



Independent Inking



Voters Say NO to Prop CC

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Letter from the President



What a way to cap off 2019! Thanks to you, we were able to stave off yet another assault on our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights: Prop CC. With 35 years of experience and expertise and with strong relationships inside Colorado's often unseemly political universe, Independence played the pivotal role in protecting the law that keeps us from becoming California – TABOR.

The ultra-progressive legislative session of 2019 that created the ill-fated Prop CC can be described by one word - hubris. The capitol's current tenants seem to think the entire state is like Boulder and Denver. This line of thinking shouldn't surprise us, given our Governor, Attorney General, Speaker of the House, Senate Majority Leader and Secretary of State all hail from Boulder where voter-sanctioned taxation is loathed in favor of trust in the elite.

Election Day proved that despite what the elites may think, the whole state of Colorado hasn't turned into Boulder just yet.

The looming threat of Prop CC caused something else that could become a real threat to the left: for the first time in a long while, we on the right, actually worked together. If you're not familiar with Caldara's First Political Axiom, you'll find it to be a truism – There is nothing Republicans can't F*#@# up.

This axiom explains how the ugly primary fight between Bob Beauprez and Marc Holtzman allowed Bill Ritter to waltz into the Governor's Mansion and how the Dan Maes fiasco gave the governorship to Hickenlooper, and the list of examples goes on.

Politics is the art of addition. While the left comes together all the time to take more of what we earn, the right doesn't naturally work as a team. We believe in the individual, after all.

But we at Independence Institute saw the threat to TABOR early this year and knew to defeat it we needed addition. We leaned into our coalition building skills and asked all the groups and individuals who might work against the threat to sing from the same sheet music; and a great No on CC rock band was created.

My Executive Vice President, Amy Cooke, worked hand-in-hand with Michael Fields of Colorado Rising Action to form our long-term battle plan. Jesse Mallory and all his foot soldiers at Americans for Prosperity hit the doors, mailboxes, and airways. Michelle Lyng and Novitas Communications kept everyone on message. Laura Carno and Springs Taxpayers rallied southern Colorado. Luke Ragland and Ready Colorado added their considerable voice. The Colorado Republican Party exercised their machinery. The Centennial Institute at CCU mobilized along with the Colorado Union of Taxpayers, the TABOR Foundation, and TABOR author Douglas Bruce.

Every rock band needs some impressive vocals. We had the best. Former Governor Bill Owens and former U.S. Senator Hank Brown passionately explained how Prop CC was nothing like Ref C some 14 years ago. University of Colorado Regents Heidi Ganahl, Chance Hill, and Sue Sharkey dared to say not everyone in Higher Ed wants to tax you more. All but one Republican state legislator joined the chorus. District Attorney George Brauchler was relentless in his defense of our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. While former State Treasurers Walker Stapleton and Mark Hillman lent their names and gravitas as co-chairs of the issue committee

But the consent-haters who tried to kill TABOR via Prop CC aren't going away. They are the undead. There is even an effort to repeal our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights altogether rumored to go to the ballot in 2020.

And like in any good zombie story, our best defense is a good offense. With our ongoing TABOR-YES effort we are building support for TABOR from people who know little about it. Many Coloradans weren't around when we passed TABOR in 1992.

As much as the tax-spending coalitions and Colorado's press hate our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, voters love it more than ever. A recent poll by Baseline and Associates showed around 70% of voters support it.

With you as our partner we plan on diving into 2020 ready to defend what the Wall Street Journal calls the "gold standard" of tax limitation laws – the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Thanks again for helping us defeat Prop CC!

Think Freedom,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Douglas Bruce". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Local Government Spotlight on Don Sheehan



The Local Government Project at Independence Institute hosts a quarterly workshop where average citizens learn how to get appointed to local boards and commissions. Here is the story of one of our students, Don Sheehan.

For those of us who only know a little Greek (not counting the food truck guy with the fabulous gyros), “*horror vacui*” is Greek for “nature abhors a vacuum.” It’s a famous quote from the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

As unnatural as politics often is, politics also abhors a vacuum. I’m not talking about the mud fights that characterize politics nowadays. I am talking about the groups of people who come together at a local level to govern a neighborhood, city, county, district or state. Tons of organizations fill the vacuum with surprising influence and decision-making power. They often determine how, when and where your fees and tax dollars are spent. It’s big money.

For example, the Parks and Recreation District in my area manages 100 acres of parks, 500 acres of open space and 17 miles of paved trails. The volunteer board supervises an annual budget of nearly \$4 million. I’m far enough outside of DC to know that \$4 million is big money.

Money is sometimes paired with power. The group meeting in the library conference room could be your home owners association. They collect monthly fees and send threatening letters when your weeds need mowing.

