



**INTERFAITH  
ALLIANCE**  
OF COLORADO  
ACHIEVING DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

# Legislative Report

2025

# INTRODUCTION

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 firmly advocating for policies rooted in freedom, justice, and anti-discrimination.

**Thank you for reading our 2025 Legislative Report!**

In the pages that follow, you will find out more about Interfaith's work to advance bills that align with our commitment to a more just Colorado in which all people are free and supported to live the lives they wish for, and in which faith continues to be a conduit for transformation and hope within our communities.

## OUR POLICY TEAM



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



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



**MELISSA CHARNES (SHE/HER)**  
**VICE PRESIDENT OF POLICY,  
PROGRAMS, & PARTNERSHIPS**



**ALANNA HUNTER-LAWLEY (SHE/THEY)**  
**DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION & OUTREACH**



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

With the broader uncertainty currently occurring at the federal policy level, this year Interfaith focused on a variety of policy priorities at the Colorado Legislature including protections for LGBTQ+ Coloradans, access to healthcare, and protections for Colorado voters and renters.

While protecting religious freedom continues to be a crucial piece of all that we do, Interfaith knows that this must go hand in hand with protecting our democracy. Without democracy, where every one of us has a chance to make our voices heard, there is no way to guarantee religious freedom for all. That is why now, more than ever, we each need to become more civically engaged. By working with elected officials, our network of faith families, and partner community organizations, we can make lasting systemic changes without sacrificing our shared values.

With so many voices clamoring for attention and funding in a tight budget year, it is vital to continue providing a strong, clear message from people of faith and conscience that aim to care for vulnerable and marginalized communities in our society. With your support, that is exactly what our policy team brought to the Capitol this year!

Along with faith leaders from various traditions, Interfaith's team provided testimony, attended committee hearings, worked with legislators, and kept YOU, our community, informed about when your voices needed to be heard at the Colorado capitol. Centering lived experience and our common humanity, we advocated for our shared values on over 40 bills this year, with another 45 on our list to monitor.

We thank you for supporting our efforts to protect democracy, protect religious freedom for all, and to protect vulnerable and marginalized communities from discrimination. While the road is long, the journey to justice is necessary, and we thank you for travelling this path with us. We invite you to learn more about Interfaith's work at the Colorado Legislature in 2025 in the following pages, and ask that you stay tuned for opportunities to provide feedback on our policy priorities and more in the future.



We are stronger together.

**SHARA SMITH, CEO**

**WITHOUT DEMOCRACY,  
WHERE EVERY ONE OF US HAS  
A CHANCE TO MAKE OUR  
VOICES HEARD, THERE IS NO  
WAY TO GUARANTEE  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR ALL.**



# OUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

“We believe that freedom of religion and conscience allows individuals to flourish and live the lives they wish for. But we also believe that when faith is used to justify discrimination and the imposition of beliefs on others, that is not religious freedom. It is religious extremism.” - Shara Smith, CEO

## Interfaith promotes...



safety and self-determination in matters of faith and conscience, supporting policies that advance religious freedom and interfaith understanding.



healthy, safe, and inclusive communities, supporting policies that advance equity, increase access to care, and protect from discrimination.



a more just legal system, supporting policies grounded in values of human dignity and redemption and that strengthen, not harm, our communities.



economic justice and just working conditions, supporting policies that help people access employment and experience fairness and dignity on the job.



safe, accessible, and secure housing, supporting policies that remove barriers to housing and help secure safe housing conditions.



civic engagement and voting rights, supporting policies that advance understanding and participation in our democratic institutions and processes.



environmental justice, supporting policies that advance stewardship and just distribution of environmental resources and improve resiliency of our communities to the effects of climate change.

