



INTERFAITH ALLIANCE  
OF COLORADO  
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT



20

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado's 2023 Legislative Report! In the following report, you'll learn more about Interfaith's work to advance bills that reflect our commitment to making faith a conduit for positive change within our communities.

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding through building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. We are fortunate to be joined and supported in our work by a network of more than 400 congregations across more than a dozen faith traditions. We are also joined by many individuals and organizations steadfastly advocating for policy rooted in liberty, equity, and justice.

## Our Policy Team



**SHARA SMITH (SHE/HER)**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



**MELISSA CHARNES (SHE/HER)**  
**DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY & PROGRAMS**



**TRINA GRIEGO (SHE/HER)**  
**PROGRAM MANAGER**



**EMMA HUDSON (SHE/HER)**  
**LOBBYIST**



# A Message From Our CEO

This legislative session was momentous for Interfaith. In addition to tracking a record number of bills, we also challenged legislation that did not reflect our collective values and that would ultimately serve to harm and divide communities.

This effort involved expertise, precision, and dedication on behalf of our public policy team, as well as the many members of our network, like you, who joined us at the Capitol this session to share perspectives and give voice to the voiceless.

Together, we provided expertise, personal experiences, and values statements designed to help legislators make decisions in the best interest of all Coloradans. We will continue to use our collective voice to ensure that public policy in Colorado both reflects our common values, as well as honors our dignified potential.

I am so grateful to the incredible team we assembled to advance this work and am honored that you continue to walk together with us in our efforts to remain a powerful catalyst for positive change. We thank you for your trust, partnership, and dedication.



**Together, we  
make it possible  
to give a voice to  
the voiceless,  
while honoring  
our dignified  
potential.**





# Religious Freedom Day

## Freedom that Benefits All

On April 13th, the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado co-sponsored Religious Freedom Day in Colorado! The ceremony to mark the occasion was held in the Capitol and included an official Executive Proclamation and recognition in the senate. Leaders of various faith traditions came together to celebrate our common value of religious freedom.

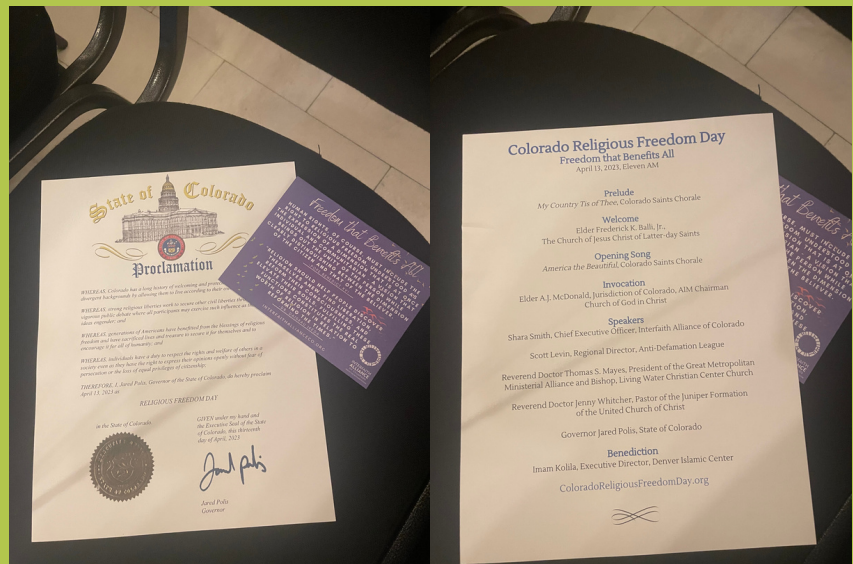
Regardless of your faith, or if you subscribe to no faith, we hold this first amendment right as sacred while recognizing that this ideal has not been the reality throughout history, that we still have work to do in order to deliver that promise.

