

Initiative 310: Establishing an All-Candidate Primary and Ranked Choice Voting

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

1 Initiative 310 proposes amending the Colorado statutes to:

- 2 • create an all-candidate primary election for certain state and federal offices,
3 where up to four candidates advance to the general election; and
- 4 • allow voters to rank those candidates in the general election, with votes tallied
5 over multiple rounds to determine who wins the election.

6 What Your Vote Means

7 YES

8 A “yes” vote on Initiative 310 establishes
9 an all-candidate primary for certain state
10 and federal offices and advances up to
11 four candidates to a general election
12 where voters rank the candidates in order
13 of preference, once certain conditions in
14 state law are met.

15 NO

16 A “no” vote on Initiative 310 continues the
17 existing primary election system and the
18 current method of selecting candidates
19 and counting votes at general elections.

20 Summary and Analysis of Initiative 310

21 How does the current election system work in Colorado?

22 A primary election narrows a field of candidates. A general election then determines which
23 candidate is elected to an office. Under the current system, a political party may nominate
24 only one candidate per office to the general election ballot.

25 In Colorado, primary elections are conducted for the two major political parties to determine
26 each party’s nominee at the general election. Voters affiliated with a political party may cast
27 a primary ballot only for candidates of that party. Unaffiliated voters may cast one political
28 party’s ballot but not both. Other political parties may also nominate candidates to the
29 general election.

30 Nominees from each political party are then placed on the general election ballot, along
31 with any unaffiliated candidates, who qualify directly to the general election by gathering
32 signatures and do not participate in primary elections.

1 **When will Initiative 310 take effect?**

2 Initiative 310 proposes significant changes to how the state conducts primary and general
3 elections for certain offices. Under current law, however, the measure cannot take effect until
4 certain criteria are met. At least 12 municipalities that meet various demographic
5 qualifications must use ranked choice voting, and the state must audit these elections,
6 before an election for state and federal offices using the changes proposed in the measure
7 can occur.

8 **What elections are affected by the measure?**

9 The measure applies to the following state and federal offices:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 10 • U.S. Senator | 15 • State Attorney General |
| 11 • U.S. Representative | 16 • Members of the State Board of Education |
| 12 • Governor and Lieutenant Governor | 17 • Regents of the University of Colorado |
| 13 • Secretary of State | 18 • State Senator |
| 14 • State Treasurer | 19 • State Representative |

20 The measure does not apply to the office of U.S. President or to local government offices.

21 **How does the all-candidate primary election work under Initiative 310?**

22 Under Initiative 310, all candidates who qualify appear on the same primary ballot,
23 regardless of political party affiliation. Unaffiliated candidates collect signatures to qualify for
24 the primary election, rather than the general election. Candidates from political parties still
25 qualify for the all-candidate primary by collecting signatures or receiving a party nomination.

26 All voters, regardless of political party affiliation, choose a single candidate for each office in
27 the primary election. For each office, the four candidates with the highest number of votes
28 advance to the general election, and appear on that ballot in a random order. If there are
29 fewer than four candidates for the office, all the candidates advance to the general election.
30 Each voter receives at least two primary election ballots: one for the all-candidate primary
31 and at least one for all other offices.

32 **What is ranked choice voting and how would it work under Initiative 310?**

33 After up to four candidates advance from the all-candidate primary election, the general
34 election determines the winner. Voters can rank some or all of the candidates for each office
35 in order of preference. If one candidate gets more than half of the first-place votes, they win
36 the election. If no candidate wins more than half of the first-place votes, the candidate with
37 the fewest first-place votes is eliminated and an additional round of counting is conducted.

38 Votes for the eliminated candidate are then counted for the next highest ranked candidate
39 on that ballot, if any. This process continues until a candidate has more than half of the
40 active votes, and wins the election.

41 If voters do not rank all the candidates, their ballots may become inactive, meaning they do
42 not factor into the next round of counting. This happens if all of their selections have been
43 eliminated. Similarly, if voters select the same ranking for multiple candidates, their ballot
44 will become inactive if any higher ranked candidates are eliminated.

1 **How do ballots look and how are they counted using ranked choice voting?**

2 Figure 1 shows an example of an individual voter's completed ballot cast in an election using
 3 ranked choice voting for a covered office. In this example, the voter selected Candidate C as
 4 their first choice, Candidate D as their second choice, and Candidate B as their third choice.
 5 The voter did not rank Candidate A. Please note that the actual ballot may look different
 6 depending on future ballot design rules and decisions by local election officials.

