

Initiative 157: Funding for Law Enforcement

Placed on the ballot by citizen initiative • Passes with a majority vote

1 Initiative 157 proposes amending the Colorado statutes to:

- 2 • require the state to spend \$350 million to help recruit, train, and retain local law
- 3 enforcement officers; and
- 4 • provide an additional benefit for families of officers killed in the line of duty.

5 What Your Vote Means

6 YES

7 A “yes” vote on Initiative 157 requires the
8 state to provide \$350 million in
9 additional funding to local law
10 enforcement agencies to improve officer
11 recruitment and retention, and to provide
12 a \$1 million death benefit to families of
13 police officers, firefighters, and first
14 responders killed in the line of duty.

15 NO

16 A “no” vote on Initiative 157 will continue
17 current levels of funding for local law
18 enforcement agencies, and families of
19 officers killed in the line of duty will
20 continue to receive existing benefits
21 provided by current law.

22 Summary and Analysis of Initiative 157

23 What does the measure do?

24 Initiative 157 provides \$350 million in additional state funding to local law enforcement
25 agencies to be distributed by the Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS). The funding
26 must be used to:

- 27 • increase annual pay;
- 28 • provide one-time hiring, recruitment, and retention bonuses;
- 29 • hire additional officers to address specific geographic locations or types of crime;
- 30 • provide ongoing training to new and veteran officers in areas such as the use of force,
31 restraints, and physical fitness; and
- 32 • establish a one-time death benefit of \$1 million for law enforcement officer, firefighter,
33 or first responder killed while on duty.

1 **How would the measure change funding for law enforcement?**

2 Local law enforcement agencies in Colorado are funded through county or municipal
3 budgets, and the state funds law enforcement agencies within the Colorado State Patrol and
4 the Colorado Bureau of Investigation in CDPS. The CDPS also provides technical assistance
5 and grants to local law enforcement agencies, most recently providing \$30 million in grants
6 over the past two years to local law enforcement agencies to improve officer recruitment
7 and retention. Additionally, there are other grants available to local law enforcement from
8 federal and other state sources. The initiative requires the legislature to increase funding to
9 CDPS by \$350 million, which CDPS will distribute to local law enforcement agencies and for
10 death benefits to families of officers killed while on duty.

11 **What death benefits do law enforcement officers and their families currently receive?**

12 Currently, spouses and children of local law enforcement officers receive ongoing survivor
13 benefits through the officer's pension. For example, the Fire and Police Pension Association
14 pays beneficiaries at least 70 percent of a fallen officer's base salary when the officer is killed
15 in the line of duty.

For information on those issue committees that support or oppose the measures on the ballot at the November 5, 2024, election, go to the Colorado Secretary of State's elections center web site hyperlink for ballot and initiative information:

<https://coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Initiatives/InitiativesHome.html>

16 **Argument For Initiative 157**

17 1) Law enforcement is a critical and underfunded public need. The state has a vested
18 interest in ensuring that local governments can recruit and retain the best police officers
19 possible to protect Coloradans and their property. With additional funding, local
20 governments can supplement current resources, which helps to improve public safety
21 and foster trust within the community. Furthermore, providing additional compensation
22 for families of those who have died in the line of duty upholds a social obligation to
23 honor their sacrifice.

24 **Argument Against Initiative 157**

25 1) No evidence exists to demonstrate that increased funding to law enforcement agencies
26 has made communities safer. The initiative mandates the legislature to spend millions
27 without considering local decisions about public safety needs or the state's broader
28 public safety obligations, such as funding for courts and correctional facilities. The
29 requirement to spend more than 10 times the amount of recent state funding on a local
30 funding obligation is an irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars. The death of an officer in
31 the line of duty is tragic, and fortunately Colorado already takes care of fallen officers'
32 families through a robust pension system.

- 1 **Fiscal Impact of Initiative 157**
- 2 The fiscal impact will be included in the second draft.