



**Colorado 2016 Amendment and Proposition Ballot Guide**  
**(Adapted from the Bell Policy Center 2016 Ballot Guide)<sup>1</sup>**

*DenUM fosters family stability, increases self-sufficiency and supports community sustainability through non-partisan advocacy efforts. All advocacy efforts are guided by our primary goal of reducing poverty for all Coloradoans. Our 5 focus areas are economic self-sufficiency; accessible, safe and affordable housing; hunger and food insecurity; mass incarceration and criminal justice; and education.*

**Amendment 69 (Statewide Health Care System):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Create a universal health care coverage plan in the state of Colorado funded by taxpayers called ColoradoCare.	ColoradoCare would save money and would create a clearer and more equal system of accessing healthcare. ColoradoCare is expected to save \$4.5 billion in health care costs by 2019.	Because ColoradoCare is twice the size of the state budget, it is risky, expensive and bad for business. The amendment also lacks clear details about how to implement ColoradoCare.

**Amendment 70 (Raise the Minimum Wage):** *DenUM endorses this amendment because it aligns with our priority of reducing poverty and our focus area of economic self-sufficiency!*

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend language in the state constitution to raise the minimum wage from \$8.31 to \$12 in gradual steps by 2020.	The current minimum wage has not kept up with increasing costs of living in Colorado, and is not enough money to live off of. The wage can be raised without negatively affecting jobs or costs. Workers would spend their increased wages to boost the economy.	Increasing the minimum wage could force businesses to delay hiring or lay off minimum wage workers, which could hurt small businesses – especially those in rural communities.

**Amendment 71 (Constitutional Amendment):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend language in the state constitution to make it harder to amend. Initiated amendments would be required to get signatures from 2% of the registered voters in each senate district of Colorado. A	Currently Colorado’s state constitution is too easy to amend and a lot of amendments are brought forward by well-funded special interest groups. Discouraging constitutional	The signature requirements in this amendment would make an important part of our democracy less accessible to grassroots



new constitutional amendment would require 55% of the popular vote. Constitutional provisions that already exist could be repealed with a 50% majority, but the new 2% signature requirements would still apply.	amendments and encouraging statutory amendments is good for the state because it allows state statutes to be more easily amended to address problems. The signature requirement would ensure that an initiative has support from all over the state.	organizations with limited resources. The new majority requirement would significantly reduce the kinds of measures Colorado can pass by popular initiative.
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**Amendment 72 (Increase Cigarette and Tobacco Taxes):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend language in the state constitution to increase taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products. The money gained from this tax increase would be used towards medical research, tobacco prevention, veterans' health services, youth behavioral health services and other health programs.	Increasing taxes on these tobacco products would make it harder for people to use them, which would lead to improved health outcomes. Veterans, youth and rural residents would benefit from the programs funded through the money gained in the tax increase.	This tax increase would more severely impact Coloradans who are low-income. This amendment would also lock spending requirements into the state constitution.

**Proposition 106 (Access to Medical Aid in Dying Medication):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend Colorado state statutes to give mentally competent, terminally ill people who have been told they have six months or less to live a right to access lethal Medical Aid-in-Dying (MAID) medication. This proposition also would establish protections for patients and criminal penalties for anyone who misuses the medication.	When there are patients facing extreme suffering and medication cannot alleviate this pain, MAID would give patients peace. There are enough protections in the proposition to prevent misuse of the medication.	There are not enough protections in place in the proposition, and access to MAID might result in the abuse of the elderly, people with disabilities, or other vulnerable populations.

**Proposition 107 (Presidential Primaries):** *DenUM endorses this proposition because it aligns with our value of promoting self-sufficiency!*

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend Colorado statutes to establish a presidential	The caucus system is confusing and inaccessible,	Unaffiliated voters should not be able to choose candidates



primary, which would replace the current caucus system for presidential elections. This would open the primary to voters unaffiliated with a political party and would make Colorado a “winner-take-all” primary state.	especially for people with less flexible working hours and single parents. Changing to a primary system would make voting more accessible to those people along with allowing people unaffiliated to a political party to vote.	for parties they are not part of. Taxpayers would be required to fund political parties’ elections even though they are private. Removing caucuses also removes one way people can be passionately involved in politics.
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**Proposition 108 (Open Primary Elections):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend state statutes to create an open primary for all non-presidential elections. Voters unaffiliated with a political party could vote in the primary and would receive a ballot with all candidates from every party. Their ballot would not count if they chose candidates from multiple parties.	Since primary elections are publically financed, they should be open to all taxpayers. This includes people unaffiliated with a political party, which is one-third of registered voters. This would give all Coloradoans a voice.	Creating a ballot with all candidates for voters unaffiliated with a political party would lead to voter confusion and significantly more ballots not being counted, therefore giving less voters a voice.

**Amendment T (No Exception to Involuntary Servitude Probation):** *DenUM endorses this amendment because it aligns with our mass incarceration and criminal justice priorities!*

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend the state constitution to remove language that currently allows for slavery and involuntary servitude to be used as a punishment for the conviction of a crime.	The current constitutional language is outdated. This amendment affirms that no person should have to perform involuntary servitude, even if they are incarcerated.	Removing the “involuntary servitude” language from the state constitution may create legal confusion regarding inmates working in prisons or participating in community service programs.

