

## Annelise Shepherd

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**From:** Kelly Brough, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce <info@denverchamber.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 5:44 PM  
**To:** Annelise Shepherd  
**Subject:** Colorado, Your Votes Are In



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Dear Annelise,

### **Colorado Voters Decide Key Ballot Issues for Business Community**

The presidential election may still be undecided, but we do know where Colorado voters came down on the key ballot issues for the business community. The Denver Metro Chamber took positions on eight issues. While results didn't go as we had hoped for some issues, we're proud of Colorado's record voter turnout. Coloradans cast over 3.1 million votes, blowing away the 2016 record voter turnout of 2.86 million. [View a breakdown of who voted in this election.](#)

Here are the outcomes of the key issues for the business community. (Results as of 4 p.m., Wednesday)

#### **Amendment B: Repeal Property Tax Assessment Rates**

**Chamber Position: Support**

**Passed – 57.37% to 42.63%**

This initiative repeals the Gallagher Amendment, which required 45% of the total share of

state property taxes come from residential property taxes and 55% of the total share of state property taxes come from non-residential (commercial) property taxes.

We're pleased that Colorado voters saw the challenge presented by locking a formula like Gallagher into our Constitution. While this repeal can't undo decades of shifting our tax burden onto businesses, it does stabilize property rates where they are today. This adds much-needed predictability for businesses at a time they need it most and will help fund essential local services foundational to any strong economy like transportation, education and public safety.

**Proposition EE: Increase Taxes on Nicotine Products**

**Chamber Position: Support**

**Passed – 67.89% to 32.11%**

Proposition EE raises taxes on cigarettes, tobacco and, for the first time, applies a tax to nicotine vaping products equal to the tax on other tobacco products. Revenue will provide relief to state budget cuts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and then go to nicotine education and cessation and health care programs, as well as early childhood education.

We're pleased that Colorado came out so strongly in support of proposition. It will apply consistent tax policy to new products, such as vaping, while also increasing funds for education and health measures that aim to improve public health in Colorado.

**Proposition 113: Adopt Agreement to Elect U.S. Presidents by National Popular Vote**

**Chamber Position: Oppose**

**Passed – 52.16% to 47.84%**

Proposition 113 affirms Colorado's participation in the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). States in the NPVIC agree to give their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who wins the National Popular Vote, regardless of which candidate wins in that respective state.

We opposed this proposition and hope the passage will not reduce Colorado's political voice by handing our electoral votes to whichever candidate wins states with larger populations, like California. The compact won't take effect until enough states sign on to represent 270 electoral votes, which will be a challenge. With Colorado, the compact represents 15 states and 196 electoral votes.

**Proposition 114: Restoration of Gray Wolves**

**Chamber Position: Oppose**

**Too Close to Call – 50.15% to 49.85%**

Proposition 114 allows for the reintroduction of gray wolves in certain areas west of the Continental Divide by 2024. According to state wildlife officials, the program could cost approximately \$5.7 million over eight years, and a funding source has yet to be identified.

We're disappointed that voters decided to override the experts of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, who have studied the reintroduction of gray wolves four times and decided against it, and we're concerned for our partners in the agriculture industry, particularly ranchers, who are already facing great challenges in the current economy.

**Proposition 116: State Income Tax Rate Reduction**

**Chamber Position: Oppose**

**Passed – 57.25% to 42.75%**

This proposition decreases the state income tax rate from 4.63% to 4.55%.

We know it's hard to say no to a personal income tax reduction, so while we're disappointed, we aren't shocked by the results. Colorado's income tax rate has never been a hurdle in the economic development efforts that have led us to be the top economy in the country. This reduction will dig a bigger budget hole for our state, presenting even more challenges in terms of supporting foundational government services like transportation. While we know every dollar counts for Coloradans right now, we worry that this cut has more downsides than upsides for all of us as our state struggles to fund its core responsibilities.

**Proposition 117: Voter Approval Requirement for Creation of Certain Fee-Based Enterprises**

**Chamber Position: Oppose**

**Passed – 52.42% to 47.58%**

This initiative requires voter approval of new state enterprises if the enterprise's projected or actual revenue from fees and surcharges is greater than \$100 million within its first five years.

Fees, when properly identified as fees, can and should be utilized to help fund specific initiatives directly tied to those fees. The passage of this measure concerns us in that it may paralyze our state's ability to generate new revenue to cover specific uses. It creates a barrier to generating fee-based revenue, which our state has historically used for everything from fixing bridges to increasing access to health care to funding higher education via tuition.

**Proposition 118: Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program**

**Chamber Position: Oppose**

**Passed – 57% to 43%**

This initiative establishes a state-administered paid family and medical leave program funded by a payroll tax on employers and workers.

Our members have been and will continue to be committed to providing paid family and

medical leave. The passage of Proposition 118 is concerning to us because we don't believe the state can financially sustain the program or timely deliver on the promised benefits. We know paid family leave is a critical issue to address but believe the approach in Proposition 118 puts benefits at risk at times when families will need them most. Because we fear there will be unintended consequences from this ballot issue, we will devote our efforts to minimizing the risks for Colorado employers and employees.

## **Denver 2H: Municipal Broadband Opt-Out**

### **Chamber Position: Oppose**

#### **Passed – 83.4% to 16.6%**

This measure allows the City and County of Denver to enter the internet provider business by opting out of a 2005 state law (SB05-152) that restricts governments from using tax dollars to build broadband networks, including infrastructure.

We opposed this measure because we believe Denver would achieve equitable access faster and more affordably through our existing investments and public-private partnership efforts. We hope Denver will continue to explore these partnerships as leaders move forward with this measure.

### **What's Next**

The 2021 Legislative Session is just around the corner, and we are already meeting with lawmakers to advocate on your behalf. Your perspective is important to us. If you have thoughts to share on the upcoming session, please reach out to us.

The start of the session means our Business Legislative Preview is coming up, too. This event, to be held virtually Jan. 5, 2021, is where we bring together the leadership of the Colorado General Assembly to share where they stand on policies impacting the business community. Be sure to keep an eye out for more information in the next few weeks.



**Stay Well,**  
Kelly J. Brough  
President and CEO  
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce



**Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce**

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