



November 11, 2021

NEWS RELEASE:

DENVER— On this Veterans Day, the Colorado Poverty Law Project (CPLP) is proud to announce its support for upcoming legislation, sponsored by Representative David Ortiz, that will prohibit housing discrimination based on a person's veteran and military status.

CPLP is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal assistance to Coloradans facing barriers to housing. Among the many issues that CPLP works on, housing discrimination is unfortunately a commonly reoccurring challenge that has affected many of its clients. While CPLP has been able to assert legal challenges to address many instances of housing discrimination, the current law in Colorado does not afford any protections to Coloradans who are denied housing because of their veteran status. As a result, if a landlord holds prejudices against prospective tenants based on their veteran or military status, they are allowed to withhold housing on that basis.

As a combat veteran, Rep. David Ortiz, who represents House District 38, is particularly familiar with the unique obstacles faced by veterans and military servicemembers. As Rep. Ortiz explains, "For the countless sacrifices that service members have made since our founding, it's unconscionable and angering that veterans are being discriminated against and denied housing simply for their veteran status. I will always fight for my brother and sister veterans and am humbled to help lead the charge on securing housing opportunities and fighting discrimination against our veterans." Rep. Ortiz is excited to serve as prime sponsor of this legislation during the 2022 legislative session, and he is eager to work with his colleagues in the legislature to pass this important bill into law.

Due to policy failures and a lack of sufficient resources, as of 2019, 21 out of every 10,000 veterans were experiencing homelessness, higher than the average of homelessness rate for non-veterans. At least eight other states currently have fair housing protections based on military or veteran status, including Illinois, Ohio, and New Jersey.

Jack Regenbogen, CPLP's Policy and Advocacy Attorney, notes: "Veterans and servicemembers, who have sacrificed so much for the wellbeing of their country, should not be denied housing because a landlord harbors unfounded prejudices. This proposed legislation is not about giving preferential treatment to one group over the other, but rather, it is intended to equalize the playing field that so that no Coloradan is denied housing based on arbitrary and discriminatory factors."

For more information, please contact:
Jack Regenbogen, Esq. at jack@copovertylawproject.org or (314) 479-1617

Founded in 2014, Colorado Poverty Law Project is a nonprofit whose mission is to prevent homelessness through legal representation, education, and advocacy.