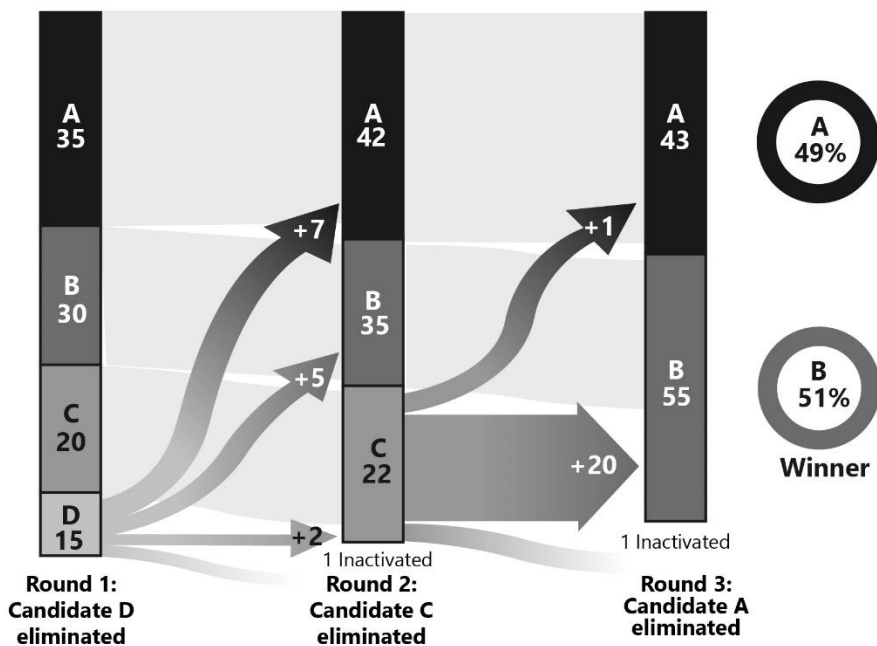
7 **Figure 1**
 8 **Example of Voted Ballot Using Ranked Choice Voting**

GOVERNOR (rank all candidates)	1	2	3	4
CANDIDATE A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE C	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE D	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9 Figure 2 gives sample results for an election conducted using ranked choice voting. It shows
 10 how votes are counted in each round, including how votes are redistributed from eliminated
 11 candidates to voters' next highest ranked candidates. The asterisk indicates the candidate for
 12 which the sample ballot above would count in each round of voting: this ballot would be
 13 counted for Candidate C in rounds 1 and 2. In round 3, this ballot would be counted for
 14 Candidate B, because Candidate D is already eliminated by round 3. Additional detail on the
 15 redistribution of votes and counting process is provided below Figure 2.

1
2

Figure 2
Example Election Results Using Ranked Choice Voting



3 In the example results in Figure 2, 100 votes are cast. No candidate has more than
 4 50 percent of the first-place votes in round 1. Candidate D has the fewest votes in round 1
 5 and is therefore eliminated. Each ballot that ranked Candidate D first is now redistributed
 6 and counted for the next highest ranked candidate on those ballots in round 2. Again in
 7 round 2, no candidate has more than 50 percent of the votes, so the candidate with the
 8 fewest votes, Candidate C, is eliminated. Finally, after Candidate C's ballots are redistributed
 9 to those voters' next choice, Candidate B gets 56 percent of the votes in round 3 and wins
 10 the election.

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>

11 **Arguments For Initiative 310**

12 1) The all-candidate primary gives all voters an equal opportunity to decide which
 13 candidates make the general election ballot. The existing primary system often
 14 determines which candidate will win the general election, but the process is heavily
 15 partisan and few voters participate. At a time when almost half of Coloradans are

1 unaffiliated with any political party, the existing primary system puts a disproportionate
2 amount of political control in the hands of a shrinking minority of voters.

3 2) Initiative 310 allows voters to rank multiple candidates, giving them more choice to
4 express their voting preferences. General election voters are not necessarily limited to
5 one candidate from each party, giving Coloradans more options. Voters may be more
6 empowered to vote for a candidate they believe cannot win the general election. Ranked
7 choice voting can lead to election results that better reflect the general will of the voters.

8 **Arguments Against Initiative 310**

9 1) The new election system proposed by Initiative 310 is more complex and expensive.
10 Voters will receive more ballots and have to vote in two different systems for each
11 election. Taxpayers will pay for extensive voter education and outreach efforts. Even so,
12 some voters will still be confused and will incorrectly fill out their ballots, which could
13 change election winners. The complexity of counting ranked results will make elections
14 less transparent, which could lead to questions about whether the results are fair.

15 2) Political parties play an important role in our political system and should have their own
16 primary elections to select candidates that reflect their beliefs and policy priorities.
17 Unaffiliated voters can already participate in primary elections, so there is no need to
18 further open up primary elections in a way that undermines the political parties' ability to
19 select their own candidates. The all-candidate primary may also increase campaign
20 spending by candidates, inviting even more money into our political system.

21 **Fiscal Impact of Initiative 310**

22 The fiscal impact will be included in the second draft.