Local government operates with open meetings, boards, commissions, committees and task forces. It’s the same with your county and state. And in most areas, overlay districts make decisions on parks and recreation, water, storm water, libraries, schools, open space, seniors, youth, public transportation, fire, law enforcement, conservation, improvement, sanitation, airport noise, planning and zoning...the list is endless.

If the list is endless, so are the opportunities. A half dozen or more volunteers make up each board. People volunteer out of a sense of service, interest, or ideology. Board terms are frequently staggered and usually limited, opening positions for new members.

I retired from a career in high-tech a little over a year ago. My plan was to work on my non-existent golf game, learn to fly fish, and volunteer more. In looking for new volunteer opportunities, I attended the Independence Institute’s local government workshop. I learned that the average Joe (or Don) can use the internet to find board or commission openings. It’s easy, but why would you do it?

The answer is balance. The big government believers are already on the boards and commissions in large numbers. It’s what they do. They passionately believe government is the cure for all ills and they use boards and commissions as a vehicle to that end.

Conservatives believe in smaller government and are less inclined to participate, especially on boards and commissions. The money and influence is still there to be wielded whether you are there or not.

I applied, interviewed and was appointed to my city’s Senior Commission. We advise city council on issues important to the 60+ crowd. As a Senior Commissioner, I meet with council members, the mayor, and city staff. As I learned more about my local government, I liked what I saw. I’m fortunate to live in a well-managed, fiscally responsible city.

When my term-limited councilman suggested I consider running for his seat, I initially balked. But after several encouraging meetings about the position, I decided to throw my hat in the ring. Campaigning is plenty of work. There will be even more work if I’m elected to city council. But as my Greek friend also said, “Happiness is a state of activity.” My golf game will wait.

Curriculum Opt Out Rights



By Pamela Benigno

Last spring, Governor Polis signed into law the controversial House Bill 1032, which restructures the content of comprehensive sexual education. While the legislation sparked outrage and received historic attention, instances of similar overreach are taking place at the local level, including at one elementary school in Jefferson County.

When it comes to comprehensive human sexuality programs, parents still have the right to opt their children out if they so wish. But what about K-12 instruction that touches on controversial issues outside the scope of human sexuality education: do parents have the right to request alternate assignments when their children are to be exposed to resources that are controversial or to topics that are sensitive in nature, or which directly contradict a family's values and beliefs? The answer: it depends on the school district and in some cases on whether districts decide to abide by their own policies.

Over the past year, one elementary school in Jefferson County has been working to introduce a curriculum that includes over 100 colorful storybooks and accompanying lesson plans, all of which are designed to “[foster] social-emotional learning through the lens of anti-bias education” and cover an extensive list of topics that include “race/ethnicity, immigration, religion, socio-economics, disabilities, gay/lesbian/transgender family members, divorce/blended, aging, foster care, incarceration, death, deployment, and adoption.”

In May I attended a meeting at the school. From the discussion I gathered that the purpose of the event was for parents to ask questions about the use of the AMAZEworks curriculum in their neighborhood school. In attendance were four members of the super-

intendent's cabinet and other district administrators, all of whom wore stickers demonstrating their support for the program. One administrator even suggested that he intended to encourage the adoption of the curriculum throughout the district.

While some parents who attended the meeting were also supportive of the program, others had some concerns. One dad, for instance, informed the administrators that he was uncomfortable with his kindergartner hearing stories about divorce at school. He and those who shared his qualms about the program all wanted to know whether their children could be opted-out of the program. The school's and district's response was an unequivocal “no.”

After the meeting I read several of the beautifully illustrated picture books, some of which aim to address the issue of gender identity at the kindergarten level. Parents are likely afraid to voice their concerns about the more controversial topics in the collection of stories, self-censoring what they do and do not say for fear of being ostracized by their community.

Nevertheless, a number of parents expressed their opposition to the use of these materials and the accompanying instructions. Each of these families likely has its own specific motives for their concern but what unites them is the idea that they, the parents, should be able to exercise some control over what their child is and is not exposed to, especially in the deeply personal and sensitive area of emotional and behavioral upbringing.

Our Education Policy Analyst, Wojciech Owczarek, looked into the school district's own board policies and helped equip the parents with two policies that

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Defending the Constitution

As the United States Supreme Court began its new term the Independence Institute is once again involved in several major cases, with Research Director Dave Kopel submitting amicus briefs. Two cases in which Independence Institute is participating are being heard by the Supreme Court on the merits, while several other II briefs involve pending petitions for certiorari.

Later this term, the Supreme Court will hear oral argument in major case on school choice, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. As in Colorado and many other states, the Montana Constitution includes a clause forbidding state aid to “sectarian” institutions. Most of these No Sectarian Aid clauses were created in the latter nineteenth century. The Montana Supreme Court used the Montana clause to strike down a program allowing Montana taxpayers to receive tax credits for donations to a scholarship program for disadvantaged students, since students could choose to attend religious schools.

