

INDEPENDENT Inking

FALL | 2021

A publication of



INDEPENDENCE
INSTITUTE.ORG



These boxes hold
progressives' worst
nightmare—a tax cut
for everyone who
works for a living
- PAGE 3

We are More Than a Think Tank

WE ARE AN ACTION TANK AND A
PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM FOR LIBERTY.

A central role of an effective think tank is to produce quality research and analysis. Since 1985, we have provided research resulting in changes in law and policy. But we have never been content with just research. We are more than a think tank. We are an “action tank.” We put our ideas into action through groundbreaking litigation, coalition building, work on ballot initiatives, new media and investigative reporting. We don’t just fight on paper. We fight for freedom on the streets, in the statehouse, in the media, on the ballot, and in the courts.

The mission of the Independence Institute is to empower individuals and to educate citizens, legislators and opinion makers about public policies that enhance personal and economic freedom.



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Sniffing out the Smell of Tyranny

By Jon Caldara, President

Tax reform has always been a core issue for Independence Institute. It was our work, and the great work of our economist Barry Poulson, that brought Colorado's flat tax into existence.

A couple weeks ago, we delivered over 216,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's office to place an income tax cut question on next year's ballot. It would lower Colorado's income tax rate from the current 4.55% to 4.40%.

Keep in mind, when it passes, it's additional to the tax cut we passed last year which lowered your income tax from 4.63% to 4.55%. Combined, that's a 5% reduction in state income tax in two years and we will have whittled it down by nearly half since 1987 (8% to 4.40%). And we fully intend to keep driving it lower. However, I'm not nearly so certain that our taxpayer-loathing legislature will let it count.

Some background here: Colorado has the initiative and referendum processes which are a crucial safety valve to the abuses of politicians who don't want their power limited. Without the citizens' initiative, we couldn't have passed term limits, tax cuts, open meeting laws, or the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Colorado lawmakers have always attacked our initiative process. Several years ago, we brought forward a successful federal lawsuit over a new law that banned paying petition gatherers by the signature. The law was meant to make sure people like you and me wouldn't be able to afford to get reforms on the ballot.

But in the last year, Jared Polis and the Democrat-controlled legislature have gone full nuclear on the people's will.

What am I talking about? Well, the legislature has bathed themselves in billions of dollars in tax increases without going to a vote of the people. They do this by calling a tax increase a "fee" increase and use euphemisms like "faster fee," "mill levy freeze" and "hospital provider fee."

So ugly is this practice that the voters of Colorado passed Prop 117 in 2020 to stop it, requiring that any sizable "fee" increase must be voted on by the people.

To spit in the face of the people and ignore their expressed will, instead of passing one large "fee" that would've been subject to a vote under Prop 117, the legislature broke it into several "fees" that equate to one massive tax increase. This includes an \$0.08/gallon gas tax you didn't get to vote on.

The message from Polis and his legislature is clear enough: screw you. No matter how often you demand consent, we will find a way to avoid your consent. Outside of government, don't private individuals, like Bill Cosby, go to jail for similar behavior?

This "win at any cost" operating system from Polis and his progressives makes Richard Nixon look like a Girl Scout.

Now, to impede the power of the citizen's initiative and prevent future tax cuts, the legislature has passed a bill (HB21-1321) to put an ugly, scary, and inaccurate preamble on any tax cut ballot question declaring all sorts of doom and gloom if it passes. Think of it as the equivalent of a Surgeon General's warning on your ballot—"if you vote for this tax cut, it will cause birth defects in unborn babies."

Fortunately, our recent income tax initiative cut just made it under the wire. But here's my fear. What does the legislature have up its sleeve to subvert the will of the people and invalidate an income tax cut they know voters will pass? It's something citizens who brought forward initiatives have never had to think about before in Colorado history.

Something has the scent of tyranny down at the Capitol.

Think Freedom,



Polis' COVID Policies Weighed Most Heavily on Small Businesses

By Ben Murrey

Independence Institute recently released a study on the economic consequences of Polis' COVID-19 mandates. It shows that the number of open small businesses in Colorado has declined by a staggering 40% from before the pandemic. State mandates and economic lockdowns are largely to blame.

"[T]he number of open small businesses in Colorado declined by over 40% from pre-pandemic levels," the study found. "During the same period, stock prices increased by an average of 61.4% among the Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Colorado."

