



Source of Income Discrimination – An Unfair Housing Practice

The League supports [HB20-1332 Prohibit Housing Discrimination Source Of Income](#) because it provides equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination and it helps to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every Colorado family. The bill aims to make housing discrimination based on a person's source of income an unfair housing practice. The sponsors of this bill are Reps. Herod and Jackson and Sen. Fields.

"Source of income discrimination" refers to the practice of refusing to rent to a housing applicant because of that person's lawful form of income. According to a 2018 survey of Colorado renters by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, 47% of respondents who had been rejected from housing indicated source of income discrimination as the reason. Often, the denial of housing disproportionately affects renters of color, women, and persons with disabilities.

The source of income must be lawful and verifiable, including income from any lawful profession or occupation and from any government or private assistance, grant, or loan program. A landlord cannot refuse to rent or lease housing, refuse to show housing, refuse to transmit an offer to rent or lease, advertise that the rental or lease is limited based on source of income, or deny that housing is available in order to discriminate against someone based on their source of income.

Source of income discrimination is an enormous housing barrier for people who receive public or private housing assistance, such as income derived from Social Security, Housing Choice Vouchers/Section 8, pensions, annuities, state or federal disability programs or benefits, child support, alimony, foster care subsidies, disability or unemployment insurance, veterans' benefits, and other government assistance. A 2019 report on Home Equity by the Colorado Health Institute shows a direct connection between housing instability and health. The report states, "Laws or ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on source of income can ensure that housing subsidies are used effectively."

The Colorado Civil Rights Division enforces the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, which includes unfair housing practices. This bill includes some protections for landlords such that, if the initial payment is not made to the owner in a timely manner, the landlord may exercise any right or pursue any remedy available under law. Also, landlords with three or fewer units of housing for lease or rent are exempt from the bill's requirements. At least 16 other states have

statutes that prohibit discrimination in the housing market based on source of income (Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 2019).

by Kathy Smith