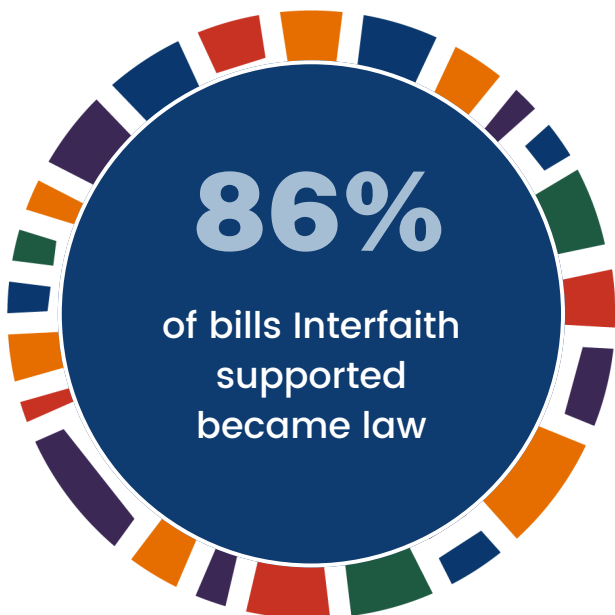
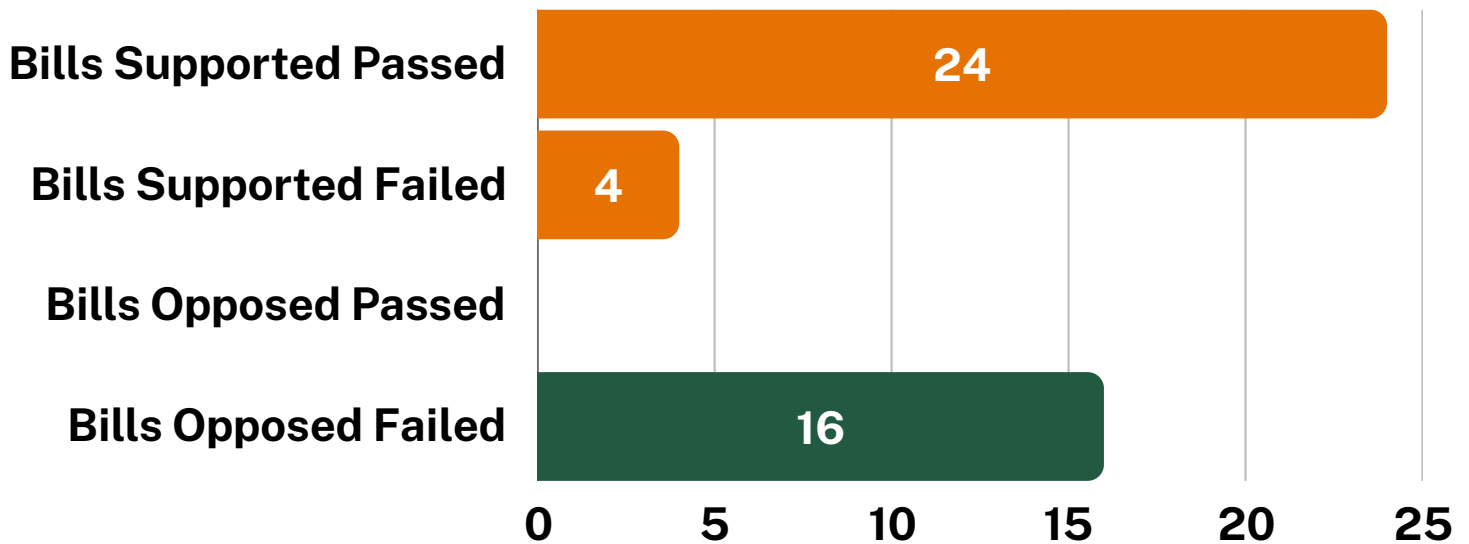


# BY THE NUMBERS

During the 2025 Legislative Session, our Policy Team reviewed over a hundred bills, determining which bills fit into our current Legislative Priorities. Over the last few months, we have monitored, advocated in support or against, and followed 89 different bills that will impact our communities in Colorado. Interfaith took a position on 44 of those bills, and monitored the other 45. We provided in person, virtual, or written testimony on 19 different bills. Below are the outcomes for bills we supported or opposed.