Speakers included Governor Jared Polis, Imam Kolila, Executive Director of the Masjid Al-Shuhada Denver Islamic Center, Rev. Dr. Jenny Whitcher, Pastor of Juniper Formation of the United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Thomas Mayes of the Denver Ministerial Alliance and Pastor of Living Water Church, Scott Levin of the Anti-Defamation League, Elder Frederick K. Balli, Jr. of the Latter Day Saints, Shara Smith, Chief Executive Officer of the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, and others.

We were honored to co-sponsor this event with the Church of Latter Day Saints and look forward to future opportunities to celebrate and connect on our shared values.



Photo Credit: Alanna Hunter-Lawley of the Interfaith Alliance of CO



# Our Legislative Priorities

During the 2023 legislative session, the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado focused on bills that would advance economic justice and fairness for workers; improve housing access & affordability; make our legal system more fair, transparent and accessible; protect the health and safety of our communities; protect individual rights; and advance equity.



## 01. Advancing economic justice and fair working conditions

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported a variety of bills that promise to advance economic justice and fair working conditions for Coloradans, including efforts to advance pay equity, improve working conditions, and provide essential support to our neighbors.



## 02. Improving housing access and security

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported a variety of bills that would improve housing access, affordability, stability, and safety.



## 03. Making our legal system more fair

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported a variety of bills that would promote fairness and transparency in our legal system and opposed efforts to double down on harmful, ineffective policies that further criminalize people struggling with addiction.



## 04. Protecting community health and safety

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported a variety of bills designed to protect community health and safety, including addressing the threat of gun violence in our communities.



## 05. Protecting rights and advancing equity

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported a variety of policies that would increase access to reproductive health care, advance health equity, and address the needs of pregnant people involved in the legal system.

Interfaith opposed discriminatory policies that would stigmatize and single out non-citizens and our LGBTQ+ neighbors for discrimination.



# By the Numbers

These stats reflect bills Interfaith tracked that passed out of the legislature.

**75**

bills tracked

**15**

bills provided  
and/or coordinated  
committee  
testimony

**83%**

of bill results in the  
legislature reflected  
Interfaith's  
positioning

## Bill Results

Includes number of bills that passed the legislature

**80%**

of bills  
Supported by  
Interfaith  
passed the  
legislature

**100%**

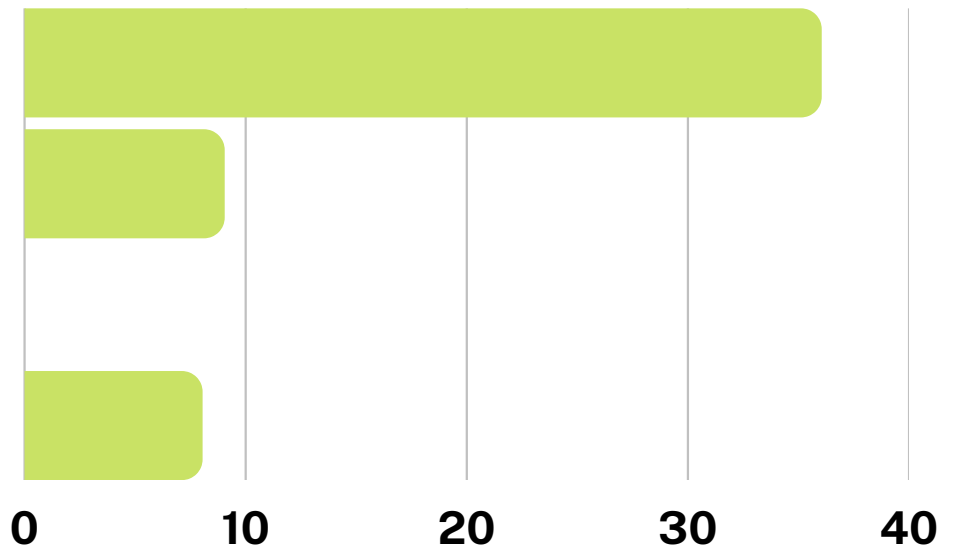
of bills Opposed  
by Interfaith  
failed to pass in  
the legislature

**Bills Supported Passed**

**Bills Supported Failed**

**Bills Opposed Passed**

**Bills Opposed Failed**



Of the 36 supported bills that successfully passed the legislature, the Governor signed 35 into law.