On March 16, 2020, Polis closed bars, in-restaurant dining, theaters, gyms, and casinos. He restricted the workforce of all non-essential businesses to 50% of staff, and by the end of March, he ordered all non-essential businesses to close. Only in mid-May did he allow them all to start reopening, but with capacity limits and additional restrictions.

Those policies weighed especially heavily on Colorado's small businesses.

The Independence Institute study highlights a minority couple who poured years of work and their life savings into their small business. They attempted to stay open during the pandemic but faced fines of \$15,000 per day for violating lockdowns. They eventually had to file bankruptcy, and they lost everything.

"Our American dream was dead, because of government policies," the couple said.

Now, after wreaking havoc on the Colorado economy and causing the closure of thousands of small businesses across the state, Polis is posturing as the savior of small business. The governor's fiscal year 2022-23 budget released in early November proposes over \$700 million in spending to help businesses recover from the pandemic.

Do not be fooled. Governor Polis and the Democrat-controlled legislature had a large hand in the struggles Coloradans now face, particularly small business owners.

When the federal government granted tax relief for small businesses in the CARES Act, Democrat legislators in Colorado took away those provisions at the state level with HB20-1420.

Now, after denying these businesses tax relief at the height of the pandemic when they most needed it, Polis' budget proposes to fund government programs to help businesses "recover faster and stronger." That includes \$2.5 million for the Colorado Equity Office, a new state agency created to further "equity, diversity and inclusion efforts throughout the state."

The budget also proposes "\$104 million in fee relief for individuals and businesses." The pittance sum will hardly make a dent in the nearly \$4 billion dollars in new government fees created this year without voter consent.

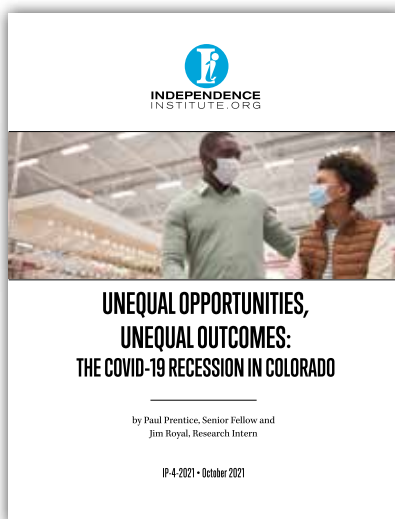
A large portion of this "fee relief" is slated to reduce payroll taxes. But Colorado had no state payroll taxes until the Democrat-backed payroll tax to fund mandated family and medical leave passed last year. It will cost businesses \$1.3 billion dollars per year by 2025, according to analysts.

Policies from Governor Polis and other Colorado Democrats have devastated the state's small businesses, and now they want to start and fund new government programs to solve the problems they created—or at a minimum exacerbated.

Businesses do not need more government intervention; they need government

to get out of the way.

To read the complete study, please go to: i2i.org/fiscal.



Ben Murrey

Ben Murrey serves as Director of Fiscal Policy, working to promote fiscal responsibility in Colorado government and to defend the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

Candidate Policy Briefings Influence School Board Election Outcomes

By Pam Benigno

I find speaking to a group of people in southern Colorado invigorating because they tend to be happy and full of energy. On a September evening in Colorado Springs, the bipartisan gathering of 20 school board candidates from nine different school districts did not disappoint. One candidate drove two-and-a-half hours for our 90-minute K-12 policy briefing. The most energized of the candidates were five women from Huerfano School District who came up from Walsenburg. Now, all five of them are school board directors-elect. Of the 20 candidates in attendance at my Colorado Springs briefing, 19 won (including two Democrats and several who are unaffiliated).

For the ninth consecutive election cycle, the Education Policy Center hosted five school board candidate policy briefings in three cities, plus one virtual event. Topics included open enrollment, charter schools, collective bargaining reform, teacher evaluations, compensation reform, school finance, literacy, and critical race theory.

63 candidates from 37 different school districts attended one of the policy briefings. It was an opportunity for us to share our perspective on important educational topics and to offer our services for future policy decisions. Based on unofficial results, 48 of those 63 candidates won their election, including 11 Democrats. I am always glad when Democrats attend because they have the opportunity to learn about how their party supported or initiated reforms, such as charter schools, the Innovation Act, and tenure reform. All attendees received copies of our numerous issue papers, including the history of Colorado's charter school law. Additionally, all candidates statewide received an electronic version of our 2021 School Board Member Handbook.