An amicus brief by Rob Natelson and Dave debunks the widely-held notion that “sectarian” was a synonym for “religious.” In the nineteenth century, “sectarian” was widely used and understood as an epithet for bad religions: those that were considered to be extreme, fanatical, or heretical. So a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist would be considered to be “religious” but not “sectarian.” During the nineteenth century, the anti-“sectarian” language took aim at Catholics and Mormons, and the textual language is broad enough to authorize discrimination against any denomination that the government doesn’t like.

The *Espinoza* case will likely be scheduled for oral argument sometime in January through March 2020.

Already slated for oral argument on December 2 is another II case, *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. City of New York*. A City regulation forbade licensed handgun owners from taking their handguns outside the City. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the travel ban and stated that the ban probably did not even implicate Second Amendment rights.

In an amicus brief on behalf of Second Amendment law professors, civil rights organizations, and firearms

trainers, Dave explained how the travel ban is contrary to responsible firearms training and public safety. As the brief details, the Second Circuit’s hostility to the Second Amendment is not unique, and has been copied by several other courts, most notably the Ninth Circuit, which have created doctrines make it impossible for Second Amendment plaintiffs to ever win a case. The amicus brief urges the Supreme Court to issue doctrinal guidance to stop lower court defiance of the Court’s right to arms precedents in *D.C. v. Heller* and *McDonald v. Chicago*.

Another II case involves the 2005 federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA). The statute forbids lawsuits against firearms manufacturers or sellers that obey firearms laws. Even the Second Circuit and the Ninth Circuit have complied with PLCAA and enforced it as written. However, earlier this year the Connecticut Supreme Court voted 4-3 that Remington could be sued for manufacturing the rifle that was used in the 2012 murders at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Supposedly, Remington violated Connecticut’s Unfair Trade Practices Act because some its advertising had militaristic imagery.

Dave’s amicus brief in *Remington v. Soto* urges the Supreme Court to take the case. As he explains, PLCAA is similar to the Supreme Court’s 1964 decision *New York Times v. Sullivan*, which limited libel lawsuits by government officials. There was a long record in the segregated South of libel suits being filed in order to deter or punish national media or the local black press from critical coverage of government misconduct, including unjustified police violence. Likewise, PLCAA was enacted to thwart abusive lawsuits that were intended to bankrupt the firearms industry, thus achieving through the courts what the gun prohibition lobbies could not achieve in the legislatures.

Indeed, the anti-gun abusive suits are even worse than the suits in the Civil Rights Era. When police commissioner L.B. Sullivan was aggrieved by an inaccurate advertisement published in the *New York Times*, he sued the *Times*, but he didn’t sue the manufacturer of the printing press that the *Times* used to print the ad. Constitutionally speaking, printing presses and arms

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Natelson in the Media

Rob Natelson, our Senior Fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence, is becoming a favorite on the talk show circuit. During the two weeks straddling September and October, for example, he appeared on radio shows in California (twice, both syndicated), Colorado (three times), Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana (twice), Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania (twice, one syndicated), and Texas (syndicated)—and a syndicated TV show based in New Jersey.

That's 18 shows in 12 states in just two weeks. And Rob's connection with II is advertised every time.

The hot topic right now, Rob says, is impeachment. Last year, he published a scholarly article on the meaning of the term "high . . . Misdemeanors," and many of the talk show hosts want to know more about what the term means. They also quiz him on everything else the Constitution says about impeachment.

"The favorite topics change over time," Rob says. "Only a few weeks ago, most interviewers wanted to talk about the presidential election system. They wanted to know more about the Electoral College. And they were curious about proposals to elect the president by a bare plurality of the national popular vote."



He continues, "Another subject that pops up frequently is holding a convention of states to propose amendments to the Constitution. Most people understand the U.S. government has become dysfunctional and sometimes abusive. Historically, passing constitutional amendments has been a way to correct such problems."

"Talk show hosts would have accepted the conven-

tion idea a long time ago if the liberal media hadn't promoted claims that an amendments convention is a 'mystery,' and 'uncontrollable,'" Rob observes. "But fresh research has now discredited those claims. And it has become clear we can't put restore our constitutional system any other way. So there is more and more radio interest in the convention idea."

"One reason they want to talk to me about that topic is that I've become a Senior Adviser to the Convention of States project," he adds.

Rob has a background in newspapers, radio, and television. Early in his career, he worked both in newspaper journalism and in news radio. While practicing law in Colorado during the 1970s and 1980s, he was the regular real estate law columnist for the *Rocky Mountain News* and penned an occasional article for the *Denver Post*.