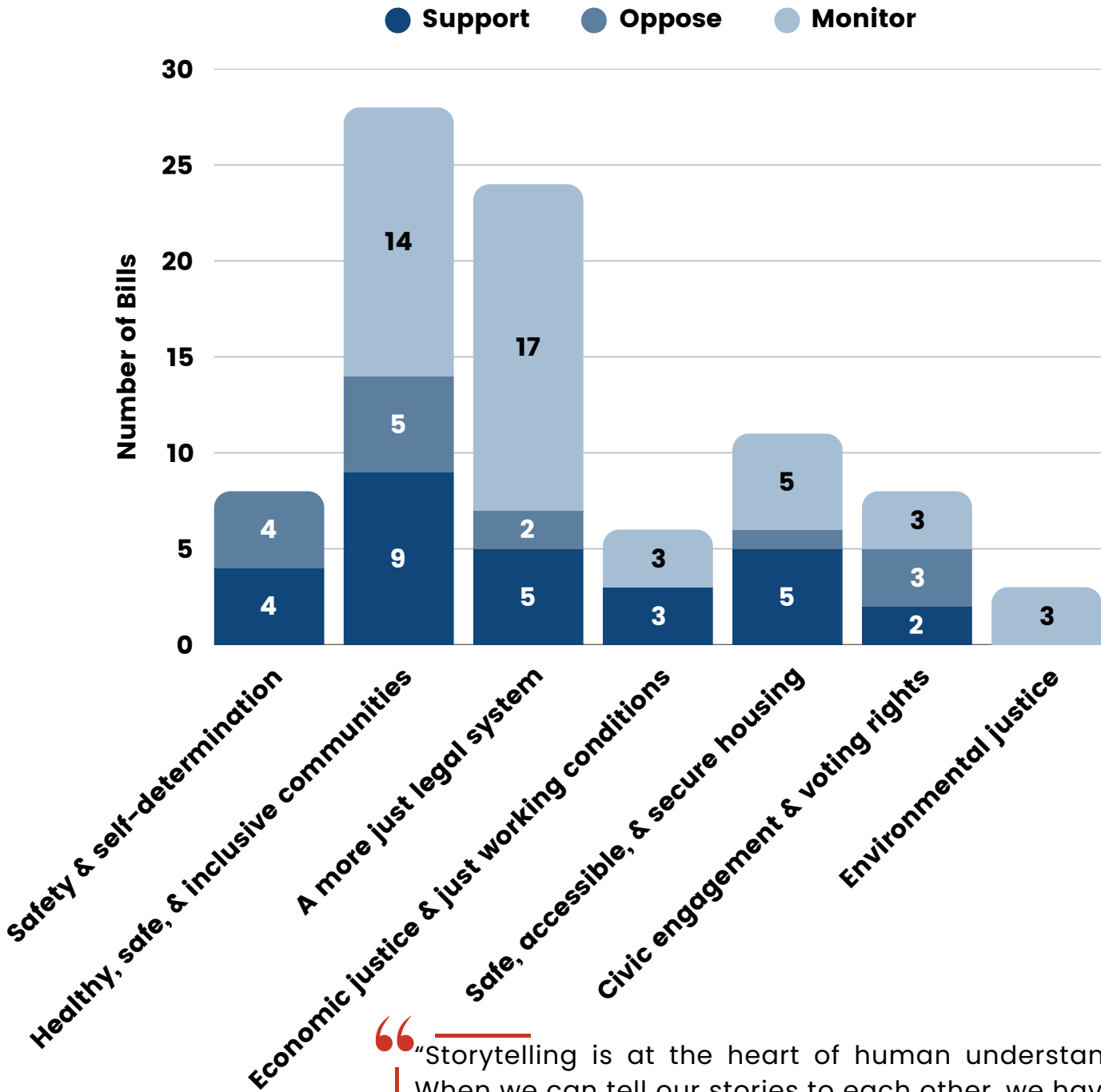
**Of the 44 bills, we supported 28 and opposed 16.**

## Bill Results



# BY THE NUMBERS

Interfaith monitored bills under each of our policy priorities, and either supported or opposed bills for most of them. Below is the breakdown of how many bills we supported, opposed, or monitored for each of our priorities.



“Storytelling is at the heart of human understanding. When we can tell our stories to each other, we have the opportunity to be understood and to find common ground. We have the opportunity to better understand ourselves and our world.” - Shara Smith, CEO



# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Having looked at the numbers, let's look more closely at the bills.

Interfaith uses many factors to evaluate bills and positioning, putting support behind legislation that advances our policy priorities and opposing legislation that undermines or harms our policy priorities. Every bill we take a position on will be connected to our policy priorities, but that we do not necessarily take a position on every bill that is connected to them. Other factors, like resources, capacity, and urgency are also taken into consideration.



