

Vote Faithfully!

The ELCA is a Public Church

As people of God, we believe in promoting faithful and non-partisan voter participation. All members of ELCA congregations are encouraged to use the rich faith-based resources of the church to guide their voting on measures that affect all people.

We Are the People of God

Scripture reveals God’s presence in all realms of life, including political life. This church understands government as a means through which God works to preserve creation and build a more peaceful and just social order in a sinful world. The electoral process is one way in which we live out our affirmation of baptism to “serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,” and “to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.”

As people of God, we have been freed to love our neighbor, seek peace and justice, and care for God’s creation. Faith should inform not only our participation but also how we look at public issues and interpret what is happening in political life.



Important Dates

Friday, October 8

Ballots mailed to registered Colorado voters

Tuesday, November 2

Election Day

Thursday, February 17, 2022

Colorado Lutheran Day at the Legislature

Resources to Know

Colorado “Blue Book” Guide online

leg.colorado.gov —> Click the “Blue Book” link in the top banner

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado

www.lam-co.org

ELCA Social Statements & Messages

www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society

Check your voter registration status:

www.govotecolorado.com

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8

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Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God’s work. Our hands.

Colorado Ballot Measures

Voter Guide

Fall 2021



Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado

Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

Vote Ballot Measures First!

Direct Democracy

Colorado is a ballot initiative state. This means that eligible voters not only elect representatives to make policy decisions, they also sometimes directly vote on public policy.

This direct democracy element of Colorado’s civic structure is unique, and voters need to know the important decision-making role they play in building and maintaining thriving communities. Data from recent elections shows that many voters don’t vote all the way to the end of the ballot. This incomplete voting creates an obstacle to realizing the equitable policies and thriving communities we desire.

Ballot Measures Matter Too

With so much happening in state and national politics, ballot measures can sometimes become an afterthought. Even so, these ballot measures have an important impact on our state policy landscape.

Making thoughtful and informed decisions about candidates for office is undoubtedly a critical component of your participation in our democracy. It is also important to research the measures at the bottom of your ballot. That’s where we can help! This voter guide is designed to help you understand the issues and learn about our Lutheran perspective on them. You are warmly invited to share this guide with any family, friends and neighbors for whom it may be helpful, too.

Your Colorado Ballot Measures

Colorado voters will have three ballot measures to consider this year. All are citizen initiatives, one of which is a constitutional amendment and two of which are statutory.

The positions taken in this Voter Guide were adopted by the Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado Policy Committee on October 9, 2021.

Constitutional amendment

Statutory propositions

Measure	Title	What it would do	Analysis in brief	Our position
Amendment 78	Legislative Authority for Spending State Money	Prohibit state agencies from spending money received for specific purposes (custodial money) without direct allocation by the legislature; deposit custodial money in a fund; and require that the legislature have a public hearing the following year to allocate any spending from the fund	<p>This amendment was proposed in response to Colorado's receipt of federal funding for coronavirus relief, which was principally allocated by the Governor's office. However, the amendment would also impact regular federal government allocations in health care, human services, and education, as well as money from legal settlements, transportation funding, state grants, and gifts and donations made to colleges and universities.</p> <p>Reducing the power of other branches of government to make spending decisions will increase the legislature's power. It is also likely to require new patterns of legislative meeting and activity to make spending decisions throughout the year, as failure to do so might delay or interrupt operations that require custodial funds. This could lead the legislature to expand to year-round meetings rather than January to May.</p> <p>Lutherans should consider several factors when voting on this amendment. Our social teaching encourages us to always view public policy first through the lens of its impact on our most vulnerable neighbors. Does adding legislative power over the process of allocating federal money better protect their needs? Our Social Statement on Economic Life reads: "Government regulations must not be so burdensome as to stifle the production of the very goods and services people need to live."</p> <p>Although proponents of this measure claim to seek more transparency and widening the exercise of power, increasing the bureaucracy of government is likelier to make government processes more cumbersome, inefficient, and unable to provide federal support in a timely manner. This measure speaks to the balance between public trust in government agencies and appointees versus a bureaucratically expansive push to increase public oversight via legislative accountability, a process that is likelier to benefit wealthy institutional and corporate interests that can lobby the legislature on a year-round basis.</p>	VOTE NO
Proposition 119	Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress Program	Raise taxes on retail cannabis and use other existing state funds to create the Colorado Learning Enrichment and Academic Process program	<p>This measure creates a new state agency for after-school tutoring and learning programs that would directly compete with the State Board of Education and which would be governed entirely by partisan appointees. It is thus not publicly accountable in the way the Department of Education is. The language of the measure states a preference in offering programs and scholarships to students from low-income families, but it is not restricted to them; it also states that credentialed public school teachers would be prioritized as "qualified providers" of tutoring but it is not restricted to them, either. The after-school programs proposed by the measure are also not free; although financial aid is available "by application," all programs will cost something. Finally, there is the concern of using cannabis taxes - a so-called "sin tax" - to support the programs. ELCA social teaching supports funding public goods, such as education, with equitably-collected tax revenue, not regressive use taxes that fall heavily on lower-income people.</p> <p>The ELCA's Social Statement on Education and our 2001 social policy resolution on school vouchers asks these questions about educational reform proposals: "To what degree does the proposal ensure just, equitable, and long-term viable sources of funding? To what degree does it provide public schools the support and resources necessary to fulfill their tasks?" Creating a separate, partisan-governed, fee-driven tutoring program outside the state Board of Education, funded by regressive use taxes, is not the sort of system for which Colorado should be aiming.</p>	NO
Proposition 120	Property Tax Assessment Rate Reduction	Lower property tax assessment rates for only multifamily housing and lodging properties	<p>The measure will reduce local government revenue through permanently lowering taxes on certain properties. The impact is estimated around \$50 million, although a \$1 billion reduction from an across-the-board rate reduction was averted by Senate Bill 21-293. Lowering the property tax assessment rate for multi-family dwellings and lodging properties will have the immediate effect of decreasing local government revenue across the state, negatively impacting funding for school districts, fire districts, water, parks, libraries and more. Proponents argue that lower taxes "could reduce rents" or incentivize businesses to invest and hire more employees, but no such requirements exist in the statute.</p> <p>In the ELCA Social Statement on Economic Life, we affirm, "Government is intended to serve God's purposes by limiting or countering narrow economic interests and promoting the common good. Paying taxes to enable government to carry out these and other purposes is an appropriate expression of our stewardship in society, rather than something to be avoided" We believe equity in tax collection can be achieved through better means that this flawed proposal, which will diminish local public services across the state.</p>	NO