

Proposition __: Establishing All-Candidate Primary and Ranked Choice Voting General Elections

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

1 **Proposition __ 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 Proposition __ establishes
9 an all-candidate primary for all voters
10 regardless of their political party for
11 certain offices and advances the top four
12 candidates to a general election where
13 voters rank the candidates in order of
14 preference, once certain conditions in
15 state law are met.

16 **NO**

17 A “no” vote on Proposition __ continues
18 the existing primary election system and
19 the current method of selecting
20 candidates and counting votes at general
21 elections.

22 **Summary and Analysis of Proposition __**

23 **How does the current election system work in Colorado?**

24 Currently, primary elections are used by political parties to nominate candidates for public
25 office. In Colorado, the state conducts primary elections for the major political parties to
26 determine each party’s nominee for each office in the general election. Voters affiliated with
27 a political party may cast a primary ballot only for candidates of that party. Unaffiliated
28 voters may cast only one political party’s ballot. Other political parties may also nominate
29 candidates to the general election.

30 Nominees from each political party are then placed on the general election ballot, along
31 with any qualifying unaffiliated candidates. Unaffiliated candidates qualify directly to the
32 general election by gathering signatures and do not participate in primary elections. The
33 general election then determines which candidate is elected to an office. For state and
34 federal offices, the candidate receiving the most votes in the general election wins

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

2 Proposition __ applies to the following state and federal offices:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 3 • U.S. Senator | 8 • State Attorney General |
| 4 • U.S. Representative | 9 • Member of the State Board of Education |
| 5 • Governor and Lieutenant Governor | 10 • Regent of the University of Colorado |
| 6 • Secretary of State | 11 • State Senator |
| 7 • State Treasurer | 12 • State Representative |

13 The measure does not apply to the office of U.S. President, district attorneys, or local
14 government offices. These races will continue to be conducted as they are under current law.

15 **How does the all-candidate primary election work under Proposition __?**

16 Under Proposition __, all candidates who qualify appear on the same primary ballot,
17 regardless of political party affiliation. Unaffiliated candidates collect signatures to qualify for
18 the primary election, rather than the general election. Candidates from political parties still
19 qualify for the all-candidate primary by collecting signatures or receiving a party nomination.

20 All voters, regardless of political party affiliation, receive the all-candidate primary ballot and
21 choose a single candidate for each office in the primary election. For each office, the four
22 candidates with the highest number of votes advance to the general election and appear on
23 that ballot in a random order. More than one candidate from the same political party may
24 advance to the general election. If there are fewer than four candidates for the office, all the
25 candidates advance to the general election. Each voter receives at least two primary election
26 ballots: one for the all-candidate primary and at least one for all other offices.

27 **What is ranked choice voting and how would it work under Proposition __?**

28 After the top four candidates advance from the all-candidate primary election, the general
29 election determines the winner. Voters can rank some or all of the candidates for each office
30 in order of preference. The winner is determined by counting the ranked votes using a
31 method called instant runoff voting. If one candidate gets more than half of the first-place
32 votes, they win the election. If no candidate wins more than half of the first-place votes, the
33 candidate with the fewest first-place votes is eliminated and an additional round of counting
34 is conducted.

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

38 If voters do not rank all the candidates or if they select the same ranking for multiple
39 candidates, their ballots may not factor into the next round of counting. This happens if all of
40 their ranked candidates have been eliminated.

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

42 Figure 1 shows an example of an individual voter's completed ballot cast in a general
43 election using ranked choice voting. In this example, the voter selected Candidate C as their
44 first choice, Candidate D as their second choice, and Candidate B as their third choice. The

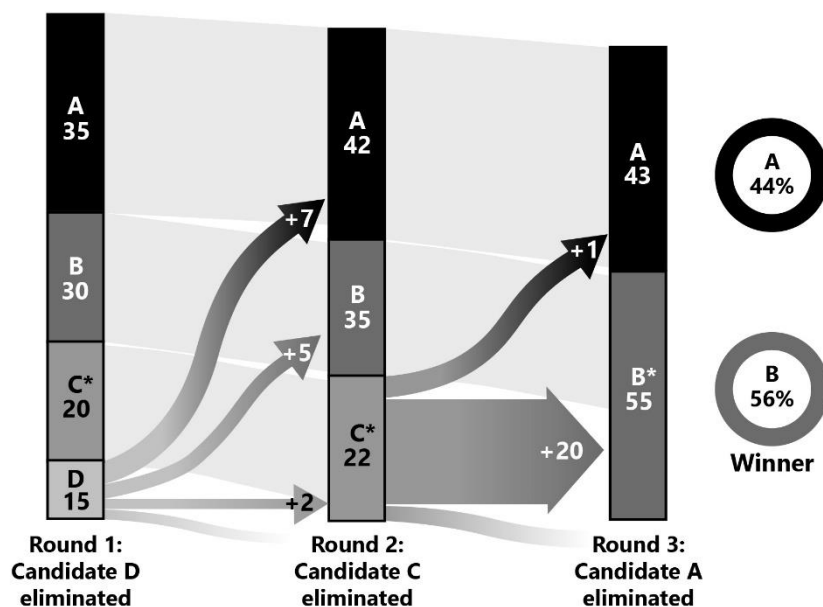
1 voter did not rank Candidate A. Please note that the actual ballot will look different
 2 depending on future ballot design rules and decisions by election officials.