## Safety and self-determination in matters of faith and conscience

Interfaith supported HB25-1163, which allows members of the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes to access Colorado state parks without paying a fee. The bill acknowledges the longstanding ties between the tribes and the land within Colorado and advances religious freedom by removing financial barriers to visiting spiritually and religiously important places.

“Long before many of our ancestors came to this land, people lived upon it and were its stewards. HB25-1163 acknowledges the deep ties that the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes have to the land within Colorado, and the spiritual – as well as cultural, ancestral, and historic – nature of those ties.” – Shara Smith, CEO

Interfaith supported multiple bills related to reproductive and LGBTQIA+ rights. Interfaith also opposed discriminatory policies that would remove individual self-determination. When religious beliefs are used to justify discriminatory policies, it is important to clarify what religious freedom and liberty truly look like for Coloradans.

Interfaith supported SB25-183 following voter support for Amendment 79, which will expand healthcare coverage for pregnancy-related services, including abortion. As a key member of the campaign behind Amendment 79, Interfaith strongly supports reproductive justice and the right of pregnant people to be guided by their faith and conscience in reproductive matters.

“As we engaged faith communities and other members of the public, two things were made clear: 1) Coloradans desire the freedom to exercise their own faith and conscience when making decisions about their reproductive healthcare, and 2) This decision is one that should be afforded to all Coloradans, regardless of who they are, where they work, or how they worship.” – Shara Smith, CEO

Interfaith opposed HB25-1255, which would have allowed healthcare facilities and insurers to discriminate in which patients receive care and what kind of care they can receive. Instead of advancing religious freedom, the bill would have enabled religious extremism by using faith and conscience objections to justify systemic discrimination.



# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



## Healthy, safe, and inclusive communities

Interfaith supported HB25-1309, which protects access to gender-affirming care in Colorado. Protecting the dignity, health, and well-being of our transgender and nonbinary siblings reflects our values of justice, compassion, and self-determination. When individuals are protected from discrimination and can access the care they need, they are able to live their lives truthfully and flourish.

“Justice, compassion, and human dignity are important values across faith traditions, and those values inform the support for LGBTQ+ people among people of faith and conscience across our state. HB25-1309 affirms those values by eliminating harmful barriers to care, removing stigma, and prohibiting discrimination in health care services.” – Shara Smith, CEO

Interfaith supported SB25-063, which requires public schools to have standards for library resources and deal with removal requests in a way that protects students' First Amendment rights. The bill requires transparency and protects library staff from retaliation. Removal requests and censorship attempts in public schools often target protected classes - including religion - and are an attack on religious and intellectual freedom. SB25-063 builds on work done last year on book challenges in public libraries.

“Censorship is deeply marginalizing and diminishes the vibrancy of the democratic values that protect religious and intellectual freedom. Book challenges, whether or not they are successful, can have a chilling effect and send a harmful message to our young people.” – Shara Smith, CEO

Interfaith supported HB25-1149, which would require the adoption of educational standards related to Black historical and cultural studies. Teaching Black history reinforces critical thinking and reflection and is important to ensuring that young people have a comprehensive understanding of our shared history.

“It is very timely for us to reflect on the relationships between history and storytelling, between narrative and power. The right to teach and to be educated about the truth of our history and ourselves is under attack by bad faith actors who understand those relationships very well. But I take comfort in the truth of our history, knowing that faith communities have come together to work against ignorance and injustice.” – Rev. Dr. Val Jackson

Interfaith opposed several harmful bills that targeted LGBTQIA+ people, including HB25-1253. The bill included many harmful changes, including prohibiting affirming medical care for gender nonconforming minors and encouraging discredited and harmful practices like "reparative therapy".

“The premise of this bill is a strawman argument based on unrealized fears about gender expansiveness and transgenderism wrapped up in propagandized religious beliefs. Please do not misconstrue harmful religious beliefs as rights. Our collective right to religious freedom ends the moment our beliefs violate the rights of others and cause them harm.” – Rev. Dr. Jenny Witcher



# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



## A more just legal system

To advance a more just legal system, Interfaith supported SB25-276, which protects civil rights for Coloradans, regardless of immigration status. Faith communities are disrupted when community members do not feel that their rights are respected and protected. SB25-276 supports the rule of law and affirms that rights are not dependent on immigration status. Interfaith also supported HB25-1013, which would establish a right to social visitation for people confined in a correctional facility and clarify when and to what extent visitation may be limited. Interfaith supports the goal of ensuring that people confined to correctional facilities and their family and support systems can be maintained.

