traversed La veta pass for the first time to transfer 18 kittens to our Denver facility, you name it and I have probably been there with a puppy in tow. The most consistent thing I heard across every town in the San Luis Valley is that they couldn't have pets, either their landlords didn't allow them or the pet deposit and subsequent fees made it impossible.

I started a Humane Education program for the local kids hosted once a month at the shelter. Kids were so excited to get to learn about animals, visit with them and make toys and treats. We had so many kids that would come every month because it was the only time they got to interact with pets. We even had a boy and his mom come in once a week to clean and make treats because he so badly wanted an animal, but he wasn't even old enough to sign up to volunteer. Through my encounters it quickly became apparent that my struggle as a Community Liaison wouldn't be connecting to the community, it would be to get these pets adopted out in the community they came from. It was not for a lack of want, people in the San Luis Valley are fierce animal lovers and the most supportive community in getting people their pets back safely, these pets are transferred to Denver, or sit unadopted at the Alamosa shelter simply because landlords see pets as a liability rather than an integral part of the family.

Not only are pets left unhoused due to some of these restrictive practices, the issue of treating pets as a liability rather than a member of the family as many people see them, is actually contributing to homelessness in the San Luis Valley, where any night being unhoused creates serious risk of death. One a month we would distribute pet food to those in need with Colorado Pet Food Pantry, my colleague would often stop by the Safe Outdoor site to drop off food for the pets there. She came back in tears telling me of a community member we both knew who she saw at the campsite. An older disabled woman who became homeless and stayed unhoused due to her dogs. She couldn't afford the additional rent anywhere in the area. They were her family and she refused to give them up, making her already limited housing options impossible.

Down in the valley I used to teach a class called "Too many cats" it is an easy way for kids to connect animal welfare and pet overpopulation. They often make the connection to housing themselves. These two facts are always a hit. If all pets in the US had a home and were cared

for, each individual person would have 7 pets. There are now more households with pets than children. Colorado's housing crisis is not limited to the front range, we face housing instability and scarcity all over the state and any barriers to housing are often felt more drastically in rural areas. HB23-1068 would be a big help in ensuring people all over the state, of various economic backgrounds can have and keep pets. In a socially conscious sheltering model, the service providers and its government must be responsive to the members of the community to help all issues of animal welfare within those communities. Our communities are begging for these barriers to be removed and it is with them in mind that I urge you to support HB23-1068. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Trina Griego
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