

# DISABILITY JUSTICE

## 2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT





# Let's make Colorado the best place in America for people with disabilities to thrive.

Disability Justice is a small organization with a broad mission. As Colorado's Protection and Advocacy agency, we aim not only to eradicate discrimination but also to enable every Coloradan with a disability to thrive.

We use a wide range of tools — including education, monitoring, investigation, and legal representation — to advance that mission. Our work often takes us to the State Capitol, where we educate lawmakers and shape legislation.

What guides our efforts is a set of core priorities, informed by the community we serve. We seek to ensure that Coloradans with disabilities:

- are free from abuse and neglect;
- are not removed or at risk of being removed from school, bullied, restrained, or secluded because of their disability;
- are not denied appropriate health care or other individualized services because of their disability;
- do not face discrimination in securing accessible, affordable, and supportive housing;
- can obtain reasonable accommodations — and do not face harassment or retaliation — at work;
- can live as independently as possible in the least restrictive setting, based on their individual needs;
- can make their own decisions and can use supported decision-making, when appropriate, as an alternative to guardianship or conservatorship;
- receive appropriate services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Centers for Independent Living;
- can access transportation and government buildings and services; and
- understand and can fully exercise their voting rights.

# KEY BILLS

For Disability Justice, the 2025 legislative session was extraordinarily productive. Our attorneys and allies provided expert testimony and guidance on 22 key pieces of legislation.

Below you'll find a description of those bills, as well as our position and the outcome of each. A thumbs-up indicates the 21 bills we supported, all but one of which was signed into law; a thumbs-down marks the measure we helped defeat.

Hundreds of supporters — inside and outside the State Capitol — secured our success. This year we honor our first-ever Champions of Disability Justice: a group of lawmakers and community advocates (listed on page 7) who led the fight for the rights and dignity of Coloradans with disabilities.

Disability Justice's legislative team was headed by Public Policy Liaison Jack Johnson, Co-Legal Directors Emily Harvey and Kelly McCullough, Senior Attorney Meghan Baker, and Attorney Sara Ridenour.

## Education



### House Bill 25-1248 | Signed into law

This bill clarifies the use of restraint and seclusion in public schools. The bill encourages trauma-informed practices and establishes mandatory training and reporting requirements, ensuring that students are treated with respect and care.



### Senate Bill 25-087 | Signed into law

This bill requires colleges to provide timely and effective academic adjustments for students with disabilities. By simplifying the process for requesting supports, such as extra time for tests and note-taking services, the bill empowers students to pursue their academic goals without unnecessary barriers.

## Employment



### House Bill 25-1018 | Signed into law

This bill expands access to vocational rehabilitation services by eliminating financial means testing as a requirement. The bill strengthens coordination among state agencies, ensuring that individuals receive personalized employment planning tailored to their unique needs.

## Health Care



### House Bill 25-1162 | Signed into law

This bill updates the process for Medicaid eligibility checks to minimize unnecessary losses of coverage. By aligning the state's practices with federal guidelines, the bill supports continuity of care and ensures that individuals maintain access to essential health services.



### Senate Bill 25-042 | Signed into law

This bill strengthens Colorado's behavioral health crisis response system by implementing recommendations from a state task force. The bill improves the coordination, training, and deployment of mobile crisis teams.

## Housing & Public Accommodations



### House Bill 25-1030 | Signed into law

This bill updates Colorado's building codes to align with federal accessibility standards, making public buildings more inclusive for people with disabilities. The bill applies to new construction and significant renovations.



### House Bill 25-1236 | Signed into law

This bill limits how landlords can use screening criteria, such as credit history and criminal records, when evaluating tenants. By reducing barriers for people with low incomes or past legal involvement, the bill expands access to stable housing.



### House Bill 25-1239 | Signed into law

This bill updates the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act by expanding protected classes and clarifying the process for filing discrimination complaints. By strengthening available remedies for violations, the bill enhances the safety and dignity of individuals facing discrimination.



## House Bill 25-1240 | Signed into law

This bill prohibits discrimination against tenants who utilize housing subsidies, such as Section 8 vouchers. By expanding housing opportunities for low-income individuals and families, the bill promotes a more inclusive community.



## Senate Bill 25-131 | Defeated

This bill sought to repeal rental protections for people on fixed incomes, including those receiving Social Security Disability benefits. Our opposition helped ensure that this measure did not become law.

## Independent Living



### House Bill 25-1017 | Signed into law

This bill establishes the right to independent living, access to necessary services, and person-centered planning, promoting autonomy for people with disabilities. The bill directs the creation of a statewide strategic plan to support community integration.



### House Bill 25-1154 | Signed into law

This bill creates a state enterprise to manage and fund communication access services, such as sign language interpretation and captioning. By ensuring these services are available throughout Colorado, the bill fosters greater inclusion for people with disabilities.

## Justice



### House Bill 25-1013 | Signed into law

This bill protects the visitation rights of individuals who are incarcerated by requiring reasonable access to both in-person and virtual visits. By supporting family and community connections, the bill promotes rehabilitation and social support.



### House Bill 25-1058 | Signed into law

This bill updates the approach to individuals found not guilty by reason of insanity, ensuring proper mental health evaluations and placements. The bill balances public safety with the need for appropriate treatment.

## Justice (continued)



### House Bill 25-1146 | Signed into law

This bill sets limits on the number of juvenile detention beds in Colorado to encourage alternatives to incarceration. By supporting community-based solutions, the bill fosters reform in the juvenile justice system.



### House Bill 25-1147 | Vetoed

This bill would have promoted fairness in municipal courts by requiring legal representation in certain cases and by ensuring that people are fully informed of their rights. It would have helped reduce fines and fees that often have a greater impact on low-income people and people with behavioral health disorders.



### Senate Bill 25-041 | Signed into law

This bill addresses service gaps for individuals found incompetent to stand trial. By establishing evaluation timelines and granting access to restoration services, the bill ensures that individuals receive the support they need.



### Senate Bill 25-043 | Incorporated into law

This bill funds programs that divert youth from the justice system into treatment and support services. The bill focuses on early intervention, addressing behavioral health needs before they escalate into more serious issues. The contents of this bill were added to House Bill 25-1146, which was signed into law.



### Senate Bill 25-062 | Signed into law

This bill limits the conditions under which failure-to-appear charges can be filed, focusing on decriminalizing offenses related to poverty. The bill improves access to the court system while reducing reliance on bench warrants.



### Senate Bill 25-190 | Signed into law

This bill clarifies the release process for people in custody with disabilities or medical needs, defining eligibility and timing to promote fairness and efficiency in the judicial system.

## Personal & Financial Decisions



### Senate Bill 25-302 | Signed into law

This bill provides a state income tax deduction for contributions to ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts, enabling people with disabilities to save money while preserving access to public benefits.

## Voting



### Senate Bill 25-001 | Signed into law

This bill strengthens voting rights protections in Colorado, particularly for people with disabilities and other historically disenfranchised communities. The bill introduces measures to prevent discrimination and ensure equal access to voting.

# CHAMPIONS OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

Carson Covey, Family Voices Colorado  
Molly Kirkham, Arc of Colorado  
Representative Chad Clifford  
Representative Meg Froelich  
Representative Junie Joseph  
Representative Katie Stewart  
Representative Yara Zokaie  
Senator Judy Amabile  
Senator Dafna Michaelson Jenet

# DISABILITY JUSTICE

## Stay in touch

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