"But I really didn't have much contact with broadcasting during those Colorado years," he says. "I remember doing only one radio interview. What happened was, a Denver radio host was really angry about something I said in my *Rocky Mountain News* column. He invited me on his show so he could embarrass me on the air. During the program he kept trying to trip me up—but he couldn't do it, and he got incredibly frustrated."

In 1985 Rob left Colorado to embark on an academic career. His first posting was in Oklahoma, but the law school at the University of Montana recruited him two years later. In the early 1990s, he turned his scholarly attention to the poor condition of the Montana economy.

"Montana had an ill-deserved reputation as a conservative place," he says, "but state taxes and spending were utterly out of control. That and excessive regulations were driving Montana to economic oblivion. Yet very few people were saying anything about it"

So Rob became a statewide spokesman for fiscal conservatism. He led several successful ballot issue campaigns to control taxes and spending, and in 2000 placed second among five candidates in the state's bipartisan primary election for governor. In the course of all that activity, reporters and hosts working for all kinds of mass media interviewed him frequently.

For the three years before running for governor, he hosted his own drive-time radio program in Missoula. When he began, all Montana commercial radio talk shows were local. There was no way for people in different parts of that sprawling state to compare notes on statewide issues. But using then-new satellite technology, Rob extended the show to stations all throughout Montana. It continued to thrive after he left the microphone—and it's still on the air in two different forms.

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FASTER Training for Armed School Staff Adds Fall Class and Raffle

We are proud to announce we have completed four successful FASTER classes this year. FASTER is training for school staff members who are armed on their K-12 campus. This year we added a new FASTER Level 2 class for those who have already been certified, and have been carrying on campus for a year. We have trained over 200 armed

That's why we are so grateful for the partnership of program sponsors like Bullets Both Ways. Aaron Boyd founded BulletsBothWays.com to "help expand protection of our nation's schools, churches and communities." He is donating a generous portion of the proceeds from Bullets Both Ways merchandise sales to FASTER scholarships. Aaron also successfully completed a FASTER



staffers in 34 school districts in Colorado. We are proud to be a part of offering this extra level of protection for Colorado's school children.

After our summer classes were complete, we added an additional class for Thanksgiving weekend due to the overwhelming demand for training. After the STEM School shooting in May—which killed one precious, heroic child, Kendrick Castillo—we were inundated with requests for information, meetings, media, and training.

FASTER raises private money to make sure that lack of budget is never an obstacle to schools that need this lifesaving training. Active duty law enforcement instructors lead our instructor team. They deliver world-class training that is similar to what law enforcement receives in their Academies and ongoing training. And that costs money—about \$1,000 per class member.

training class so he could experience for himself the value of the training. Aaron said, *"It was surreal to meet the actual teachers, to look them in the eyes and realize the commitment they are making to be an added layer of protection in their schools."*

Recently, Columbine survivor Evan Todd joined Aaron to help with Communications at Bullets Both Ways. Evan has also attended a FASTER class as a full participant, and also attends every Level 1 class to address the school staff. They really appreciate his perspective.

Last year, we obtained our Raffle license, and just finished our 3rd raffle to raise scholarship money for FASTER. Our latest raffle, in November, featured a SIG SAUER conceal-carry raffle package. All proceeds from the raffle go to fund scholarships to FASTER.

For more information on becoming a sponsor, please contact Josh Williams at Josh.Williams@i2i.org. For program information, please visit FASTERColorado.com.

Education Policy Center Briefs School Board Candidates

By Wojciech Owczarek

At the Education Policy Center, one of our primary goals is to provide local education leaders with the up-to-date information and pertinent skills they need in order to broaden our state's educational choice landscape and to thus provide Colorado's students with the highest quality schooling. To that end, in late September we held our school board candidate policy briefings, marking the eighth election cycle in which these presentations were hosted.

All registered candidates from across the state were invited to our briefings in Denver, Loveland, and Colorado Springs; those who could not attend in person were able to participate through an online platform. In all, the presentations attracted participants from seventeen school districts across the state.

Our comprehensive 90-minute presentations covered a range of topics which included a broad overview of school choice and its history in Colorado, charter schools and waivers, blended and digital learning, career and technical education, school and educator effectiveness, school finance and student-based budgeting, as well as issues pertaining to instructor compensation and collective bargain reform. Additionally, the talks briefly addressed the topic of good governance at the school board level, allowing Pam to share some of the lessons she's learned over the course of her career in the field of education policy.

