



2022

Ballot Guide



Colorado Consumer
Health Initiative

Election Day:
November 8, 2022

Voter Information

In Colorado, we have same day registration which allows you to register to vote or update your registration at a Voter Service and Polling Center until polls close on Election Day at 7 p.m.

In Person Voting Registration Dates: October 24 - November 8, 2022
Mail in Ballot Registration Deadline: October 31, 2022

Mail in ballot registration:

- Online at www.govotecolorado.com through October 31, 2022.
- Submit a printed registration application by October 31 by mail or in person.

Method

CCHI's mission is to advance the consumer voice to improve health care access by working for progress toward equity, affordability, and quality. We only take positions on ballot items related to health care access and equity. This year we evaluated five of the eleven amendments and propositions on the 2022 Colorado ballot.

We utilized our equity impact assessment tool to evaluate the potential impacts of the five measures related to health care. The tool prompted us to consider how each initiative would impact health disparities, address the root causes of the disparities, its potential for unintended consequences on the most vulnerable populations, and whether or not the initiative's creation centered on the voices of impacted communities. Through analyzing each initiative through an equity lens, CCHI has taken better informed stances on the initiatives on the following pages.



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At a Glance...

PROP GG

AMOUNT OF TAX OWED
TABLE FOR INITIATIVES



SUPPORT

Proposition GG would require any citizen-initiated measure that would change the state's individual income tax rate to include a tax information table on the ballot. The table would display proposed changes in tax rates based on income level, creating greater transparency for voters in understanding how a proposed ballot measure may directly affect them.

PROP FF

HEALTHY MEALS FOR ALL
PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN



SUPPORT

Proposition FF would create the Healthy School Meals for All program which would enable public schools to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of family income. This ballot measure would also increase wages for employees who prepare school meals and encourage school districts to purchase and serve locally grown food products. The initiative would be funded by closing tax loopholes for households earning more than \$300,000 per year.

PROP 121

STATE INCOME TAX
REDUCTION



OPPOSE

Proposition 121 would lower personal and corporate income tax rates in Colorado from 4.55% to 4.40%. High-income earners and corporations stand to benefit the most from these tax reductions, while simultaneously decreasing the funding available for social service programs in Colorado. Health care services are the second largest use of tax funds in the state and are affected by changes in state revenue.

PROP 122

ACCESS TO
NATURAL MEDICINE



NEUTRAL

Proposition 122 legalizes the possession of psilocybin and requires the state to implement a regulated access program for patients in a supervised treatment setting.

PROP 123

DEDICATED STATE INCOME TAX
REVENUE FOR AFFORDABLE
HOUSING PROGRAMS



SUPPORT

Proposition 123 sets aside 0.1% of annual income tax revenue for the state to administer affordable housing initiatives. These programs include helping local governments and nonprofits purchase land for affordable housing, investing in new and existing affordable rental properties, a rental assistance and eviction defense fund, and down payment assistance for first-time home buyers.



PROPOSITION GG

Include Income Tax Effects in Initiative Ballot Language

SUPPORT

What does Proposition GG seek to do?

Proposition GG requires a tax information table be printed on petition initiatives and the ballot. The table would show how a given tax rate change impacts eight income categories ranging from less than \$25,000 per year to over \$2 million.

Who would benefit from Proposition GG?

Colorado's tax landscape is notoriously complicated and difficult to decipher. Proposition GG seeks to create greater transparency around proposed changes to the state tax code. Oftentimes, it is not immediately clear to voters who proposed tax changes would affect. The table broken down by income bracket makes this easier to understand and enables voters to make more well-informed decisions.

What are the equity implications?

Colorado has a regressive tax system in which lower-income earners pay a higher proportion of their income in net taxes than high-income earners. This inequitable system is difficult to improve because any changes to the tax rate in the state must be approved by voters. Ballot language is inaccessible for many and makes it difficult to understand the real impacts of tax policy, which has historically led changes to the tax rate to most benefit the wealthiest in Colorado.

How does this impact Colorado health care consumers?

The link between taxes and health care is two-pronged. First, the state allocates over a quarter of annual tax income to health care spending, so increases or decreases to revenue alter the funding landscape for necessary health programs, like Medicaid. Second, increasing health care costs are a concern to a large swath of Coloradans, and tax code changes alter the state's ability to address these issues and regulate relevant industries.



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PROPOSITION FF

Healthy School Meals for All Public School Students

SUPPORT

What does Proposition FF seek to do?

Proposition FF seeks to create the Healthy School Meals for All program to give all public school students in Colorado access to free breakfasts and lunches. This initiative would be funded through closing tax loopholes for households making over \$300,000 per year. This would impact only 5% of tax filings in the state and would fully fund the program. Proposition FF incentivizes the use of locally grown food products, increases wages for employees preparing and serving meals, and provides additional training, equipment, and technical assistance to schools and communities.

Who would benefit from Proposition FF?

All Colorado public school families will be positively impacted by Proposition FF. Students who previously qualified for free or reduced lunch will now have increased and less stigmatized access, given the eliminated need for an application and the program's ubiquity. These students will also have access to healthier meals. Middle-income students will also benefit from Proposition FF. Some students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch because of the low income required to be eligible may still experience food insecurity and thus benefit from consistent access to meals. Additionally, Colorado farmers are positively impacted, and the increased wages will help those who prepare and serve school meals.

What are the equity implications?

Proposition FF directly addresses one of the social determinants of health: consistent access to nutritious foods. Reliable access to high-quality, nutritious food impacts children's and families' health and economic security. Despite rhetoric painting this as a failure on the part of the individual, access to affordable and nutritious food is largely determined by structural racism and durable inequality caused by lack of economic opportunity. Proposition FF directly addresses these disparities by offering high-quality, free meals to all Colorado public school students.