Generally, school district board member elections receive very little attention unless there is enough controversy in a particular school district to stir up voters other than school district employees. This year was an exception.



School board candidate briefing at the Loveland Chophouse

Fury has been stirred up statewide and nationally. In Colorado alone, conservatives flipped eight school boards. Parents are upset about the debacle in the spring of 2020 when school buildings were closed and students were taught (or not taught) via the internet. For many it was an awakening when they heard terms like “white privilege” coming through their computer speakers. For others, they discovered the modest amount of work actually required to pass a class. And now, parents are divided over student mask mandates for attending class in person.

The education of most of Colorado's children is in the hands of elected school district board members, and few parents have historically paid enough attention to what is being taught, but that is now changing.

Once COVID-19 is no longer the main focus, I hope the current interest and momentum will shift to parental demand for curricula transparency. Parents should oust school board members who are not focused on student achievement but allow the public education establishment free rein to indoctrinate students with harmful political ideologies. And you can trust that Independence Institute's Education Policy Center will be there to help and support Colorado's parents.



Pam Benigno

Pamela Benigno is Director of the Education Policy Center. A tireless advocate for both public and private school choice, she works with education organizations, policymakers, and community leaders to expand school choice opportunities.

Stay Informed Daily About the 2nd Amendment, Free Speech and Sports!

By Dave Kopel

You already know that *Complete Colorado* is the best online newspaper for state and local news. What about national and international news? Let me suggest *Kopel's Law and Liberty News*. The paper is published twice daily, at 8:38 a.m. and 8:38 p.m., Mountain Time. Subscriptions are free. Just go to paper.li/davekopel, and enter your email address to receive notification when an edition is published.

Kopel's Law and Liberty News doesn't duplicate the kind of coverage you could find in the front section of the *Denver Post*, or on CNN. Instead, I collect stories and sources you probably haven't seen via the usual old media.

Of course, there's a lot of coverage of right-to-arms issues, nationally and internationally. Even the sports section is focused on hunting tips, gear reviews, sports shooting competitions, and wild game recipes.

On other topics, you'll find great stories from sources like *The Federalist*, *Reason*, the *Washington Examiner*, *Quillette*, *National Review*, and the *Jerusalem Post*. My parents were liberal John F. Kennedy Democrats, and since I come from a very anti-communist family, you'll find

plenty of articles about the modern threats of communism—including Taiwan's struggle for independence, the Tibetan government in exile, and the Cuban resistance.

As you might expect from a Kennedy Democrat, you'll find pro-free speech and very anti-racism content. So nearly every issue of the newspaper covers attacks on free thought at home and abroad, and also tells the stories of people fighting back against the modern-day racists attempting to indoctrinate schoolchildren with so-called "critical race theory."

As an experienced U.S. Supreme Court attorney, you'll also find coverage of major legal cases, especially those involving constitutional law.



Dave Kopel

Dave Kopel is Director of our Second Amendment Project and our Research Director. He is also an adjunct scholar with the Cato Institute in Washington; and adjunct professor of advanced constitutional law at University of Denver's Sturm College of Law.

Keeping an Eye on the Unelected Bureaucrats

By Shayne Madsen

The Political Law Center is pleased to welcome our new Energy and Environmental Policy Research Associate, Jake Fogleman. Jake is a graduate of Metropolitan State University in Denver and recently interned with Dave Kopel in the Second Amendment Project. In addition to working for IL, Jake is also a contributing writer at *The Reload*, an independent publication covering firearms politics and policy.

While the Political Law Center carefully monitors legislation, we are also quite busy during the interim. The Colorado legislature consistently grants broad rule-making authority to Colorado agencies, boards, and commissions for proceedings outside the legislative session. It is in these administrative proceedings that more detailed restrictions are adopted. During the current interim, we are closely watching the Colorado Department of Transportation in connection with its efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions through rulemaking.

These proceedings will be closely tied to the actions of both the Air Quality Control Commission and the Regional Air Quality Control Council.

No aspect of the Colorado economy is too small or remote for the current regulators. We are also following the efforts of groups to develop a Natural and Working Lands Strategic Plan with the Department of Agriculture.

In short, we continue to be very busy and watchful.



Shayne Madsen

Shayne M. Madsen is the Director of our Political Law Center where she is a leading voice on donor privacy issues. She previously led the Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs Practice Group in the Denver office of law firm Jackson Kelly PLLC.