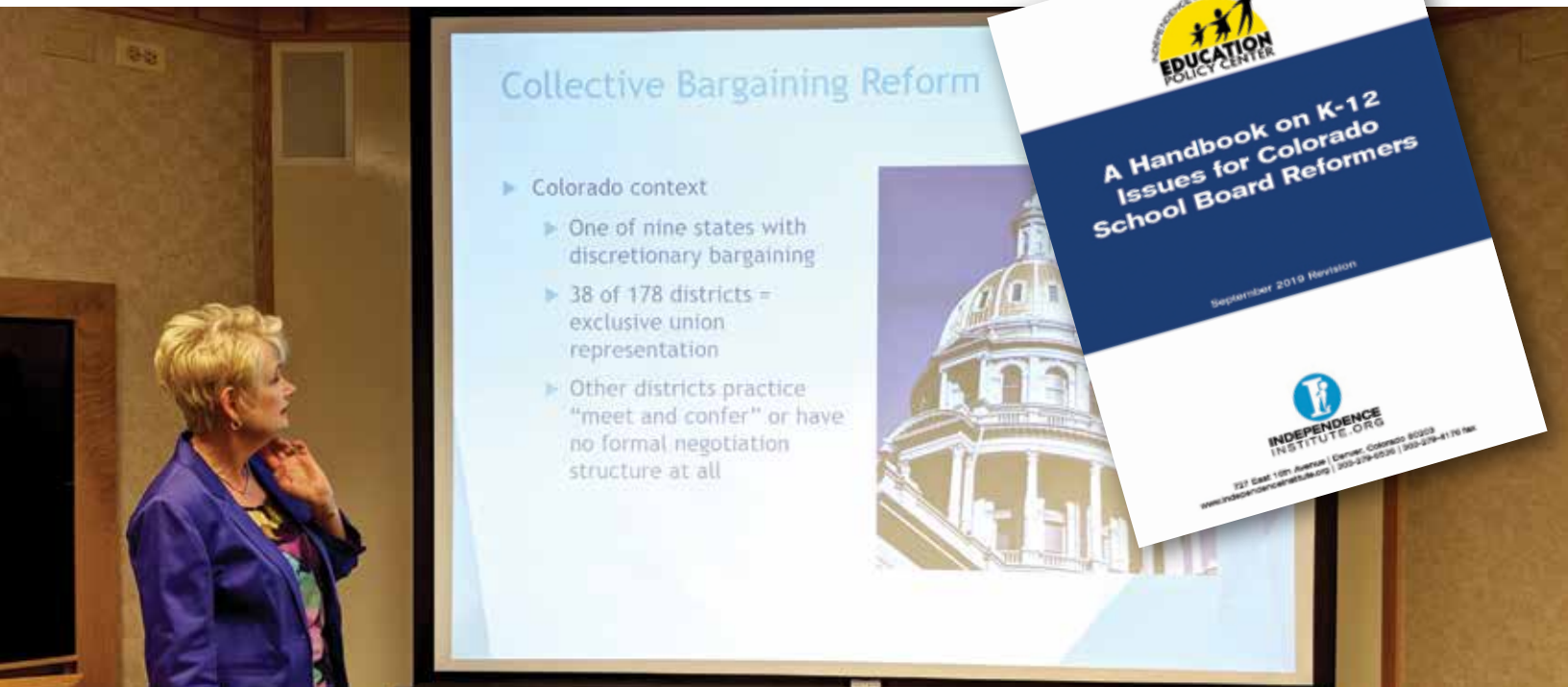
Because some of those running in 2019 are incumbents, our briefings also provided a space for those with some—or in many cases considerable—practical experience to share their lessons and observations with relative political newcomers.

To complement the briefings, the Education Policy Center also released the latest edition of its *Handbook on K-12 Issues for Colorado School Board Reformers*, edited to better reflect the facts, figures, and issues affecting Colorado education policy in 2019. The handbook covers many of the issues addressed at our briefings in much greater depth and detail and much of its content will certainly be valuable to anyone interested in education, not just those currently running for school boards.

Additionally, having helped us with the candidate briefings, Roger Good, our school board outreach coordinator has continued his statewide workshop series for active school board members. Roger's latest presentation, given to a group representing a rural school district in southern Colorado, addressed waivers open to districts wishing to pursue educational innovation.



Wojciech Owczarek is an Education Policy Analyst at the Education Policy Center.



Many Independence Institute staff and friends ride every year in the Courage Classic, a bike tour for Children's Hospital. I have the honor of being the captain of Team Parker which rides in memory of Jon's daughter, Parker Caldara.

For the past few years, Jon has issued a fundraising challenge, if Team Parker raises \$20,000, he will ride the tour. At last, we finally hit our goal by raising more than \$24,000 this year! A **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who donated.

Please enjoy our Photoshop simulation of what Jon will look like in spandex bike shorts, as he rides with us in the 2020 Courage Classic.



