

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2021



SEN. RACHEL ZENZINGER
SENATE DISTRICT 19
ARVADA AND WESTMINSTER



303.866.4840



senatorrachelz@gmail.com



@Zenzinger_AtoZ

Zenzinger Defends Coloradans With Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

The Senate Business, Labor, & Technology Committee passed a bill to eliminate the subminimum wage with bipartisan support

DENVER, CO - Today, the Senate Business, Labor, & Technology Committee gave unanimous approval to [SB21-039](#), a bipartisan Zenzinger bill that would eliminate the sub-minimum wage in Colorado. The sub-minimum wage is an unlivable wage that is legally allowed to be paid to employees with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

"Individuals with disabilities are valuable members of our communities and our economy. Paying them a lower wage than their counterparts for doing the same work is an unfair and discriminatory practice that must end," said Senator Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada. "This bill will carefully address this inequity while ensuring the individuals in these programs are successful in transitioning to competitive employment by meaningfully enhancing employment supports overall."

Currently, some employers hold certificates that authorize them to pay people with intellectual and developmental disabilities a sub-minimum wage – currently set at 15% lower than the minimum wage. Starting this summer, the bill would prohibit an employer from hiring employees at the sub-minimum wage and would require those with

sub-minimum wage employees to submit a plan to the Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE) detailing how they plan to phase out the sub-minimum wage by 2025.

Additionally, the bill would task CDLE with developing a list of recommendations to address the structural and fiscal barriers to phasing out sub-minimum wage employment to ensure businesses can comply and have the support they need during these already-difficult times.

Several states and municipalities across the country have passed legislation to eliminate the sub-minimum wage for employees with disabilities, including Vermont, Maine, and Alaska – if SB21-039 passes, Colorado would become the 8th state to do so.

The legislation now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration. Information and updates regarding the bill can be found at leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-039.

#

ABOUT SEN. ZENZINGER:

An Arvada resident with a deep background in education and public school advocacy, Rachel Zenzinger was elected to the State Senate in 2016. Rachel had previously represented the district when she was appointed to serve in the State Senate for the 2014 legislative session. She currently serves as Chair of the Education Committee, as Vice Chair of the Statutory Revision Committee, and as a member of the Transportation and Energy Committee.