

Amendment V Lower Age Requirement for Members of the State Legislature

1 **Amendment V proposes amending the Colorado Constitution to:**

- 2 ♦ lower the age requirement for serving in the state legislature from 25 to 21.

3 **Summary and Analysis**

4 **Requirements for serving in the state legislature.** The state constitution requires
5 that a representative or senator in the state legislature be at least 25 years old, be a
6 United States citizen, and reside in the district from which he or she is elected for at least
7 12 months prior to being elected. Amendment V lowers the minimum age requirement
8 to 21.

9 **Comparison of state age requirements.** Every state, with the exception of
10 Vermont, has minimum age requirements ranging from 18 to 30 years old for members
11 of the state legislature. In Colorado, an individual must be at least 25 years old to
12 become a state representative or state senator. Forty-three states set the minimum age
13 requirement for state representatives at either 18 or 21. For state senators, about half of
14 the states set the minimum age requirement between 25 and 30, and the other half set it
15 at either age 18 or 21.

*For information on those issue committees that support or oppose the measures on the ballot at the **November 6, 2018**, election, go to the Colorado Secretary of State's elections center web site hyperlink for ballot and initiative information:*

<http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Initiatives/InitiativesHome.html>

16 **Argument For**

- 17 1) Excluding 21- to 24-year-olds from seeking election to the state legislature is an
18 unnecessary restriction. A 21-year-old is considered an adult under the law.
19 Voters can judge whether a candidate possesses the maturity, ability, and
20 competence to hold political office. In addition, allowing younger candidates to
21 run for office encourages the civic engagement of young people.

22 **Argument Against**

- 23 1) The current age requirement strikes an appropriate balance between youth and
24 experience. Younger candidates may lack the maturity and expertise to be
25 effective legislators. The policy decisions and political pressures that legislators
26 face are best handled by people with more life experience. Lack of experience
27 could hinder a young legislator's ability to represent his or her constituents
28 effectively.

1 **Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

2 This measure has no impact on state or local government revenue or spending.

Last Draft as Mailed to Interested Parties

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5 that a representative or senator in the state legislature be at least 25 years old, be a
6 United States citizen, and reside in the district from which he or she is elected for at least
7 12 months prior to being elected. Amendment V lowers the minimum age requirement
8 to 21. The existing age requirement has been in the state constitution since its adoption
9 in 1876.

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11 Vermont, has minimum age requirements ranging from 18 to 30 years old for members
12 of the state legislature. In Colorado, an individual must be at least 25 years old to
13 become a state representative or state senator. Forty-three states set the minimum age
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Last Draft Comments from Interested Parties

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Legislative Council Staff received no comments on the last draft mailed to interested persons.

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Amendment V
Reduce Age Qualification for Members of the General Assembly

1 **Ballot Title:** Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning a reduction
2 in the age qualification for a member of the general assembly from twenty-five years to twenty-
3 one years?

4 *Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-first General Assembly of the State of*
5 *Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:*

6 **SECTION 1.** At the election held on November 6, 2018, the secretary of state shall submit
7 to the registered electors of the state the ballot title set forth in section 2 for the following
8 amendment to the state constitution:

9 In the constitution of the state of Colorado, **amend** section 4 of article V as follows:

10 **Section 4. Qualifications of members.** No person shall be a representative or senator
11 who shall not have attained the age of ~~twenty-five~~ TWENTY-ONE years, who shall not be a citizen
12 of the United States, and who shall not for at least twelve months next preceding his OR HER
13 election, have resided within the territory included in the limits of the district in which he OR SHE
14 shall be chosen.

15 **SECTION 2.** Each elector voting at the election may cast a vote either "Yes/For" or
16 "No/Against" on the following ballot title: "Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado
17 constitution concerning a reduction in the age qualification for a member of the general assembly
18 from twenty-five years to twenty-one years?"

19 **SECTION 3.** Except as otherwise provided in section 1-40-123, Colorado Revised
20 Statutes, if at least fifty-five percent of the electors voting on the ballot title vote "Yes/For", then
21 the amendment will become part of the state constitution.