2019 Courage Classic

By Tracy Kimball Smith

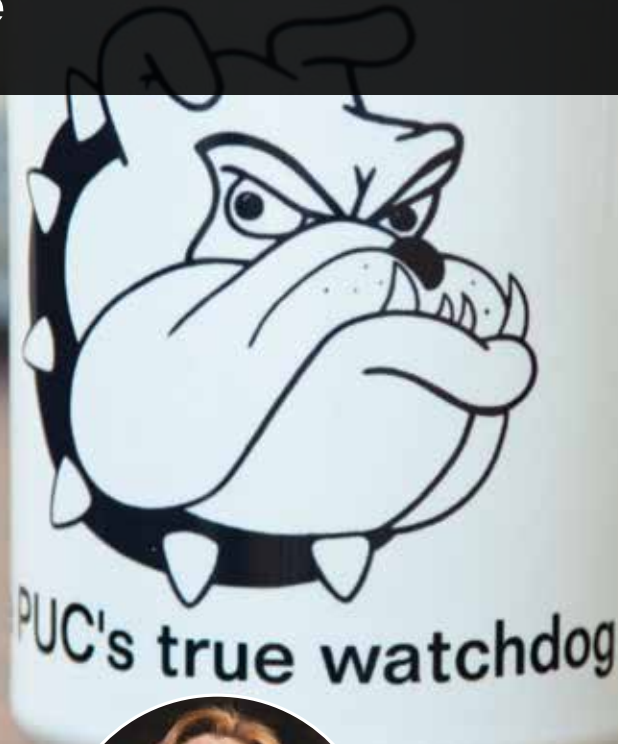


New Creative Labs Studio

Did you know, Independence Institute helps Colorado's freedom movement record award-winning video content? For instance, local education reformers Ready Colorado used our Creative Labs studio to create a video that won top honors at a reform conference.

Thanks to a recent expansion and upgrade of our media production capacities, we will be able to assist our allies with content creation better than ever before. We have recently grown our in-house production space from two rooms to three, with all new cameras, lights, and set designs. We now offer a green screen studio, a podcast/videocast studio, and our brand new production studio chock full of new professional-level equipment. **So expect to see higher quality content coming to a screen near you!**

Energy & Environmental Policy Update



By Staff



Amy Named to Utility Consumers' Board

As our Executive Vice President, director of Energy & Environmental Policy (E2P), and director of the Coalition of Ratepayers, Amy Oliver Cooke has been a Public Utilities Commission (PUC) watchdog for years, and while we've always considered this an official title, the PUC probably has not. Now, fortunately for Colorado's ratepayers, and unfortunately for Colorado's regulated utilities, Senate Minority Leader Chris Holbert named her to the eleven-member Utility Consumers' Board, which provides oversight for The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC).

As a ferocious consumer advocate against monopoly utilities, Amy is likely to be in the minority. But even if it's 10 to 1, our money is on Amy. Captive ratepayers can take comfort in knowing their voice will be heard.



Has hell frozen over or are microgrids simply the intersection of innovation, conservation, and free markets? Microgrid technology is still in its infancy and may be pricey compared to utility-scale generation, but it's also where eco-left collaborates with the free market right. Microgrids have the potential to revolutionize the energy sector as we move away from a regulated monopoly utility model and toward a peer-to-peer business model—much like we have with Uber and Airbnb.

We worked with Clean Energy Action to bring the first ever Colorado Microgrid Summit to the Independence Institute. With the most incredible line up of microgrid experts,—including our keynote, Alex Fitzsimmons from the U.S. Department of Energy—it was like Woodstock for energy geeks. Sorry you missed it? You should be. We'll do it again next year.

Can we afford to keep the lights on under the Polis Power Plan?

In May, Governor Jared Polis released a roadmap toward achieving what he promised on the campaign trail: powering Colorado with 100 percent renewable energy – industrial wind and solar – by 2040. For all the media coverage, someone should ask how much? Or, have you done a cost-benefit analysis?

Since no one seemed willing to put pencil to paper, we did.

Prior to the 2018 elections, we commissioned Energy Venture Analysis, a respected energy consulting and research firm in Washington D.C., to calculate the total cost of Polis' campaign promise. A cool \$45 billion. That number pales in comparison to results of our latest study: *The Radical Reorganization of Colorado's Electric Grid: The Cost of Keeping the Lights On*, which builds on our first study and includes battery storage.

These numbers may sound like something out of an Austin Powers movie but they're real: The Polis' promise could cost anywhere from \$941 billion to several trillion dollars, roughly a half million dollars or more for a fam-

ily of four. With those numbers, it's worth considering other alternatives.

We include two that achieve the same goal of reducing Colorado's electric grid carbon footprint. The first is nuclear power. Nuclear is more reliable, creates permanent jobs, and once built, is one of the cheapest and cleanest sources of electricity generation. The second alternative is microgrids. Microgrid technology, while expensive and still in its infancy, would permit individuals to invest in themselves and their property instead of enriching monopolies so politicians can keep unrealistic campaign promises.

