



Vote **NO! on SB17-071** **To Protect the Rights of People with Disabilities**

February 21, 2017

BACKGROUND AND WHO WE ARE - Disability Law Colorado (“DLC”) is a Colorado nonprofit organization established to protect and promote the legal and human rights of persons with disabilities. It serves as the federally-mandated and state-designated Protection and Advocacy System for people with disabilities as authorized by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals Rights section of the Rehabilitation Act. Since Disability Law Colorado was founded in 1976, it has represented nearly 20,000 individuals with disabilities and has assisted more than 65,000 individuals with disabilities in advocating for themselves.

VOTE NO! - Disability Law Colorado strongly opposes Senate Bill 17-071, which changes the number of required Voting Service and Polling Centers (VSPCs) from one for each 30,000 active voters to one for each 75,000 active voters and removes the requirement that VSPCs be open on the first Saturday during the 15 day period prior to election day.

HOW THIS BILL AFFECTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – By reducing the number of VSPCs available in the first week of Colorado’s early voting period, people with disabilities will face greater barriers and challenges during the election process that will inevitably result in disenfranchisement. Colorado has made significant progress over the past several years by creating a more accessible election system by implementing an early voting period, ADA compliant VSPCs, and same day registration. This progress has made it much more likely that a person with a disability will have the opportunity to vote and participate in Colorado’s elections alongside non-disabled voters. Disability Law Colorado’s concern is that this bill eliminates services during early voting without taking into consideration how it will disparately impact people with disabilities. Nor does the bill provide any thoughtful alternatives that could replace these services. This legislation places Colorado on a regressive path when it comes to providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities during the election process.

MAINTAIN VOTER ACCESS TO POLLS - By voting against SB 17-071, you are maintaining access to Voting Service and Polling Centers so that everyone, including all eligible voters with disabilities, will have the opportunity to participate in the election process.

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