Path to Zero: Our long-term plan to bring Colorado's income tax to zero

LEGEND

PHASE ONE: FOUNDATION

Establish the pillars for Colorado's economic prosperity, a flat income tax and our Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

PHASE TWO: DEFEND

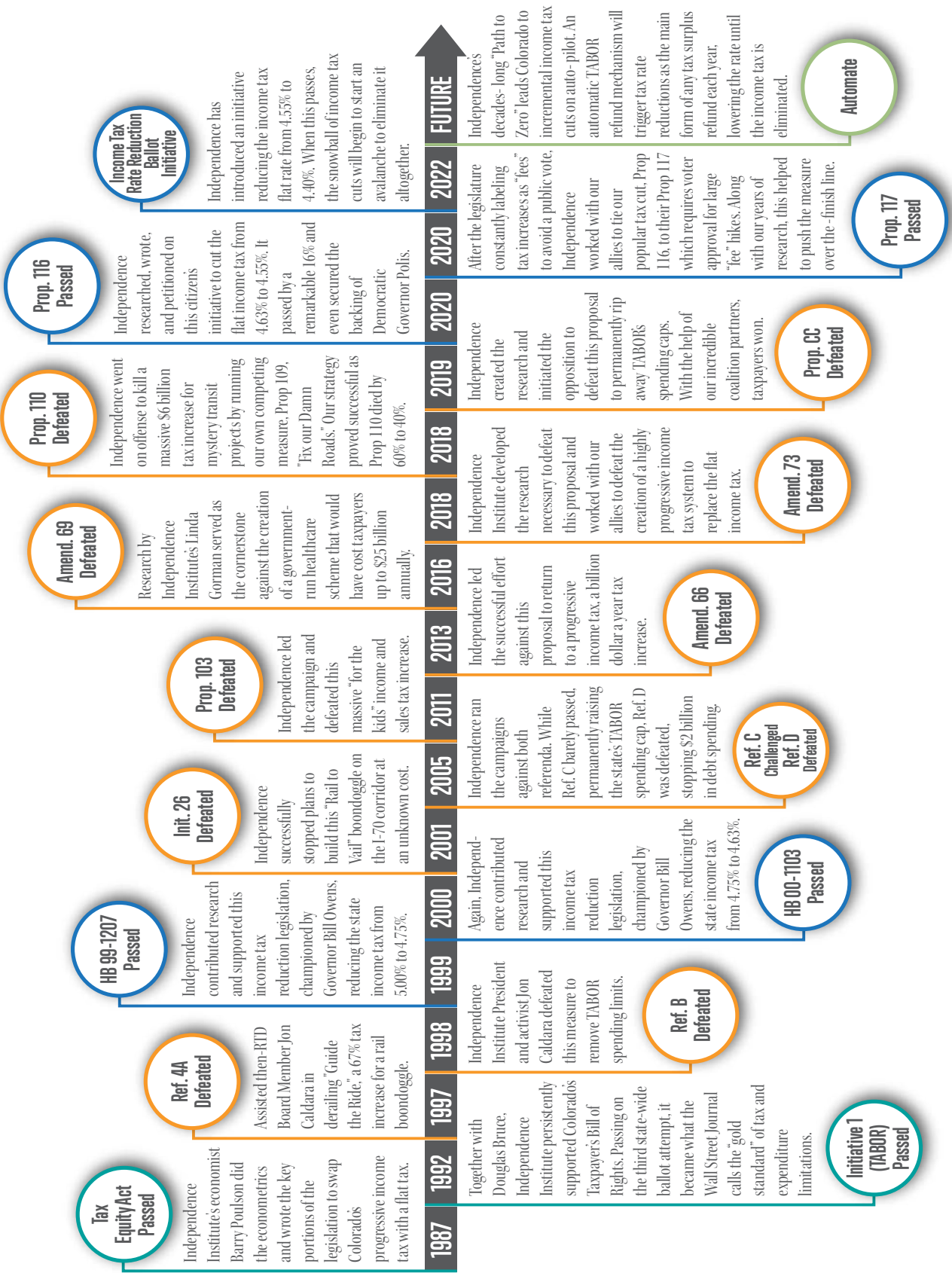
Battle back the threats waged against Colorado's taxpayers.