Read the study at: <https://i2i.org/energy/>



MILF (Mothers in Love with Fracking)

At the Western Conservative Summit, four Colorado Christian University students proudly strutted the halls of the Denver Convention Center wearing MILF shirts. No, this is not a reference to the acronym made famous by the 90s movie *American Pie*! Get your mind out of the gutter! We all know CCU would never permit such a thing; rather, the acronym stands for Mothers In Love With Fracking (MILF).

With the passage of Senate Bill 181, Colorado's oil and gas sector is under siege. At E2P, we pride ourselves on being fuel agnostics, but when legislators try to destroy an energy source and our economy with the swipe of a pen, we won't be silent. Hence, why we brought our infamous MILF shirts to this summer's Western Conservative Summit.

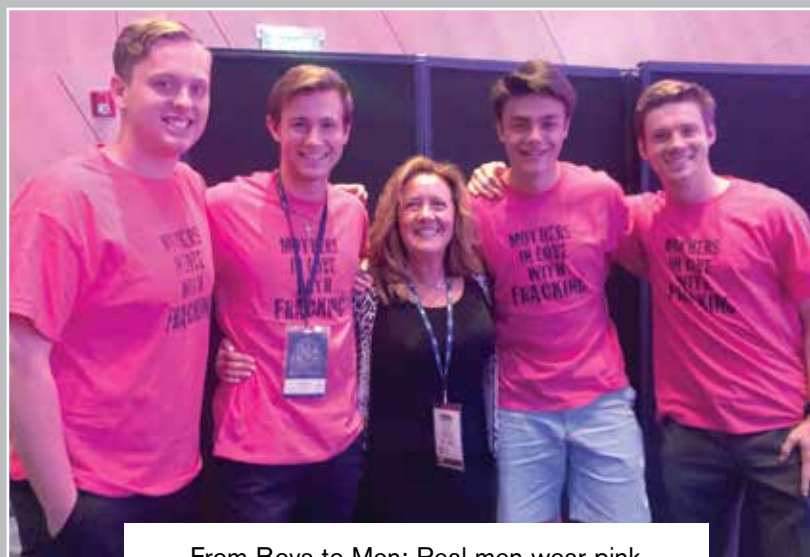
And they were a fashion and policy hit!

A MILF doesn't have to be a mother to a son or daughter working in the oil and gas industry. A MILF can be anyone who appreciates everything the industry does to make our lives easier.

The oil and gas sector touches and benefits everyone's life, every single day. Whether it's getting our hair done

or filling your car with gas or saving lives with sterile plastic medical supplies in hospitals, we all have reason to be thankful for fracking.

The men and women in the extraction and energy development industry are heroes! And these CCU students know it. Their mothers should be proud. We certainly are.



From Boys to Men: Real men wear pink

Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms Party 2019

By Josh Williams

Independence Institute likes to end the summer with a (literal) bang! We celebrated our annual Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) Party again this year in Kiowa Creek Sporting Club's brand new facility, enjoying the perks of adulthood, and proving that people on the political right know how to have a good time.

We enjoyed a keynote address from Cam Edwards, former host of "Cam and Co" on NRATV and editor of the site Bearing Arms. We also had the privilege of recognizing Aaron Cayce and Bullets Both Ways with the Liberty Leader Award for their dedication to ensur-

ing that there are bullets going both ways when danger threatens our kids in school, or in our churches.

To conclude, we had a fantastic auction that included a custom AR-15 rifle, silencer, binoculars, and a one year membership to Kiowa Creek!



Thank you everyone who came, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Josh Williams is the Manager of Donor Relations at Independence Institute.





Opt Out continued

could prove useful in requesting alternate resources for their children. The parents then presented these policies to the district’s superintendent, who subsequently agreed that, because the materials did not have board approval, under the district’s supplemental materials policy the parents had the right to request alternate resources.

Further examination of a sampling of school district board policies revealed that the overwhelming majority of metro area school districts do not have a supplemental materials policy that is as parent friendly as Jefferson County’s. Most school districts do have policies that provide parents with the opportunity to opt their children out of the use of “controversial” resources, but in that case it is important to remember that it is ultimately up to the district, not the parents, to decide whether or not the material in question is in fact controversial.

The fact that a sizeable educational program—one with a national track record of controversy—was brought into a school with little to no regard for community input highlights first and foremost the need for parents to remain watchful and pay attention to the materials and topics covered in their children’s schools. Secondly, it should be noted that in many cases parents have relatively few options when sensitive, and oftentimes politically contentious, topics are being covered in schools. The need for educational options remains high and is perhaps growing.



Pam Benigno is the Director of the Independence Institute’s Education Policy Center.

Defending continued

are two manmade tools that the Founders believed persons have a natural right to possess. Suing the manufacturers of presses or arms for third-party misuse is contrary to constitutional values.

