



# Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

## 2020 BALLOT GUIDE

With 11 measures on the statewide ballot this year, Colorado voters have much to consider when ballots drop on October 9th. Of those, the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative has identified 6 measures that directly relate to our mission and vision for health care consumers in Colorado.

### SUMMARY

#### VOTING

#### INFORMATION

##### Already registered?

- October 9th: Ballots drop
- October 26th: Last day to vote by mail (recommended)

##### Need to register?

- Check eligibility & register at [govotecolorado.com](http://govotecolorado.com)
- October 26th: Last day to register & receive ballot by mail
- Register in-person through Election Day!



**All ballots due Election Day (11/3) by 7 PM.**

**Polls are open for in-person voting from 7 AM to 7 PM.**

**AMENDMENT B**  
MODIFY  
PROPERTY TAXES

SUPPORT

**PROP 115**  
PROHIBIT ABORTIONS  
AFTER 22 WEEKS

OPPOSE

**PROP 118**  
PAID FAMILY AND  
MEDICAL LEAVE

SUPPORT

**PROP 116**  
STATE INCOME TAX  
REDUCTION

OPPOSE

**PROP EE**  
TAXES ON NICOTINE  
PRODUCTS

SUPPORT

**PROP 117**  
VOTER APPROVAL FOR  
CERTAIN ENTERPRISES

OPPOSE





## AMENDMENT B

*Modify Property Taxes (repeal Gallagher Amendment)*

## SUPPORT

### What does Amendment B seek to do?

Amendment B is a legislature-recommended ballot initiative that asks voters whether Colorado should repeal the Gallagher constitutional amendment which established a fixed ratio between the revenues the state can collect from residential and non-residential property tax. Since residential property values have been rising faster than non-residential properties, this provision has forced localities to cut residential property taxes and forfeit needed revenue to adhere to this fixed ratio. In addition to unlinking the ratio, the proposal would freeze property tax rates at their current levels. A “yes” vote would also give the state legislature the power to pursue future efforts to change future tax rate assessments through state law.

### Proponents of this measure...

include a bipartisan majority of state legislators that passed the bill. They cited the disproportionate impact that the Gallagher Amendment has on school districts and local government, especially in rural Colorado, as the main impetus for this initiative. Progressive policy organizations dedicated to addressing Colorado’s persistent budget issues are also joining the campaign to support the repeal.

### Opponents of this measure...

are registered under "Keep Property Taxes Low." Colorado Rising Action has been a vocal opponent of repealing the Gallagher Amendment, citing concerns for taxpayers and the affordability challenges that renters and homeowners alike are facing. They argue that state politicians do not need further revenue, but Coloradans need to keep their cost of living low to get by.

### How does this initiative intersect with CCHI’s mission and values?

This complex matter may not be in our normal scope of work, but this amendment does have important implications for Colorado consumers and our coalition’s ability to promote health equity through policy. Constraints on local and state government revenue in Colorado has undermined our state’s ability to fund and advance public goods and services for all of its residents.

Without the repeal of the Gallagher Amendment, school districts and local governments are facing catastrophic revenue shortfalls that the State, who is also facing a large budget deficit, would need to backfill. Between these two projected budget challenges, many programs and goods that Coloradans rely on would be at risk for years to come. Preventing the domino effect of revenue shortfalls protects access to education, transportation, and safety net programs--all of which impact consumers’ ability to maintain good health--as well as state-supported healthcare initiatives. This amendment is an important step to untangle the complex challenges of our state’s tax code.

### KEY REASONS TO VOTE YES:

- Prevents catastrophic revenue shortfall for school districts and local governments, particularly in rural Colorado
- Protects public programs, including those that promote equity for social determinants of health and direct healthcare access
- Gives state legislators a greater ability to tackle budget challenges in the future





## PROPOSITION 115

*Prohibit Abortions After 22 Weeks*

**OPPOSE**

### **What does Proposition 115 seek to do?**

Proposition 115 would ban abortions after 22 weeks gestational age. If this initiative were to be approved, providing an abortion after 22 weeks would be punishable as a misdemeanor offense for medical providers subject to a fine; cases where the life of the pregnant individual is at risk would be the only exemption.

### **Proponents of this measure...**

"Due Too Late", argue that 22 weeks is a reasonable threshold to restrict abortion because there have been cases in which fetuses have been viable when born at 21 weeks and that they can experience pain; there is no definitive scientific evidence to support this assertion. They term abortions after 22 weeks "late term abortions", which does not have any medical basis.

### **Opponents of this measure...**

have united under the "No on 115" campaign championed by Abortion Access for All, which is comprised of progressive policy organizations including CCHI members Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), Cobalt, and Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains (PPRM). They cite concerns for the bodily sovereignty and wellbeing of pregnant people seeking abortions as the basis for their opposition.

### **How does this initiative intersect with CCHI's mission and values?**

This initiative would limit access to care for Coloradans and consumers from many other states who rely on providers in Colorado to access care that is restricted in their states.

