

SUPPORT THE BALLOT ACCESS FOR ALL CITIZENS ACT

Sponsors: Rep. Caraveo and Sen. Gonzales / HB20-1081

The Issue: There are approximately 82,096 eligible voters in Colorado who do not speak English very well and are effectively denied access to the ballot because they live in counties where election materials are provided only in English. For many people who speak a language other than English, the ballot is incomprehensible even if they read some English. These voters are excluded from full participation in our democracy.

Currently, under the Voting Rights Act, only four counties in Colorado (Conejos, Costilla, Denver, and Saguache) are required to provide election materials in both English and Spanish and one other county in Ute. Colorado does not have any additional state-wide policies that expand language access beyond the federal requirements thus denying meaningful ballot access to tens of thousands of citizens.

What HB20-1081 Accomplishes:

- Provides eligible voters with access to a statewide interpretation hotline which will provide over-the-phone translation in the same languages that the census is offered in.
- For counties where at least 2,000 citizens over the age of 18 or 2.5% of the citizens over the age of 18 do not speak English very well and speak another language at home:
 - The counties must make a translated sample ballot available to voters by 2020.
 - The counties must provide voters with the ability to vote a translated ballot at a Voter Service and Polling Center by 2022.

Every eligible voter in Colorado wants to—and should—have a say in deciding which people and policies will determine the future for our families, community and state. Colorado has an opportunity to provide more voters with meaningful access to ballots that they can read, understand, and vote. The following organizations support the Ballot Access for All Citizens Act:

