



**League of Women Voters® of Colorado
Advocacy Positions
2018 Colorado Statewide Ballot Issues**

Amendment V - Lower Age Requirement for Members of State Legislature	Not Taking a Position
Amendment W - Election Ballot Format for Judicial Retention Elections	Support
Amendment X - Industrial Hemp Definition	Not Taking a Position
Amendment Y – Congressional Redistricting	Support
Amendment Z – Legislative Redistricting	Support
Amendment A - Prohibit Slavery & Involuntary Servitude in All Circumstances	Support
Amendment 73 - Funding for Public Schools	Support (with Comments)
Amendment 74 - Just Compensation for Fair Market Value	Oppose
Amendment 75 - Campaign Contributions	Oppose
Proposition 109 - Authorize Bonds for Transportation Projects	Oppose
Proposition 110 - Transportation Funding (sales tax increase)	Support
Proposition 111 - Limitation on PayDay Loans	Support
Proposition 112 - Setback Requirements for Oil and Gas Development	Support

LWVCO Advocacy
2018 COLORADO STATEWIDE BALLOT ISSUES

Amendment V - Lower Age Requirement for Members of State Legislature
Not Taking a Position (No League Position)

Amendment W - Election Ballot Format for Judicial Retention Elections

Support

Why We Support:

- A shorter ballot will save county clerks printing, processing, and mailing costs, particularly in counties with greater populations where ballots must be printed in both English and Spanish.
- A more concise ballot may increase voter participation by reducing voter fatigue related to a lengthy ballot. A more user-friendly and compact ballot will bring Colorado closer to well-established principles for ballot design and clear, simple language.

Amendment X - Industrial Hemp Definition

Not Taking a Position (No League Position)

Amendment Y – Congressional Redistricting

Support

Why We Support:

- The amendment limits the role of partisan politics in the redistricting process by establishing an independent commission made up of equal number of Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliated representatives. It makes the process of redistricting more transparent by requiring open meetings and public engagement during the planning process.
- It creates fair criteria for drawing of district maps to maximize the number of competitive congressional seats, protecting communities of interest and keeping districts compact.

Amendment Z – Legislative Redistricting

Support

Why We Support:

- This proposal limits the role of partisan politics in the redistricting process by establishing an independent commission made up of Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters.
- It makes the process of redistricting more transparent and provides an opportunity for public participation. The amendment creates fair criteria for the drawing of legislative districts, prioritizing communities of interest and political competitiveness.

Amendment A - Prohibit Slavery & Involuntary Servitude in All Circumstances

Support

Why We Support:

- Freedom and equality are fundamental human values which should be reflected in the Colorado Constitution.
- The language to be eliminated is archaic. It was written in the 19th Century, when not all people were treated with human dignity or even considered human. Colorado must heal racial divides, and removal of racially divisive symbols will move us toward that important goal.
- The state constitution already prohibits slavery, except as a punishment for crime. This would clarify that slavery and involuntary servitude are not allowed in any circumstance.

Amendment 73 - Funding for Public Schools

Support (with Comments)

Major Provisions:

- Raises money to be spent exclusively on pre-primary, primary and secondary education.
- Directs revenue to increase per pupil funding by 7.8% from FY 2018; fully fund kindergarten; increase funds for special education, gifted/talented programs, English language proficiency, low income students/schools, and preschool.
- Adds additional funds to supplement and not supplant current funding from the General Fund. The General Assembly may adjust how funds are spent in the future, according to need, although the monies must continue to supplement and not supplant General Fund support to pre-primary, primary and secondary education.
- Changes Colorado's state income tax from being a completely flat tax (currently 4.63% of federally adjusted gross income) to slightly progressive, by instituting a gradual tax increase for incomes over \$150,000, and increasing corporate tax rates to 6% from 4.63%.
- Reduces property tax rates on non-residential property.
- Changes tax rates for residential property by a reduction from current levels, but an increase from projected levels.
- Exempts additional revenue from spending limits set forth in article X, section 20, of the Colorado Constitution.

Why We Support:

- Historically LWVCO has been a champion for quality education in Colorado.
- Colorado has been underfunding its schools by close to \$1B for almost ten years; \$830 million in the 2017-18 school year.
- The state is facing a serious teacher shortage.
- 95% of teachers in rural districts don't make enough salary to meet the cost of living. New teachers in the metro-Denver area cannot afford to buy a house.
- The achievement gap is widening.
- While the state ranks in the top 10 for personal income, we rank close to the bottom (just above West Virginia) in spending for public schools.
- Colorado has one of the fastest growing economies, yet spends roughly \$2,800 less than the national average and has the least competitive teacher wages in the country causing teacher shortages in the majority of Colorado school districts.
- Strong public schools are the backbone of healthy communities, and one of the government's most important duties is to provide students with a quality education. This proposal will give local school districts the funding they need by creating a new revenue stream for local schools that legislators can't raid. This measure would provide equitable funding for all Colorado school districts by asking those benefiting the most from Colorado's growth—corporations and the wealthy—to contribute a little more.