“Faith communities are often called upon in times of crisis, to help those in need. For many it is a religious calling to come to the aid of those suffering, to help the stranger in our land. We support this bill as it not only affirms the rights of every individual regardless of immigration status but also those that seek to fulfill their missions.” – Rev. Leta Behrens

Interfaith opposed SB25-044, which would have changed the law related to by repealing elements of the law related to synthetic opiates, including removing consideration for mistake of fact, vacature upon completion of alternative sentencing, and other changes that would result in harsher penalties for drug possession. Interfaith believes strongly in a public health focused approach to substance use disorder in place of harsh penalties that do not effectively address the needs of individuals and communities dealing with health and social impacts of substance use.



## Economic justice and just working conditions

To promote economic justice and just working conditions, Interfaith supported HB25-1001, which expands wage theft protections and includes important clarifications regarding wage enforcement. Interfaith also supported SB25-157, which would address challenges in enforcing Colorado’s deceptive trade practices statute. While the bill did not successfully make it off the Senate floor, Interfaith will continue to support efforts to address barriers to holding bad faith actors accountable for deceptive trade practices that by their nature are harmful to the public.

“Colorado faith communities are often at the forefront of supporting the vulnerable in our community. Deceptive trade practices can have the most significant impacts on the most vulnerable in our community, who may also be those who are least well-positioned to protect themselves and vindicate their rights.” – Shara Smith, CEO



# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



## Safe, accessible, and secure housing

Interfaith supported HB25-1004, which stops landlords from using algorithmic pricing tools in a manner that restricts competition and unfairly drives up the cost of housing. Restricting competition and distorting the housing market contributes to housing instability and contributes to the ongoing affordability crisis.

“Anti-competitive practices that put financial pressure on tenants also put pressure on the community institutions that they rely on for support. And while our faith communities will no doubt continue in earnest to care for their neighbors in need, it is unfair for landlords to profit through anti-competitive practices while faith communities are bridging the gap left in housing and support.” – Shara Smith, CEO

Interfaith also supported HB25-1168, which provides housing protections for survivors of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a significant contributor to housing instability in Colorado, and housing insecurity further imperils individuals and makes it more difficult for them to protect themselves and their legal rights. Interfaith also supported HB25-1240, which puts additional protections in place for tenants who use housing subsidies. Protecting tenants from discrimination and unfair practices helps ensure that people can meaningfully benefit from subsidies and access safe and stable housing.



## Civic engagement and voting rights

To advance our civic engagement and voting rights priorities, Interfaith supported SB25-001, or the Colorado Voting Rights Act (COVRA). Interfaith understands that religious freedom and democracy are interconnected, and neither can truly exist without the other. Voting helps us secure our rights and live by our most cherished values, and COVRA includes many important changes that will protect and improve voting rights and access to Coloradans, regardless of disability, gender identity, native language or whether they live on tribal lands within Colorado.

“In a flourishing democracy, different ideas and beliefs are considered and respected. Different faiths, traditions, and practices coexist and enrich our communities, fostering mutual understanding and respect.” – Shara Smith, CEO



## Environmental justice

To promote environmental justice, Interfaith monitored a number of bills related to affordable energy and energy infrastructure, including HB25-1234.



# THANK YOU!

## Thank you for reading our 2025 Legislative Report!

Whether you are a member of our network, an advocacy partner, or simply a community member learning more about our work, your interest and engagement is appreciated. Your voice in our communities matters, and we hope to continue to empower you to use it.

Does your community want to dig deeper into our legislative report or have questions about the legislative session? Reach out to us at [info\(at\)InterfaithAllianceCO\(dot\)com](mailto:info@InterfaithAllianceCO.com) to invite a member of our team to give a presentation!

**As we begin to plan for our work in 2026, we would like to invite you to provide feedback by completing our 2026 Policy Priorities Survey. Your insights and feedback are invaluable to our ongoing work to make positive, lasting change in communities across Colorado.**

