Colorado Businesses Call for Clean Civil Rights Division Reauthorization

*Says amendments would harm commission’s effectiveness*

DENVER – Today the business group Good Business Colorado is calling for a clean bill to reauthorize the Colorado Civil Rights Division and Commission. The business group has concerns about the negative consequences of amendments that could create polarization and slowing down the process of mediating civil rights complaints that reduce 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 Yoav Lurie, CEO and founder of energy management software company Simple Energy and member of Good Business Colorado. “I’m afraid that bill in its current form could render the Civil Rights Division ineffective and unable 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.”

This morning the Senate voted on a version of the bill that weakens the CCRD’s ability to ensure fair treatment for Coloradans and employers’ confidence in the entity that protects them from expensive lawsuits. 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 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 keeping the CCRD in its current form is that it keeps me out of court, which can be so expensive. I’m concerned that the amendments would add unnecessary red tape that would hurt small business.”
In fiscal year 2015-2016, 737 discrimination charges against Colorado employers were filed, yet only 16 – two 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.

*With 60+ business owner members, [Good Business Colorado](https://www.goodbusinesscolorado.org) is a nonpartisan business voice for a strong economy, thriving communities and sustainable environment in Colorado.*

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