PHASE THREE: OFFENSE

Reduce Colorado's income tax rate and expand taxpayer protection.

PHASE FOUR: AUTOMATE

Implement TABOR refund method or similar automatic triggers for tax rate reductions.



Annual ATF Party Celebrates the Perks of Adulthood

We were so excited to party with the best this year at our annual Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Party at Kiowa Creek Sporting Club on September 18. If you missed this fun and liberal-irritating party, we hope you can join us next year.

Continuing with our tradition, we brought together shooters from all over the state (with a handful of out-of-staters mixed in too) to celebrate the perks of adulthood together. We had expert shooters, first-time shooters, first-time drinkers, and many who just came to enjoy a party with fellow freedom-lovers.

After shooting the course, guests heard from Dave Kopel, Independence Institute’s Director of Second Amendment Project and Laura Carno, Executive Director of FASTER Colorado followed by a chat with keynote speaker Ross Kaminsky over lunch and booze, and of course fine cigars compliments of our friends at Smoker Friendly. We wrapped up the festivities with awards for the day’s best (and worst) shooters, including our famed “tiara of shame” for the worst.

A special thank you to our sponsors and guests. We look forward to seeing you next year!



Independence Institute President Jon Caldara welcomes the 2021 ATF Party attendees



Corey Sheldon (Best Female Shooter), Jonathan Sheldon, and Brandon Fancher (Best Male Shooter)



Trevor Millikan receives the award for Worst Male Shooter from Jon Caldara



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Annual ATF Party Celebrates the Perks of Adulthood



Chris Balzano, Brent Bickel, Tim Collins



Cody Wisnieski, Robert Kearney, Instructor Tina Francone, Elizabeth Kearney, Marion Sasso, Justin Sasso



Tyler DeHaan, Trevor Millikan, Jason Vaughn, Instructor Bob Meyer, John Kamm



Ross Kaminsky and Jon Caldara



Dennis Flaherty, John Contino, Nathan Want, Instructor Frank Francone, Kyle Blacketer, John Koeltzow

Tours, Columns and Speaking Engagements

By Rob Natelson

As II's Senior Fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence, I've been giving a series of lectures in Montana about the Constitution's amendment process.

Why Montana? Although I became an Independence Institute senior fellow in 1994, I did so while serving as professor of law at the University of Montana (1987-2010). While in that state, I championed smaller state government, lower taxes, privatization, and school choice. In 2000, I ran for Governor, coming in second in a field of five Republicans and Democrats in the open party primaries.

By 2010, I had become thoroughly disillusioned with the corruption and far-left bigotry of academia and decided to flee. So with my wife I moved back to Colorado to work with Independence Institute full time.

I'm currently the nation's most published active scholar on the amendment process described in Article V of the Constitution, and I moderate our Article V Information Center. Montanans are now actively considering whether to join the growing movement pushing for a "convention of the states" to formally propose one or more amendments checking federal overreach. Any proposed amendments still would have to be ratified by three-fourths of the states (38).

Because of my Montana reputation, I'm well positioned to help the state's citizens decide whether to promote a convention to check federal excess.

The first branch of my tour was in September, when, in conjunction with state senator Tom McGillvray (R.-Billings), I spoke to large and enthusiastic audiences in Helena and Billings. In October, Senator McGillvray and I addressed

similar groups in Bozeman, Kalispell, and Great Falls. There will be a third tour in late January and early February.

Meanwhile, I continue to contribute a weekly column for *The Epoch Times*, a conservative international newspaper. I've covered such issues as vaccination mandates, the possibility of removing Joe Biden from office for incapacity, the amendment process, the constitutionality of federal lands holdings, and the history and meaning of the Constitution. In addition, *The Epoch Times* has issued a special edition called "Defending the Constitution," containing ten of my writings on the Constitution. You may have received a copy of that edition in the mail.

I've also contributed two essays to the latest special edition of *The Epoch Times* as well.

Finally, I appear regularly on radio programs across the nation, and occasionally on television. Jon Caldara recently interviewed me for *Devil's Advocate* on PBS, where we discussed vaccination mandates.

I am very grateful for your support for the Independence Institute—the best policy center on the planet.

You can read my work at: i2i.org/constitution.



Rob Natelson

Professor Robert G. Natelson is a Senior Fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence and heads our

Constitutional Studies and Article V Information Centers. He is widely acknowledged to be the country's leading active scholar on the Constitution's amendment procedure and among the leaders on several other topics.