How does this impact Colorado health care consumers?

Proposition FF is directly related to the health of Colorado children. Reliable access to nutritious food is a proven avenue for alleviating food insecurity, supporting good nutrition, improving learning and behavioral outcomes, and, central to CCHI's mission, decreasing health disparities. Guaranteeing food access in childhood both provides immediate health benefits in mitigating and preventing chronic conditions, and also can reduce the risk of both mental and physical health issues in later life. Improving opportunities for children to access free, nutritious food will have compounding positive impacts on reducing financial pressures on families with the biggest economic barriers and preventing the need for downstream interventions and treatments for health care conditions that can also be expensive. Healthy school meals support short and long term financial and physical health. Thus, CCHI takes a strong support position on Proposition FF.



PROPOSITION 121

Income State Tax Reduction

OPPOSE

What does Proposition 121 seek to do?

Proposition 121 would lower the state income tax rate by 0.15%, dropping from 4.55% to 4.40%. This reduction would apply to both personal and corporate income taxes. The passage of Proposition 121 would continue a decades-long pattern of income tax reductions in Colorado.

Who would benefit from Proposition 121?

The wealthiest Coloradans stand to benefit the most from Proposition 121. An income tax reduction in Colorado means that the state budget will shrink, while the highest income earners will see the largest reduction in their taxes owed. If passed, a Coloradan making \$30,000 a year would owe around \$45 less in taxes, whereas one making \$1 million a year would owe \$1,500 less.

What are the equity implications?

Due to the racial-wealth divide in Colorado, higher-income earners are predominantly white. Lower-income Coloradans, who are disproportionately Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), will continue to pay a higher share of their income in taxes compared to higher-income earners, regardless of the income tax rate decrease. If passed, the state revenue would lose \$572 million in just the first year. This loss of tax revenue could be detrimental to state funded initiatives including public education, health care, and transportation. In years where TABOR rebates are due to taxpayers, this reduction in the tax rate would leave lower-income earners *worse off overall*, since the reduction in their rebate would exceed their savings in taxes owed.

How does this impact Colorado health care consumers?

State funding is one factor in determining social determinants of health: the conditions in which people work, live, and play. While health care alone accounts for over a quarter of Colorado's annual tax revenue, other uses of income tax revenue also contribute to the overall health of individuals and communities. Reducing the tax income pool limits Colorado's ability to adequately fund infrastructure and social programs.



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PROPOSITION 122

Access to Natural Medicine

NEUTRAL

What does Proposition 122 seek to do?

Proposition 122 legalizes the possession of psilocybin and requires the state to implement a regulated access program for patients in a supervised treatment setting.

Who would benefit from Proposition 122?

Psilocybin is proven to provide relief for individuals struggling with treatment resistant mental health diagnoses. For those who have access to comprehensive mental health care, Proposition 122 could open up other treatment options.

What are the equity implications?

If we can learn anything from the lessons of marijuana decriminalization in this state, there is a concern that predominantly white people will benefit from and profit off of Proposition 122 despite a history of specifically criminalizing Black communities for drug use. Additionally, Black and brown Coloradans have disproportionate barriers to accessing mental health care so this will likely serve to expand access to an emerging treatment to a predominantly white and affluent consumer base. That being said, the criminalization of drug possession is inherently racialized and Proposition 122 would be one step towards expanded mental health treatments and decriminalization.

How does this impact Colorado health care consumers?

Psilocybin is a mental health treatment with substantial empirical evidence supporting its benefits. Proposition 122 could expand the number of mental health professionals willing to provide Psychedelic Assisted Therapy and improve consumer safety in regulating the substance.



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PROPOSITION 123

Dedicated State Income Tax Revenue for Affordable Housing Programs
SUPPORT

What does Proposition 123 seek to do?

Proposition 123 seeks to set aside 0.1% of annual state income tax every year to fund an affordable housing program that will help finance new housing-related initiatives, including building more affordable units, supporting first-time homeowners, and eviction defense. The money collected would be exempt from the state's revenue limit and thus create a sustainable pool of funds specifically for affordable housing ventures. Proposition 123 aims to expedite the construction of affordable housing units through multiple mechanisms while leaving room for local solutions.

Who would benefit from Proposition 123?

Renters making up to 60% area median income and homeowners making up to 100% area median income stand to benefit from the new housing units created by Proposition 123. Additionally, some programs earmark money specifically for the unhoused or those at the highest risk of becoming unhoused. The Homelessness Program provides rental assistance, housing vouchers, and eviction defense assistance.

What are the equity implications?

While the cost of living in Colorado is unaffordable to many, this proposition could unintentionally prioritize middle-income Coloradans over lower-income families because there is no stipulation that housing developers specifically accommodate those with the lowest incomes of the income ranges they target. In years with a budget deficit, this expenditure could be in competition with state health care spending priorities. However, housing is a key social determinant of health and this crisis needs immediate action and investment.

How does this impact Colorado health care consumers?

Proposition 123 aims to address housing affordability and insecurity for Coloradans, predominantly families, an issue that feeds into multiple social determinants of health, including economic stability, education access, health care access. Housing stability is central to overall health. Those overburdened by rent have less income for their health insurance or health care costs. Stable housing enables children to remain in the same school districts and establish relationships with primary care providers. Budgets less burdened by rent allow more room for other necessities like high-quality food. These factors increase access to health care and the affordability of health care relative to families' budgets.



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