

2020 AAUW-CO Ballot Issues

Voters will see 11 Ballot Issues in 2020, four proposed **Constitutional Amendments** and seven **Propositions** to change state laws (Colorado Revised Statutes).

In October each voting household will receive the 2020 Blue Book prepared by the state's Legislative Council that includes fiscal analyses of all the issues.

AAUW-CO has taken positions on two issues:

- **Colorado AAUW OPPOSES Proposition 115 - Ban Abortions after 22 Weeks Gestation**
- **Colorado AAUW SUPPORTS Proposition 118 - Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program**

Proposed Amendments to Colorado Constitution:

Amendment 76 - Citizenship Qualification of Electors

Should the state constitution be amended to explicitly require that Colorado voters must be U.S. citizens? The state already bans non-citizens from voting so opponents say this would accomplish little in practice. Supporters argue the language needs to be strengthened and point to a handful of cities in other states that allow non-citizens to vote in some local elections. The constitution currently says that "every citizen" may vote. Amendment language says "only citizens" may vote.

Amendment 77 - Local Voter Approval of Gaming Limits in Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek

When Colorado voters approved gambling in the three historic mountain mining towns, there were limits: casinos can only offer slots, blackjack, poker, craps, and roulette and as of 2008, bets are limited to \$100. The measure would allow voters in the 3 cities to approve additional games and higher bets. It also allows revenues to go to community colleges.

Amendment B - Repeal Property Tax Assessment Rates (Gallagher Amendment)

Referred to the ballot by state lawmakers.

Should Colorado repeal part of Gallagher Amendment, which limits residential property taxes to 45% of the statewide base? It would prevent automatic cuts to residential property tax rates in the future. Homeowners' tax bills won't go down, but funding for schools, rural fire districts and other entities that rely on property tax will. Gallagher was originally added to the state constitution in 1982 to keep residential property tax revenue "balanced" with commercial property revenue.

Amendment C - Bingo Raffles Allow Paid Help and Repeal 5-Year Minimum

Referred to the ballot by state lawmakers.

This measure would change how charitable gaming activities are managed . It would shorten the time a non-profit must operate in Colorado before it can apply for a charitable gaming license from 5 years to 3. It would allow licensees to hire paid staff to operate their bingo games or raffles

Propositions to Change Colorado Revised Statutes (State Laws):

Proposition 113 - Adopt Agreement To Elect U.S. Presidents by National Popular Vote

Voters can affirm or reject the 2019 legislative decision to join the National Popular Vote Compact that could eventually bind Colorado and other states to commit their presidential election (electoral) votes to the candidate who wins the most votes nationally, rather than to the candidate who wins the state. The Compact would need to be affirmed by state votes totaling a majority of the electoral college.

Proposition 114 - Restoration of Gray Wolves

Should Colorado reintroduce gray wolves on certain lands west of the Continental Divide? If approved, it could help an endangered species recover its place in Colorado's ecology. The measure faces criticism from ranchers who fear they'll lose livestock to the predators.

Proposition 115 - Ban on "Late-Term" Abortions

Would ban abortions after 22 weeks gestation, except to save life of mother. These abortions are only about 1.3 percent of all procedures and often are the result of parents receiving lethal fetal diagnoses.

Colorado AAUW opposes this Proposition because every pregnancy is unique for every woman and family. We can never know the circumstances of someone's life. That's why we believe health decisions should be between doctors and patients and families. Circumstances can include risk to the mother's health, women learning of a lethal fatal diagnosis, or a pregnancy that is a result of incest or rape. Abortion should be accessible to all - no matter who they are, what they look like, or how much money they make. We must allow women and their families, in consultation with their doctors, to determine what health care is right for them. We must keep abortion bans out of Colorado.

Proposition 116 - State Income Tax Rate Reductions

This initiative would cut the state's flat income tax rate from 4.63 percent to 4.55 percent. A person making \$50,000 would see their tax burden fall by about \$40 (\$3.30 a month). Meanwhile, it would reduce state revenue by an estimated \$170 million in the next fiscal year. Supporters argue it would boost businesses and consumer spending, while opponents say it would weaken government services and social supports already severely cut by the downturn. This measure was originally intended. to counter a progressive tax measure that failed to make the ballot.

Proposition 117 - Voter Approval Requirement for Creation of Certain Fee-Based Enterprises

This would add a new TABOR-like provision to state law, requiring the state government to get voter permission before it creates major new "enterprises" which are partially funded by fees. Colorado voters already have authority over tax increases and rarely approve them. The Colorado Supreme Court has held that a fee is different from a tax because it is reasonably connected to a specific purpose. And in the years that TABOR has been in effect, lawmakers have used them in a way to raise money without raising taxes. Critics see fees as an end-run around TABOR's spending limits.

Proposition 118 - Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

This initiative would mandate that employers provide 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for many Colorado workers, plus an additional 4 weeks in case of complications. This leave could be used for childbirth or other family medical situations. The law would offer paid leave benefits to workers who have earned at least \$2,500 at their job. It also guarantees people won't be fired if they have been on the job at least 180 days. When they are on leave, workers' wages would be partially covered through a state-administered fund. The money in that fund would be supplied by premiums paid by employers and workers, amounting to 0.9 percent of each worker's wages. Businesses with fewer than 10 people would be exempt from the employer premium, and companies could instead opt to go with their own leave program if it meets set criteria.

Colorado AAUW supports this Proposition because of its mission to advance gender equity for women and girls. AAUW promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; reduction of poverty; a living wage; quality, affordable dependent care; *paid family and medical leave*; safe, livable, and affordable housing; affordable and accessible health care for all.... A paid family and medical leave program will ensure that as we build Colorado's economy, it will be ready to keep Colorado's people, communities, and workplaces healthy and safe. Coloradoans should not have to choose between paying their bills and taking care of their seriously ill family members or having a baby.

Proposition EE - Increase Taxes on Nicotine Products

Referred to the ballot by state lawmakers.

This measure would raise an estimated \$168 million next fiscal year by creating a new tax on nicotine vaping products and raise existing taxes on tobacco products. Vaping product taxes would start at 30 percent of the manufacturer's price and eventually rise to 62 percent. The tax on cigarettes would ramp up from \$0.84 a pack today to \$2.64 a pack by 2027. Taxes on other tobacco products would grow from 40 percent today to 62 percent by 2027. The minimum price for cigarettes would be set at \$7 per pack beginning in 2024. Over 10 years it is expected to raise \$2 billion for universal preschool for all 4-year old children, \$110 million for tobacco-vape cessation and public health programs, and \$375 million for public schools.