Liberals Triggered on Colorado Gives Day and Donations Keep Coming!

By Mary Goodley

When Independence Institute hit our fundraising goal in 2020 we sent a message to the tyrants on the Tri-County Health Board by gifting each member a Liberty Kit that included a pocket Constitution, Liberty Bell, and Gadsden flag. Whew—were they triggered!

It was so much fun that this year we decided to go bigger and better! We created personalized, liberal-triggering Christmas presents to the individuals who have done the most to turn

our once liberty-loving state into the command-and-control, over-taxed, over-regulated, over-dependent, hypersensitive, politically correct, buzz-kill state of California. Again—were they triggered! Thanks to our generous supporters, we achieved each of the five goals listed below and continue to receive donations each day. **Colorado Gives Day donations can still be accepted through the end of the year so if you haven't joined in the fun, please visit i2i.org/cgd**

COLORADO GIVES DAY TOTAL	CHRISTMAS GIFT	LIBERAL TRIGGER LEVEL ACHIEVED
\$15,000+ Tay Anderson will receive...	 "TEEN CRUSH" TOTE BAG <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-year subscription to Seventeen magazine• "How to Flirt with Women" book He does it for the kids... well, mostly the teen girls	OVERWHELMED 
\$30,000+ Kevin Priola will receive...	 "WISHY WASHY" SQUISH KIT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Squishmallow hug toy• Pre-filled "Rep." to "Dem." voter registration change form Soft enough for Colorado's squishiest Republican	IRRITATED 
\$45,000+ Mayor Hancock will receive...	 "DUMP ON DENVER" DRIFTER SET <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Squatty Potty• Reserved downtown Denver camping site Defecating on Denver shouldn't be such a strain	CRANKY 
\$60,000+ Governor Polis will receive...	 FESTIVE "MEAT FREE" FEAST <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bean curd BBQ rib roast• Artificial turkey loaf• Ham-flavored vegan product <i>like</i> The holidays never tasted quite this good	ENRAGED 
\$80,000+ Faith Winter will receive...	 "COMING OUT COMMUNIST" CHRISTMAS PACK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commie PJs, mug, and fur hat• "Communism's Best Hits" mix CD• Communist Manifesto book Someone's gettin' cozy with Karl tonight	VEIN-POPPING 

Election Coverage by *Complete Colorado*

By Mike Krause

There's little doubt that Colorado's November election ended up being a mixed bag, with both major parties and competing non-partisan ideologies seeing electoral gains in some areas and losses in others, and *Complete Colorado* was hip deep in the action. Our Page Two election coverage and commentary leading up to election day, and our post-election look at the aftermath, drew just under 60,000 readers combined. From early September, *Complete* published dozens of journalistic articles and opinion pieces on the statewide ballot measures as well highly localized coverage of election issues; taking a look at various municipal races, as well as local ballot measures across the state. *Complete Colorado* appears to have been the only media outlet to cover the far-left Working Families Party endorsing city council candidates in non-partisan municipal races all over the metro-Denver area.

We also covered multiple school board races, as well as shenanigans within those races. *Complete* was the first to cover hundreds of thousands of dollars of independent expenditure committee (IEC) spending by a collection of teachers' unions and union-backed groups, using the exact same language to both praise union-backed candidates and attack their opponents in multiple school districts.

Complete also ran opinion content on statewide and local measures from a variety of high-pro-

file Coloradans, including former Colorado Governor Bill Owens and State Senator Bob Gardner, among others.

Our post-election work looked at the impact an unprecedented effort by the legislature to meddle in the citizens' initiative process had on the outcome of Proposition 120 as well as post-mortems on the failed Amendment 78 and the jam-packed Denver ballot. We also took a look at outcomes in nominally non-partisan municipal races where the state Republican Party endorsed candidates for the first time in recent memory.

Both the *Complete Colorado* aggregator and Page Two original content sites continue to be regular go-to sources of news and information for many thousands of politically engaged Coloradans, and it wouldn't be possible without the generous support of Independence Institute donors. So as always, thank you and please tell a friend or two about *Complete Colorado*.



Mike Krause

Mike Krause is Editor-in-Chief of *Complete Colorado*. A former ski instructor and construction carpenter, Mike has been a Senior Fellow and editorial writer at II before heading up *Complete Colorado*.