Comments:

- Amendment 73 is a constitutional amendment that changes the state income tax rate for those making \$150,000 and above and raises the corporate tax rate. It is likely this will also change the residential property tax as it affects school districts. It is also unclear how that may affect other districts dependent on their property taxes. Should Amendment 73 pass, any future changes to the provision or funding structure would need voter approval of 55%.
- The amendment's new tax bracket does not allow income tax thresholds to adjust for inflation. This will remain in place unless changed by a vote of the people.
- Amendment 73 sets up a tiered property tax system. There is one rate that would be applied for school districts and another rate for the special districts found on your property tax bill. In future years the residential property tax would be higher. The non-residential property tax would be lower.

Amendment 74 - Just Compensation for Fair Market Value

Oppose

Why We Oppose:

- This proposal will impact taxpayers and governments in Colorado. The scope of this measure will have far-reaching and significant consequences regarding future decisions made by governments that benefit their citizens. Even though safeguards may be supported by the citizens, governments may choose to ignore community protections for infrastructure, water quality and air quality.
- Taxpayers will be responsible for payments to property owners for any loss in property value due to a government action that reduces the value of their property. Compensation may be ordered even if property owner continue to use their property profitably.
- By amending the Colorado Constitution, this amendment is asking to allow any corporation or person who owns property to sue the government over virtually any regulation, from city planning to basic health and safety protection. LWVCO supports measures to improve the coordination, effectiveness, efficiency and economical operation of local government units.
- This amendment goes quite far in undermining local control and land use decisions.

Amendment 75 - Campaign Contributions

Oppose

Why We Oppose:

- Colorado's campaign finance system is broken, and this measure further complicates the system without truly addressing financial disparities among candidates. This increase in campaign contribution limits will allow all candidates, including wealthy candidates, to collect more money, further inflating election spending. Opening the door to more money is not the way to fix Colorado's campaign finance system. This opens the door to more contributions, further inflating election spending.
- There is some question as to a Constitutional challenge, based on case law regarding campaign finance limits of a self-funded campaign.

Proposition 109 - Authorize Bonds for Transportation Projects

Oppose

Why We Oppose:

- Earmarks General Funds for transportation at the expense of other state needs
- Does not provide for multimodal or local transportation
- Is not adequate to meet the backlog of state transportation needs

Proposition 110 - Transportation Funding (sales tax increase)

Support

Why We Support:

- We support adequate funding for state services—roads and bridges certainly fall in this category. LWVCO historically has supported a number of efforts to raise money for transportation funding—1986, 1988, 2009.
- Support of more energy-efficient transportation systems and 110 provides 15% of the funds for multimodal transportation such as mass transit, bike paths and sidewalks to preserve air quality.
- Provisions of this bill are paid with sales tax that is also paid by tourists who use our roads.
- A balanced transportation system is one which includes a variety of modes in an appropriate mix for each area and helps improve mobility and quality of life for all residents. 110 would appear to meet this criterion in that it provides for multimodal transportation projects as requested with matching funds by local governments.
- New revenue sources, as needed, should be considered but not limited to user fees, appropriations from the General Fund, revenue bonds and private funds.

Proposition 111 - Limitation on PayDay Loans

Support

Why We Support:

- Payday lenders prey on vulnerable families, taking advantage of them by charging interest rates that can go as high as 200%. Lending money at outrageously high interest rates to hard-working families is just wrong, and Colorado government should not enable companies to continue this predatory practice. Payday lenders are operating within a loophole that exempts them from Colorado's usury laws. By reducing the cost of payday loans, this measure provides the same 36% APR rate cap that is applied to other loans in Colorado.
- The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Proposition 112 - Setback Requirements for Oil and Gas Development

Support

Why We Support:

- This proposal will establish a commonsense buffer zone between new oil and gas development and homes, schools, playgrounds and drinking water sources. The distance of 2,500 feet, almost ½ mile, aligns with evacuation zones used by first responders and a growing body of peer-reviewed studies that show an increased risk of negative health impacts within ½ mile, including elevated cancer risk, respiratory problems, birth defects and low birth weight.
- This proposal will update Colorado's regulations to address new technologies and the scale of current drilling to protect our health, safety and quality of life with the inevitable harms and associated with hydraulic fracturing near neighborhoods and our water.