CCHI values equity, access, affordability, and quality of care for all Coloradans. This ballot initiative does not align with these values or our vision of health equity. Limiting patients' ability to seek care in this state by creating a ceiling for abortion services directly counteracts healthcare access. History has shown consistently that the demand for abortion care does not diminish with such regulations. On the contrary, pregnant people who are facing these restrictions in other parts of the country are simply pushed to seek care elsewhere, often driving up prices and counterintuitively pushing abortions later in pregnancy.

Abortion restrictions, such as those proposed in Proposition 115, have disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups, especially Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ people, and low-income parents. Federal and state abortion funding restrictions, compounded by broader inequities in healthcare and factors like geography, have created a two-tiered system for abortion care for people based on social and economic privilege. If Colorado no longer allows abortions after 22 weeks, it would worsen inequality in access to care for people in Colorado and beyond.

### **KEY REASONS TO VOTE NO:**

- Protect access to care for families in Colorado and beyond
- Prevent further social and economic inequality in access to reproductive healthcare
- Keep personal healthcare decisions between patients and their doctors



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## PROPOSITION 116

State Income Tax Rate Reduction

**OPPOSE**

### What does Proposition seek to do?

Proposition 116 asks voters whether Colorado should lower its income tax rate from 4.63% to 4.55%, effective January 2020. This measure proposes a blanket tax cut. If voters do not approve this measure, Colorado's income tax will remain the same.

### Proponents of this measure...

are organized under two action committees: Energize our Economy and Americans for Prosperity Colorado Issue committee. The funding behind this initiative comes primarily from conservative advocacy groups, such as the Independence Institute and Unite for Colorado. Governor Polis has also expressed support for this measure. They argue that this measure will help stimulate Colorado's economy in light of the pandemic by cutting costs for taxpayers and business owners.

### Opponents of this measure...

are progressive policy organizations, such as Great Education Colorado and CCHI member Colorado Fiscal Institute. Groups against this measure argue that Colorado is already in a budget crisis and taking more money away from schools, roads and public programs will hurt Coloradans who are struggling right now. In their view, this tax cut will not provide substantive benefits for those most in need while disproportionately lining the pockets of wealthier Coloradans who have not been as adversely affected.

### How does this proposition intersect with CCHI's mission and values?

This proposition does not meet our standards for advancing equity and consumer interests, since the net loss of revenue for state programs will be more damaging to most Coloradans than the marginal benefit of decreasing their already low state taxes. The Colorado State Legislature has already made a round of brutal cuts that have gutted key programs that consumers rely on, such as the Area Agencies on Aging, school meal programs, eviction legal defense, and more. For the upcoming budget, it is estimated that they will need to make another \$3-\$5 billion in cuts due to lost revenue in the pandemic. Further reducing our state's revenue through a tax cut will only exacerbate the gravity of the budget crisis in Colorado. Additionally, reducing revenue for the General Fund will create even steeper barriers to advancing consumer interests through health policy work for years to come.

### Key reasons to **VOTE NO**:

- Benefits those who least need support in these difficult times and hurts people who are relying on public programs to stay afloat
- Long-lasting detrimental effects on Colorado's infrastructure and public goods
- Would limit our opportunities in this legislative session and years to come to advance consumer interests through state policy and regulatory work



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## PROPOSITION 117

Voter Approval for Certain Enterprises

**OPPOSE**

### What does Proposition 117 seek to do?

Proposition 117 seeks to limit the state legislature's ability to fund public programs through the establishment of fees and enterprises. If this initiative were to be approved by voters, any collection of fees to form an enterprise whose revenue would total more than \$100 million in its first five years would need to be approved by voters in a statewide general election.

### Proponents of this proposition...

including the Common Sense Institute and Colorado Rising Action, have established that their goal is to close a loophole that they believe, while legal, violates the intentions of the Taxpayers Bill of Rights. They want to give voters ultimate oversight over increases in the state's operating expenses and stop this mechanism from being used to raise revenue.

### Opponents of this proposition...

are progressive policy groups who rely on fees and enterprises as mechanisms to raise revenue to support policy work in the State. State revenues play an important role in maintaining infrastructure, schools, parks, and other public goods that benefit all residents. Due to TABOR, Colorado already has a very limited state budget that has led to the decline of our education system, infrastructure, and ability to promote equitable policies. Further efforts to limit revenue collection would exacerbate this problem.

### How does this initiative intersect with CCHI's mission and values?

Proposition 117 is starkly in opposition to CCHI's values and would have a grave impact on our ability to achieve our vision of health equity in Colorado. Our organization, and our network of partners, have unique challenges to navigate in advocating for programs that promote access, affordability, quality, and equity in healthcare. Further limiting how we can design policy proposals to make the most of a limited pool of money would inhibit our ability to effect meaningful change and put our priorities at even greater risk with other valuable proposals seeking state funds.

