



2010 Ballot Measures: Proposition 101, Amendment 60, and Amendment 61

Great futures start with a great education . . . but even *mediocre* education will be impossible in Colorado, if Amendments 60, 61, or Proposition 101 pass. Here's why:

Already underfunded: Colorado was 42nd in the nation for K-12 education funding in 2007ⁱ, and 48th for higher ed in 2008ⁱⁱ. Since then, K-12 schools have endured cuts averaging over \$400 per student, with worse to come; and colleges and universities anticipate up to 50% cuts in state support and annual tuition increases up to 9% through 2015-16.

Now, Colorado faces three ballot initiatives that would reduce spending for public services, including education even further.

Proposition 101 – A statutory provision that would cut several state and local government revenue sources including car registration, license fees, the income tax rate, and phone bill taxes. Would:

- Reduce income tax to 3.5%, car ownership taxes to \$2 for new cars and \$1 for used cars – a 98% cut from 2009 levels, and reduce car registration fees to a flat \$10 – the same fee level used in 1919.
- Cut over \$250 million in local support for schools and reduce the state general fund, the primary revenue source of state support for preschool, K-12 and higher ed.

SUMMARY: When fully implemented, our state & local governments would lose over \$2 billion per year in the revenues that support key public services like education.

Amendment 60 – A constitutional amendment that would cut local support for schools in half. Would:

- Cut local property taxes for schools in half by 2020 – reducing local funding by \$1.22 billion – requiring the state to replace lost local revenue, but providing no way to replace the revenue.
- Reverse local “de-brucing” elections in the 98% of Colorado school districts where voters have chosen to let schools keep revenue above the constitutional “TABOR” limit.
- Allow individuals to initiate local ballot initiatives to *cut* mill levies.
- Require many colleges and universities to pay property tax for the first time.

SUMMARY: It would overturn the will of local voters, leading to deeper cuts and higher fees PreK-20.

Amendment 61 – A constitutional amendment that would prohibit state debt or loans of any kind and make it more difficult for local districts to bond to repair, improve, or build schools. Would:

- Make Colorado the only state in the nation that is prohibited from using debt to finance capital projects, including schools, health & safety repairs, higher education buildings and roads.
- End the “Build Excellent Schools Today” program which has so far financed 63 projects to address critical health and safety needs in schools around the state.
- Prevent higher education construction for projects like the Anschutz Medical Center, and the recent modernization of the Auraria Campus – which generates jobs and local economic activity.
- End the state’s interest-free, short-term loan program that many districts use to even out cash flow. This could result in a March – November school year in some school districts.

SUMMARY: A61 would make it difficult to impossible for schools and colleges to address the health and safety of Colorado students, or compete with other states that attract new businesses and jobs as a result of their investments.

TOTAL IMPACT – These initiatives would result in even deeper cuts to education from preschool through higher ed (and all other public services), accelerating the current trend toward larger class sizes, cuts in art, sports, music, and other educational opportunities, and increasing tuition.

For more information, go to www.greateducation.org, call 303-722-5901, or e-mail casey@greateducation.org.

ⁱ Education Week. Reported in *Quality Counts 2010*. Data adjusted for regional cost differences from “Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education.” National Center for Education Statistics, Fiscal Year 2007 Report.

ⁱⁱ “Gross State and Local Support for Higher Education Operating Expenses Per Capita.” The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems Information Center. data from State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), 2008.