Local Government Project is Expanding

By Kathleen Chandler

The Local Government Project is now offering another class: *Speaking Up and Speaking Out*.

Over the past few years, many people have become frustrated; they are not able to talk to their neighbors, their friends or even their family members without getting into a heated argument.

Speaking Up and Speaking Out participants practice skills, ask each other questions, and learn techniques to persuade others to think about freedom and ideas that promote economic and personal liberty. Learn how to be courageous in the face of cancel culture!

Speaking Up and Speaking Out is part of Independence Institute's Local Government Project. We are working to change Colorado by being part of the solution to government over-

reach. We want to help good people engage government as we seek the freedom to live out the American dream in the West. Success begins with you!

Are you ready to stop complaining and learn how to persuade? Watch our website for more information about our next class, coming up at the end of the year: i2i.org/local-gov.



Kathleen Chandler

Kathleen Chandler is the Coalition and Future Leaders Program Manager for Independence

Institute. She also runs our Local Government Project. She has a degree in Political Science from the University of Colorado and has been involved in politics since she was 18 years old.

Creative Labs: Spreading the Message of Freedom

By Tyler Massey

Independence Institute's Creative Labs team has been up to some very exciting things to help spread the message of freedom in Colorado. Not only have we continued providing media resources to freedom-minded groups around the state, but we have also introduced new ways to take advantage of our studios and meeting spaces. One of the newest developments has been our "Brown Bag Lunch" events. Each lunch, hosted live via Zoom, features a director from one of our many policy centers providing donors with a detailed rundown of policy center accomplishments and focus areas. Because of Studio B donors, from the comfort of home, can stay informed on how their generosity is helping the state of Colorado.

While Studio B has made many new event types possible, it has also enhanced events that Independence Institute has hosted for years. For example, for the first time this year, our Education Policy Center was able to conduct a virtual School Board Candidate Briefing, attracting attendees from the far reaches of state who otherwise might have been too far away to make an in-person briefing. In total, we were able to connect with school board candidates from 37 different school districts.

Over the last month alone, we livestreamed two unique events that previously would have been in-person only.

In partnership with Public Trust Institute, we hosted a one-of-a-kind legal course, providing attorneys with a means to satisfy the now-mandatory Equity, Diversity, and

Inclusivity (EDI) continuing legal education (CLE) credit requirement, without subjecting them to the propaganda found in most available EDI courses.

With the support of The Heritage Foundation, we hosted author Mike Gonzalez to speak about his new book, *BLM: The Making of a Marxist Revolution*, and participate in a Q&A with the audience.

In addition to all these new developments, our existing projects are alive and well. We still film and produce *Devil's Advocate*, Jon Caldara's weekly PBS12 politics and current affairs show. I encourage you to look up past shows by going to YouTube and searching for "IITV."

There you will also find the newest episode of *Kopel's Law & Liberty News*. In the most recent episode, Research Director and 2nd Amendment expert Dave Kopel looks at the controversial *Dred Scott* decision and discusses what that decision meant for the right to bear arms in America. In this 10-minute video, Kopel offers valuable insight on the little known implications of a well-known case.

Don't forget to subscribe to the channel and hit the "bell" button. That way you'll be notified whenever we release a new video.



Tyler Massey

Tyler Massey is Independence Institute's Media Production Manager. He produces video content and promotes our pro-liberty message on social media platforms.



Tyler Massey runs the board for a multi-camera livestream production.



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FASTER Colorado and LifeSpot Hold First School Safety Event

By Laura Carno

On November 13th, FASTER Colorado and LifeSpot held their first School Safety Event at The Sanctuary Golf Course in Sedalia. Attendees included school administrators and board members in districts that already utilize LifeSpot and have attended FASTER training for armed school staff; school administrators and board members who were interested in finding out more about improving their district's safety plans; and concerned parents who wanted to understand how these policies work in practice.

Speakers included Brett Titus from LifeSpot, Laura Carno and Quinn Cunningham from FASTER Colorado, George Brauchler, a panel that included superintendents and an attorney from Mountain States Legal Foundation, John Castillo, and Dave Liniger, founder of RE/MAX.

We look forward to hosting similar events each year to continue to educate school staff, parents, and voters on improved programs and technology that will empower them to make our communities and kids safer.



Laura Carno

Laura Carno is the Executive Director of FASTER Colorado, a project of Independence Institute, that trains school staff to provide armed defense and emergency medical aid.



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