# Legislative Highlights

## 01. ADVANCING ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

### SB23-105 Ensuring Equal Work for Equal Pay

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado is proud to have worked in coalition to make improvements to our state's pay equity law. SB23-105 builds on the important work already done in CO to empower workers, address pay disparities, and end pay discrimination by expanding opportunities for dispute resolution outside of the courtroom, expanding availability of back pay for workers who have experienced pay discrimination, and providing clarity on transparency and notification requirements for job opportunities.

### SB23-172 Protecting Opportunities And Workers' Rights Act

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported SB23-172, the "POWR" Act, to update the Colorado Anti-discrimination Act and modernize workplace harassment and discrimination policies in our state. SB23-172 strengthens workers' ability to address those concerns, making our state a safer and more productive environment to work and do business.

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**"NO INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE DENIED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OR HAVE TO ACCEPT UNACCEPTABLE WORKING CONDITIONS DUE TO DISCRIMINATORY OR HARASSING CONDUCT IN THE WORKPLACE."**

**- IAC TESTIMONY TO COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

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### SB23 -098 Gig Work Transparency

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported SB23 -098, which aimed to provide gig workers with more transparency in their earnings and working conditions. The bill would have required platforms to give workers – including, for example, rideshare and delivery drivers – and consumers more information about payments and earnings and provide recourse for workers who are terminated. Unfortunately, SB23-098 failed to make it out of the legislature, but Interfaith supports continuing efforts to ensure that workers in the gig economy do not have to sacrifice fairness and transparency for the flexibility and other benefits they find in gig work.



# Legislative Highlights

## 02. IMPROVING HOUSING ACCESS AND SECURITY

### SB23-184 Protections For Residential Tenants

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported SB23-184, which addresses the impact of unregulated income minimums and security deposit amounts on low and middle income renters, practices that effectively shut out many people from the rental market who can otherwise pay. SB23-184 also builds on the work already done in Colorado to combat source of income discrimination by limiting income minimums to 200 percent of the amount that a potential tenant receiving housing subsidies will pay, understanding that those individuals already have a guaranteed source of payment for rent.

### HB23-1099 Portable Screening Report For Residential Leases

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported HB23-1099, which allows potential tenants to provide a portable screening report in order to eliminate unnecessary barriers for individuals and families seeking housing, a basic necessity to thrive. This bill removes barriers to securing housing by allowing potential tenants to avoid repeatedly paying costly fees associated with tenant applications and screenings.

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**"THE FEES AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FINDING HOUSING IN COLORADO CAN ACTUALLY PREVENT FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS FROM SECURING HOUSING. THIS IS WRONG AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE HOUSING CRISIS IN OUR STATE."**

**- IAC TESTIMONY TO COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

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### HB23-1115 Repeal Prohibition Local Residential Rent Control

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported HB23-1115, which would have allowed, but not required, local governments to establish rent control policies for privately owned residential properties. HB23-1115 would have provided an avenue toward helping CO renters maintain housing stability and relieving pressure on already stretched household budgets. Unfortunately, HB23-1115 failed to make it out of the legislature, but Interfaith continues to support efforts to combat the affordability crisis and provide relief to cost-burdened households.





# Legislative Highlights

## 03. MAKING OUR LEGAL SYSTEM MORE FAIR

### HB23-1249 Reduce Justice-involvement For Young Children

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported HB23-1249. As introduced, HB23-1249 would have ended prosecution of children age 10-12 and provided an evidence supported alternative to prosecuting and incarcerating young children by requiring local collaborative management programs (CMPs) to intervene and provide appropriate services to children and their families. The final bill that came out of the legislature went through significant changes in scope. And so, although it will not result in the elimination of prosecution for young children, the bill did result in a significant investment and support for local collaborative management programs and includes a data reporting requirement. The changes promise to improve and expand access to CMPs, helping more families and children access critical support services.