### Key reasons to **VOTE NO**:

- Prevent further budget shortfall by limiting revenue streams
- Protect important programs, like the Hospital Provider Fee which funds the Medicaid expansion in Colorado
- Protect CCHI and partner organizations' ability to promote and fund state policy proposals.
- Enterprises are a targeted tool to provide services to Coloradans and are already tightly regulated by TABOR



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## PROPOSITION 118

Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

### SUPPORT

#### What does Proposition 118 seek to do?

Proposition 118 asks voters whether Colorado should establish a paid family and medical leave (PFML) insurance program, giving more than 2.6 million Coloradans access to this benefit starting in 2024. The proposal outlines a benefits package funded jointly by employers and employees that aligns with standards of adequacy, affordability, and accessibility, mirroring the prior legislative efforts of the FAML I coalition.

#### Proponents of this proposition...

are led by Colorado Families First Coalition, which is supported by national organizations working on PFML as well as local progressive policy organizations including CCHI members Small Business Majority, Colorado Fiscal Institute, and others. Long-time advocates are hopeful that putting PFML on the ballot will help surmount the significant political roadblocks they hit in the General Assembly, since Coloradans view the policy favorably.

#### Opponents of this proposition...

are led by Not Now Colorado, spearheaded by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. Local governments can opt out of this program, unlike previous iterations of PFML policy, so they are not likely to be as strongly opposed as they have been. Not Now Colorado argues that this policy will burden families and businesses who cannot afford extra costs at this moment due to the recession.

#### How does this initiative intersect with CCHI's mission and values?

CCHI has previously supported PFML proposals that have been equitable and provide sufficient benefits for workers. PFML is closely linked to positive health outcomes and social determinants of health. Individuals and families with access to PFML--and progressive wage replacement to ensure they can afford time off--are better able to heal after injury and illness. Low income families and people of color are the least likely to have access to these benefits through their employer; and often are the most vulnerable to financial and health crises when they are forced to choose between their income or job and taking care of themselves and their families. Creating a larger risk pool with a program regulated by the State will help keep premiums low, establish accountability mechanisms, and ensure equity in the administration of services Coloradans need.

Even though this program does impose costs on both employees and employers, financial analyses have shown that the amount is manageable. Over time it will also save businesses and taxpayers money by reducing employee turnover, use of public benefits programs, and more.

#### Key reasons to VOTE YES:

- Promotes positive health outcomes for consumers
- Prioritizes equity by designing an accessible and affordable program that will benefit low-wage workers, single parents and people of color
- Long-term benefits projected for economic growth, mobility, and social determinants of health



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## PROPOSITION EE

### Taxes on Nicotine Products

## SUPPORT

#### What does Proposition 118 seek to do?

Proposition EE is a legislature-recommended initiative that asks voters whether Colorado should implement a number of tobacco and nicotine product reforms, including licensure and tax increases, to fund a variety of programs. This revenue will be used primarily to fund preschool and tobacco prevention/cessation programs; it also includes allocations to affordable housing, eviction legal defense, and the General Fund.

#### Proponents of this proposition...

include health advocacy groups, public health professionals, and the Polis administration; they argue this is a solution to a major public health issue. There is strong consensus in the medical and scientific community that tobacco and nicotine products have negative impacts on health outcomes. Additionally, vaping has become increasingly popular with Colorado teens due to targeted marketing campaigns and has been linked to adverse health outcomes.

#### Opponents of this proposition...

includes tobacco and nicotine product producers, vendors, and chambers of commerce. No on EE-- A Bad Deal for Colorado has recently registered to oppose this measure.

#### How does this initiative intersect with CCHI's mission and values?

Given the financial and health consequences of tobacco and nicotine products on consumers, curbing their use seems to align clearly with CCHI's values. Increasing taxes on these products, though, has more nuanced implications.

Tax increases are considered to be one of the most effective ways of reducing tobacco and nicotine product use, particularly for youth who are price sensitive, but can place a disproportionate burden on low-income consumers, who will spend more of their income on these products if they continue to purchase them. Many advocates argue that this regressivity is counteracted by using the revenue to fund the fight against targeted marketing and product placement in marginalized communities and strengthen cessation programs. In Colorado, the funding is also earmarked for preschool programs, with a portion for affordable housing and eviction legal defense--all of which will be great benefits for these communities, too.

Another concern is the impact on people with mental health and substance use challenges. Some advocates acknowledge that smoking and nicotine product use can play an important role in preventing even more harmful behaviors and managing stress; others contest this assertion, since most supporting research for these claims is funded by the tobacco industry and additional research shows that tobacco can actually inhibit proper mental health treatment. Trying to limit access to tobacco and nicotine products, from this perspective, must also come with a commitment to more robust treatment and mental health services.

#### Key reasons to VOTE YES:

- Public health value for teens and marginalized adults targeted by tobacco and nicotine industries
- Opportunity to raise revenue for priority programs, as well as the General Fund



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