

The Clear Language Act proposes to amend Colorado law to ensure that all statewide ballot questions be written at or below a fifth-grade reading level, as determined by the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level readability formula or another widely accepted, objective readability standard.

The initiative also prohibits the practice of combining multiple unrelated issues into a single ballot question. Under this measure, each ballot initiative or referred measure must ask only one clearly written question, ensuring that voters can make informed choices on each policy matter independently.

The purpose of this initiative is to improve transparency, reduce voter confusion, and promote equitable access to the democratic process for all voters—regardless of educational background or reading ability.

If adopted, this law would apply to all statewide ballot measures beginning with elections held after its effective date.

Draft Proposal for Citizen-Driven Initiative:

Title:

"Clear Language Act"

Section 1. Short Title

This initiative shall be known and may be cited as the "Clear Language Act"

Section 2. Purpose and Findings

The voters of Colorado hereby declare the following:

1. The intent of this initiative is to ensure that all ballot questions presented to the electorate are written clearly, concisely, and at a reading level that is accessible to a broad segment of Colorado voters.

2. Studies have shown that many voters find it difficult to comprehend complex or jargon-filled ballot questions, which can lead to confusion and unintentionally misguided votes.
3. It is the goal of this initiative to promote informed decision-making by requiring that ballot questions be written to a **5th-grade reading level** to ensure accessibility for all voters.

Section 3. Amendment to Colorado Election Code

The Colorado Election Code, specifically Title 1, Articles 40 and 41 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, shall be amended as follows:

1. **Ballot Question Accessibility:**

All proposed ballot questions, regardless of whether they are statutory amendments, constitutional amendments, or other measures, must:

 - a. Be written in clear language with the goal of ensuring that the ballot question can be easily understood by a reader at or below the **5th-grade reading level**.
 - b. Use plain language, avoiding legalese, technical terms, or unnecessary complexity.
 - c. Be reviewed and certified by an independent organization or body who can ensure clarity and readability of each proposed measure.
2. **One Question Per Ballot:**
 - a. No ballot shall contain more than **one question** for a proposed law or constitutional amendment.
 - b. All multi-part proposals must be split into separate ballot questions to ensure clarity and simplicity for voters.
3. **Implementation and Enforcement:**
 - a. The Secretary of State shall ensure that all proposed ballot questions meet these requirements before they are placed on the ballot.
 - b. Any ballot question that does not meet the readability or single-question requirement shall be disqualified from appearing on the ballot until it is rewritten to comply with this section.

Section 4. Effective Date

This amendment shall become effective on the first day of the calendar year following its passage by the electorate.

Section 5. Severability

If any provision of this Act is held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions of the Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision, and to this end the provisions of this Act are severable.