

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 age requirement to 21. The
8 existing age requirement has been in the state constitution since its adoption in 1876.

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

15 **Arguments For**

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

21 **Arguments Against**

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

1 **Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

2 (Please note: A summary of the fiscal impact will be included in this space in the
3 second draft of the analysis. A final fiscal impact statement will be prepared and placed
4 on the General Assembly's website when the final blue book is sent to voters.)