**Amendment U (Exempt Certain Possessory Interests from Property Tax):**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
Amend the state constitution to eliminate property taxes for individuals or businesses that use government-owned land with a market value of \$6,000 or less for	This amendment would get rid of the burdensome process of collecting a property tax that often costs more than it contributes to income.	Individuals and businesses that use public land for private profit should not be given a tax break.



a private benefit.		
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**Denver Metropolitan Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) Ballot Issue 4B<sup>ii</sup>:**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
An amendment to continue the collection of the 0.1% sales and use tax, which provides funding to scientific, cultural and arts organizations. The amendment also outlines administrative procedures for the SCFD.	The SCFD attracts an average of 15 million visitors a year. These tax earnings fund more than 100 free days each year, which make these art and cultural spaces accessible to students. The SCFD facilities provide a \$1.85 billion boost to the metro region’s economy.	Everyone is taxed to fund the SCFD regardless of whether or not they use those services, and not everyone can afford the tax. Also a greater amount of the tax funds are distributed to the five largest organizations than to the mid-size organizations.

**Denver 2A Preschool Program Referred Question:** *DenUM endorses this amendment because it aligns with our education priority!*

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
An amendment to allow the City and County of Denver to keep and use all 2015 profits received from the 0.3% sales and use tax rate increase in support of the Denver Preschool Program, which was approved by voters in 2014. This amendment would also continue to collect the tax as much as voters allow until December 31, 2026.	The Denver Preschool Program helps provide children with education. This amendment would allow more funding to support this program.	This amendment would allow the city and county to continue collecting a 0.3% increase in sales and use tax rates.

**Denver 2B Permanent Office of the Independent Monitor Referred Question:**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
An amendment to add into the city constitution an office of <i>independent monitor</i> and the <i>citizen oversight board</i> , who will make recommendations and monitor law enforcement investigations in the Denver Department of Safety.	This office is an important tool in public safety and transparency. Adding the office into the constitution will make it a more permanent part of citizens’ lives. By putting the office in the constitution, it can only be taken away through a vote and not by city council members.	Adding this into the constitution is not necessary since this is already in the city ordinances. Also, during times of economic hardships, the city would be required to fund this office, which could take away funding from more important areas.



**Denver 3A Public Schools Mill Levy Override Ballot Issue:** *DenUM endorses this amendment because it aligns with our education priority!*

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
<p>Increase taxes towards Denver Public Schools by \$56.6 million in 2016 and in the years following by the amount allowed by Colorado State Law. The increased funding would go towards expanding early childhood reading programs, providing more mental health professionals and counselors for students, expanding student technology access, providing better training for teachers and developing a more diverse pool of teachers and expanding college and career programs.</p>	<p>This would provide the positive benefits that come from funding programs such as early childhood reading programs, more mental health counselors and more support and training for teachers. This also would help prevent future financial cuts towards the schools and prevent classroom sizes from increasing. It would cost an average of less than \$10 per month for the average Colorado property owner.</p>	<p>This would increase the amount in taxes paid by Colorado property owners, and some people may not be able to afford that increase.</p>

**Denver 3B Public Schools Bond Issue Ballot Issue:**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
<p>To allow the Denver Public Schools debt to be increased \$572 million with a maximum repayment cost of \$1,100 million, with district taxes being increased by a maximum of \$61 million per year through the implementation of property taxes. This increased debt would be used to improve school infrastructure, expand technology options for students, build new schools and classrooms, add air conditioning to classrooms, add security systems to schools and expand early education programs.</p>	<p>This bond allows more schools to be built to decrease class sizes and to help the growth of Denver Public Schools. It also allows access to technology for students, improves security for students, improves the infrastructure of the school buildings, and invests in air conditioning for classrooms that can get up to 90 degrees.</p>	<p>Previously, a majority of the contractors that have been hired with the money from these bonds were white. Only 2% of the contracts were with companies owned by people of color. This bond could continue to ignore and limit opportunities for people of color through not hiring them.</p>



**Denver Public Marijuana Use in Designated Areas Initiative<sup>iii</sup>:**

What Would This Do?	People Who Support it Say:	People Who Oppose it Say:
<p>An initiative to temporarily allow businesses to create certain areas where marijuana can be publically consumed through a pilot program that would expire in 2020. These businesses must follow the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act requirements, cannot have their areas within 1,000 feet of a school or in the view of areas where children gather, and can only allow individuals over 21 to consume marijuana amongst other requirements.</p>	<p>Many members of the business community support this initiative. Based on the location requirements in the initiative, children and students will never be exposed to these designated areas. The initiative also requires talking to neighborhood members before creating an area for marijuana consumption. This initiative will provide adults with safe and supervised consumption areas.</p>	<p>Opponents argue that legalizing marijuana consumption in public areas could increase instances of driving under the influence of marijuana and could bring marijuana use to areas near children, schools and drug treatment facilities. Some people also argue that this initiative could violate state law, which says that marijuana cannot be consumed in public.</p>

<sup>i</sup> The Bell Policy Center, “2016 Ballot Guide”. Accessed on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Link: <http://www.bellpolicy.org/sites/default/files/uploadFiles/Bell%20Policy%20Center%202016%20Ballot%20Guide.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Vote411.org, “Personalized Ballot”. Accessed September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Link: <http://www.vote411.org/ballot?street=1717%20E%20Colfax%20Ave&city=Denver&state=Colorado&zip=80218>

<sup>iii</sup> BallotPedia, “Denver County, Colorado Ballot Measures”. Accessed September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Link: [https://ballotpedia.org/Denver\\_County,\\_Colorado\\_ballot\\_measures](https://ballotpedia.org/Denver_County,_Colorado_ballot_measures)