DENVER – Today the business group Good Business Colorado is expressing concern that the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee amended the bill to reauthorize the Colorado Civil Rights Division and Commission. The business group supports the bill because the CCRD’s mediation of civil rights complaints reduces frivolous lawsuits.

“Colorado has one of the most vibrant economies in the nation, which depends on attracting and retaining a talented workforce – a workforce that feels valued and respected,” said Luba Fridnerova, a Denver architect and member of Good Business Colorado. “I’m concerned that he Civil Rights Division won’t be able to do the work we rely on them to do to give employees, customers and community the confidence that they will be treated fairly and equally in our state.”

Colorado law requires that all discrimination complaints in employment, housing and public accommodations based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other characteristics are first investigated by the CCRD before taking legal action. This requirement helps employers and businesses avoid frivolous, costly lawsuits, while at the same time ensuring discrimination complaints are impartially investigated. The Senate committee added amendments to the bill that weaken the CCRD’s ability to ensure fair treatment for Coloradans and employers’ confidence in the entity that protects them from expensive lawsuits.

“The Civil Rights Division saves Colorado small businesses from paying to retain a lawyer for advice on discrimination laws. That’s money that’s being kept in the pockets of businesses, which could go towards employee pay, benefits, and savings to their clients and customers,” said Jim Smith, owner of Golden Real Estate and Good Business Colorado member. “To me as a business person, the most important reason for protecting the CCRD is that it keeps me out of court, which can be so expensive.”

In fiscal year 2015-2016, 737 discrimination charges against Colorado employers were filed, yet only 16 – 2 percent – were found by the CCRD to have probable cause. That’s well over 700 cases not taken to court, thus protecting good employers and business owners while protecting employees from discrimination.

The Colorado Civil Rights Division and Commission will advance next to the Senate Appropriations Committee.
With 60+ business owner members, Good Business Colorado is a nonpartisan business voice for a strong economy, thriving communities and sustainable environment in Colorado.

###