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**"WHEREAS COURT INVOLVEMENT AND INCARCERATION CAN SUBJECT YOUNG CHILDREN TO TRAUMA AND SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND FAMILIAL DISRUPTION, ALLOWING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO BENEFIT FROM INTERDISCIPLINARY SUPPORTS CAN HELP ADDRESS THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDERLYING THE CONDUCT."**

**- IAC TESTIMONY TO COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

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### HB23-1034 Measures To Expand Postconviction DNA Testing

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported HB23-1034, which increases access to post conviction DNA testing for individuals seeking to demonstrate actual innocence using DNA evidence and enables courts to vacate convictions when actual innocence is established through post-conviction DNA testing.



# Legislative Highlights

## 04. PROTECTING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SB 23-249 False Reporting of Emergency

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported SB23-249, which adds language to include that falsely reporting a mass shooting or active shooter in a public or private place or vehicle that transports people or property is a class 6 felony, and that it is a class 1 misdemeanor if a shelter-in-place order or a standard response protocol is initiated as a result of the falsely reported threat results. This bill is meant to address false reporting and “swatting.” Swatting” is a situation in which an individual makes a false report in an attempt to instrumentalize law enforcement to disrupt, terrorize, and expose people to potential violence and harm. “Swatting” may also be used in conjunction with other types of harassing conduct like “doxing” (revealing personal information regarding a target of harassment, including home address) and online harassment, threats, and misinformation.

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**"UNFORTUNATELY, IN COLORADO, OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES HAVE EXPERIENCED THREATS, HARASSMENT AND IN EXTREME CASES, TARGETED VIOLENCE [...] SECURITY IS A TOP PRIORITY IN PROTECTING THEIR CONGREGANTS, THEIR PLACES OF WORSHIP AND THEIR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION."**

**- IAC TESTIMONY TO COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

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### HB23-1219 Waiting Period To Deliver A Firearm

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported HB23-1219, which puts in place a waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm. The bill requires that a seller delay delivery of a firearm to the purchaser at least three days after the initiation of a required background check, or after confirming a successful background check, whichever is later. Studies reflect that waiting periods have a notable impact on reducing firearm related deaths, making HB23-1219 a sensible step in efforts to reduce gun violence.



# Legislative Highlights

## 05. PROTECTING RIGHTS AND ADVANCING EQUITY

### SB23-189

#### Increasing Access To Reproductive Health Care

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado supported SB23-189, which will increase access to reproductive health care and advance health equity by limiting cost-sharing for many reproductive health related services. Interfaith supports the religious freedom of individuals and the sanctity of making decisions about reproductive care in line with one's own faith tradition. However, access is a barrier to an individual exercising religious freedom when it comes to their reproductive rights, and those burdens often fall hardest on women and people of color.

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**"SB-189 WILL ENSURE THAT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE IS ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL IN OUR STATE, REGARDLESS OF WHO THEY ARE, WHERE THEY LIVE, OR HOW THEY WORSHIP. "**

**- IAC TESTIMONY TO COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

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### HB23-1098

#### Women's Rights In Athletics

The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado opposed HB23-1098, a failed effort to codify discrimination against transgender people into law, in particular young people who wish to participate in organized athletics. Interfaith stands firm in opposing efforts to use the law to stigmatize, marginalize, and discriminate against LGBTQ+ Coloradans and in its support of LGBTQ+ Coloradans right to live authentically as themselves free from discrimination and harm.



# Thank You!



A big thank you to those who came out to give testimony to the legislature, checked in on us during the busy session, and supported in your own way. You help us to continue providing this important faith lens to the laws that will govern our communities.

And finally, a special thank you to each of you who read this, for taking the time to engage with the legislative process locally and through our report. Your voice in our communities matters, and we hope to continue to empower you to use it!

