



The following are Independence Institute's voting recommendations based on its review of all ballot measures.

Recommendation
VOTE YES

Amendment 78: Legislative Authority for Spending State Money

Why we support Amendment 78

This citizen-initiated measure would mandate transparency and accountability to the distribution of funds [currently known as "custodial funds"] that are paid to state government officers and agencies, outside of the state budget. Examples of "custodial funds" include large settlements from litigation against opioid manufacturers, environmental fines levied against polluters, and federal funds [such as the billions of dollars in pandemic money]. Rather than leave distribution of such funds to the whims of a single state officer, or worse to unelected boards and commissions, Amendment 78 requires that all funds be distributed through the transparent and public legislative appropriation process. No more backroom deals that do not benefit all Coloradans.

Recommendation
NEUTRAL

Proposition 119: Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress Program

Why we are neutral on Proposition 119

This proposal would create the Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress Program [LEAP], an out-of-school learning program for Colorado students between the ages of five and seventeen. The program would provide support to students for services like tutoring in core subject areas, summer enrichment programs, certain therapy programs, mentoring, and variety of other services. The program would be funded by a new tax on marijuana sales as well as a reallocation of some revenue under the State Land Trust.

While we welcome the move toward parental empowerment in education—especially in the wake of the pandemic—we are concerned about new taxes and have some questions about the way in which this new program would be governed and administered by the state. As such, we remain neutral on this proposal.

Recommendation
VOTE YES

Proposition 120: Property Tax Assessment Rate Reduction

Why we support Proposition 120

This measure would reduce residential and non-residential property tax rates beginning on January 1, 2022. Colorado home values rose on average by more than 20 percent over the last year. That means homeowners will owe much more in property taxes with nothing to offset that added cost. At the same time, inflation on the basic goods and services we all purchase have risen by over 5 percent and the price of gas has risen by over 50 percent, squeezing household budgets.

The Gallagher Amendment prevented these drastic upswings in home values from translating into skyrocketing property tax bills for homeowners. Had it not been repealed, assessment rates would have dropped this year, largely offsetting the tax increase from rising home values. While Coloradans and policymakers work to find a new long-term protection for homeowners to replace Gallagher, the measure's 9 percent reduction in residential property assessment rates will help to offset the property tax increases resulting from the soaring real estate market.