

Senate Finance

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HB22-1016 Voluntary Contribution Check-off Feeding Colorado

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Effie Rorke For Feeding Colorado	<p>My name is Effie Rorke and I'm the Senior Director of Public Policy and Communications for Feeding Colorado, the state association of the five Feeding America food banks serving our state. I am here in support of HB22-1016: Feeding Colorado Voluntary Contribution and appreciate Senator Hisey, Senator Fields, Representative Carver, and Representative McLachlan for sponsoring this legislation.</p> <p>Feeding Colorado member food banks include Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado, Community Food Share, Food Bank for Larimer County, Food Bank of the Rockies, and Weld Food Bank. Colorado's five food banks fight hunger by distributing food directly to people in need as well as through their network of more than 1,300 nonprofit partner agencies statewide.</p> <p>While this legislation has been brought forward during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the benefits of this legislation would last long beyond the end of the crisis, should it ever arrive.</p> <p>HB1016 would add Feeding Colorado to the state income tax checkoff list, a long-standing program of the Department of Revenue that allows Coloradans to easily donate some or all of their income tax refund to the registered Colorado charities that appear on the list.</p> <p>Collectively, the food banks that make up Feeding Colorado distributed more than 160 million pounds of food to people in need last year, the equivalent of more than 133 million meals. This astonishing impact is made possible by the generosity of the public, our donors, and our retail and agricultural partners. Adding Feeding Colorado to the tax checkoff list will assist in continuing the vital work of Colorado's charitable food assistance network, enabling Coloradans to easily donate some or all of their tax refund directly to Colorado's food banks, supporting local nonprofits that are doing important work in their communities, and trusting that their donation will be carefully and efficiently stewarded to make a positive impact.</p> <p>Please lend your support to HB1016 and thank you again to the bill sponsors for lending their names to our shared mission of ending hunger in Colorado.</p>
Erin Pulling For Food Bank of the Rockies	<p>Madam Chair Gonzales and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Erin Pulling and I am the President &amp; Chief Executive Officer of Food Bank of the Rockies which serves 30 counties across northern Colorado, the Western Slope, and the Eastern Plains in addition to the entire state of Wyoming. I am here to speak in support of HB22-1016: Feeding Colorado Voluntary Contribution. I'd like to thank Senator Hisey, Senator Fields, Representative Carver, and Representative McLachlan for sponsoring this legislation.</p>

	<p>Food Bank of the Rockies has been under enormous strain the last two years as a result of elevated food insecurity during the ongoing pandemic. We have experienced roughly 8 to 10 years of growth in this time, and we have stretched our financial and operational capacity beyond what we thought was possible. In spite of the challenges we've faced, the outpouring of support from the public for our work has been encouraging and inspiring, and motivates our staff and volunteers to keep going.</p> <p>HB1016 would provide an opportunity for this critical public support to continue, through allowing Coloradans to easily donate to our state's food banks by contributing all or part of their annual state income tax refund. Supporters power our work to ensure that we are able to nourish every neighbor in need, and we are grateful for every financial gift that gets us one step closer to ending hunger in our communities. We would appreciate the support of this committee in enabling taxpayers statewide to join in our efforts and help so many of our neighbors who are silently struggling.</p> <p>Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of this legislation, and I'd be glad to answer any questions the committee may have.</p>
<p>Bob O'Connor For Weld Food Bank</p>	<p>Madam Chair Gonzales and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Bob O'Connor and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Weld Food Bank. I am here to speak in support of House Bill 1016. Thank you to Senator Hisey, Senator Fields, Representative Carver, and Representative McLachlan for sponsoring this legislation.</p> <p>One in five people in Weld County are going without food today. One in four children in Weld County are struggling with the effects of hunger right now. These individuals are more than statistics. They are our neighbors price checking everything at the grocery store trying to make \$40 last the whole week. They are the young boy in our child's class who is stealing food from his classmates because there's nothing to eat at home. They are our parents weighing the decision to pay for food or their vital medications.</p> <p>We work to educate the public about the nature of hunger and poverty. We recognize the need for emergency and supplemental food programs and of other non-profit organizations that meet the critical needs of low-income families. We strive to provide our services with compassion and respect for the dignity of the people seeking food assistance. Last year, we provided over 14.6 million pounds of food in Weld County. Of that, 8.3 million pounds was fresh produce, meat, and dairy, because we understand the importance of having nutritious foods in the home.</p> <p>We value all that you have done to support our work already, and we would appreciate your support in advancing HB1016 order to make it easy for people across the state to donate to our food banks here in Colorado. Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions.</p>