Once the Supreme Court granted certiorari in the *City of New York* case, the Court suspended its decision-making on whether to grant certiorari in several other pending cert. petitions on the Second Amendment issues. Presumably the Court will decide whether to take some of these cases after the Court rules on the *New York* case. Pending cert. petitions for which II filed an amicus brief are *Pena v. Horan* (California’s

ban on all new models of semiautomatic pistols introduced after 2013) and *Mance v. Whitaker* (federal ban on persons buying a handgun outside their state of residence, even when in full compliance with the laws of their home state and the other state).

As always, the media turn to Dave for expertise on constitutional law issues. Some of Dave’s recent citations have been in the *New York Times*, CNN, and National Public Radio stations. Japan’s largest newspaper, the *Mainichi Times*, published an article by Dave and a supplemental interview with him.

Natelson continued

Rob became an II Senior Fellow in 1994, but it was not until 2010 that he left his professorship and returned to Colorado to work more intensively with II.

“Even before I was back, Dave Kopel, Amy Oliver Cooke, and Justin Longo were interviewing me for radio programs and II podcasts,” he says. Later, Jon Caldara began cross-examining me on his TV program, *Devil’s Advocate*. But my national

‘popularity’—if you can call it that—is more recent.”

Rob also writes for the *Epoch Times*, an international newspaper. And he frequently speaks to civic groups and national meetings. This summer he published a scholarly article on how the Founders restricted federal power, and in the fall he authored a “friend of the court” brief that II filed with the U.S. Supreme Court.

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- Mike Krause:** Editor-in-Chief, CompleteColorado.com
- Maggie Lit:** Director of Strategic Partnerships and Investor Experience
- Justin Longo:** Communications, Creative Labs, Complete Colorado
- Shayne Madsen:** Director, Political Law Center
- Tyler Massey:** Creative Labs/Digital Assets Manager
- Mary MacFarlane:** Grants & Outreach Manager
- Brit Naas:** Future Leaders Program Coordinator/ Associate Energy Policy Analyst
- Rob Natelson:** Senior Fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence
- Wojciech Owczarek:** Education Policy Analyst
- Sherrie Peif:** Capitol Hill beat and Investigative Reporter
- Dennis Polhill:** Senior Fellow
- Damon Sasso:** Vice President of Operations, and Creative Labs
- Scott Weiser:** Investigative Reporter/ Photojournalist
- Josh Williams:** Donor Relations Manager
- Karen Zuppa:** Accountant

Support the Independence Institute

2020 is just around the corner and Independence Institute needs YOUR help! We are a 501 c-3, non-profit, which means we rely entirely on donations from YOU. Without you, we can't do the work necessary to save our freedom-loving state from becoming California – trust us, progressives are already funneling in the necessary money and consultants to make it happen. Please get your end-of-year donations in today and help us tackle 2020 with the same firepower (and more) as we did 2019.

This year, with YOUR help, the Independence Institute won some of the most crucial victories for freedom in the history of Colorado. We would be remiss if we didn't start off by mentioning the defeat of Proposition CC, that would have ripped the heart out of our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and given Governor Polis and his big government lackies a blank check to spend YOUR hard-earned money. That success was historic because it gave freedom advocates across the state a reason to UNITE and FIGHT and that translated to a

substantial victory at the ballot box. However, none of this is meant to underscore the various other victories YOUR contributions afforded: we stalled radical, anti-free market proposals like rent control and mandatory paid maternity leave and fought to get an initiative on the 2020 ballot to overturn the National Popular Vote, which gives YOUR vote away to the coastal elitists in New York and California.

You see, Independence Institute does it differently. No longer can we give money to candidates and parties and trust they'll be elected and serve us as promised. Campaign finance laws and the well-funded progressive blueprint around the State Capitol changed all that. At Independence, we're doing the long-term work of expanding our Permanent Freedom Infrastructure to take down the overreach by progressive overlords.

Make your investment worth it and donate to us today!

Yes! I want to join the Independence Institute in advancing the principles of limited government.

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$1,000 \$500 \$100 Other \$ _____

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Name: _____

Please mail to: Independence Institute • PO Box 5387 • Denver, CO 80217-5387

Thank you... for partnering with us to make Colorado the destination state for freedom.



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Need a Place for Your Meeting?

Did you know you can use the event space at the Freedom Embassy (AKA Independence Institute) for your likeminded group or organization? And the best news, we let our friends and allies use the space **FREE OF CHARGE**.

Our event space can accommodate groups up to 80 people and includes use of our attached parking lot. The space includes tables and chairs, a lectern with microphone, kitchen and restrooms. We even have standing-height

cocktail tables to accommodate after-hours, networking events. The space also has a ceiling-mounted projector that allows users to show Powerpoint presentations as well as record and/or livestream their events.

All we ask is that you clean the space and put away the tables and chairs after your event. If you would like to reserve the space for your group, or if you have any questions, please contact Mary MacFarlane (mary@i2i.org).