3 **Figure 1**
 4 **Example of Voted Ballot Using Ranked Choice Voting**

(rank candidates)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
CANDIDATE A (Party 1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE B (Party 2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE C (Party 2)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE D (Unaffiliated)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5 Figure 2 gives sample results for an election conducted using ranked choice voting. It shows
 6 how votes are counted in each round, including how votes are redistributed from eliminated
 7 candidates to voters' next highest ranked candidates. The asterisk indicates the candidate for
 8 which the sample ballot above would count in each round of voting: this ballot would be
 9 counted for Candidate C in rounds 1 and 2. In round 3, this ballot would be counted for
 10 Candidate B, because Candidates C and D are already eliminated by round 3. Additional
 11 detail on the redistribution of votes and counting process is provided below Figure 2. Please
 12 note that Figure 2 reflects only one possible scenario for election results. In some cases, one
 13 candidate will receive more than half the first-place votes in the first round of counting.

14 **Figure 2**
 15 **Example Election Results Using Ranked Choice Voting**



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

9 **When will Proposition __ take effect?**

10 Under current law, Proposition __ cannot take effect until certain criteria are met. At least 12
 11 municipalities that meet various demographic qualifications must use ranked choice voting,
 12 and the state must audit these elections, before an election for state and federal offices
 13 using the changes proposed in the measure can occur.

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>

14 **Arguments For Proposition __**

- 15 1) The all-candidate primary gives all voters an equal opportunity to decide which
 16 candidates make the general election ballot. There are many districts in Colorado that
 17 are safe for one major political party, which means that whoever wins that primary
 18 election almost always wins the general election. Turnout is lower in primary elections,
 19 and the voters who do participate are often the most partisan. Opening primary races to
 20 more voters allows greater participation in these elections and could also make general
 21 elections more competitive.
- 22 2) Proposition __ allows voters to rank multiple candidates in general elections, giving them
 23 more choice to express their voting preferences. General election voters are not
 24 necessarily limited to one candidate from each party, giving Coloradans more options.
 25 Voters are more empowered to give a top ranking to their favorite candidate, while still
 26 supporting backup choices. Ranked choice voting can lead to election results that better
 27 reflect the will of the voters.

28 **Arguments Against Proposition __**

- 29 1) The new election system proposed by Proposition __ is more complex and expensive.
 30 Voters will receive more ballots and have to vote in two different systems for each
 31 election. Taxpayers will pay for extensive voter education and outreach efforts. Even so,
 32 some voters will still be confused and will incorrectly fill out their ballots, which could
 33 change election winners. The complexity of counting ranked results could lead to
 34 questions about whether the results are fair.

- 1 2) Political parties play an important role in our political system and should have their own
2 primary elections to select candidates that reflect their beliefs and policy priorities.
3 Unaffiliated voters can already participate in primary elections, so there is no need to
4 open up primary elections in a way that further erodes the political parties' ability to
5 select their own candidates. The all-candidate primary may also force candidates to
6 spend more on their campaigns in order to stand out in a larger field, inviting even more
7 money into our political system.

8 **Fiscal Impact of Proposition** __

9 **State spending.** If the current law requirements for implementing the all-candidate primary
10 and ranked choice voting are met, state spending in the Department of State will increase by
11 about \$100,000 in the first year of implementation and around \$6 million per year in the
12 second and third years. These costs are to hire additional staff, make software updates,
13 redesign ballots, conduct voter outreach, and reimburse counties for increased election
14 costs.

15 Because the requirements under current law may delay implementation of the measure, the
16 specific years when these impacts will occur cannot be identified. Impacts will not occur if
17 the requirements for implementing ranked choice voting and all-candidate primaries are not
18 met.

19 **State revenue.** State revenue from business filing fees paid to the Department of State must
20 be increased to cover the costs listed above. The actual amount of new revenue and fee
21 changes will be set administratively by the Department of State. Any adjustment in fees will
22 only occur once the current law requirement for implementing the measure are met. If the
23 state legislature uses state General Fund money to cover these costs, fees will not need to be
24 adjusted.

25 **Local government spending.** If the current law requirements to implement the measure are
26 met, counties will have increased costs to conduct primary and general elections. Counties
27 will need to print and mail out new ballots, update voting systems, give new instructions to
28 voters, perform additional tabulations, and provide additional training to staff and voters.
29 Based on this, the cost to counties will increase by about \$5 million for the primary election
30 and about \$4 million for the general election. The state reimburses a portion of county
31 election costs.