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 <u>Colorado statutes</u> to:**

2 • create an all-candidate primary election for certain state and federal offices,
3   where the top four candidates advance to the general election; and

4 • allow voters to rank those candidates in the general election, with votes counted
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 participate in one of these primaries. 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.

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

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

3 • U.S. Senator
4 • U.S. Representative
5 • Governor and Lieutenant Governor
6 • Secretary of State
7 • State Treasurer
8 • State Attorney General
9 • Member of the State Board of Education
10 • Regent of the University of Colorado
11 • State Senator
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 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 four or fewer candidates for the office, all the
25 candidates advance to the general election. Primary elections are conducted at the same
26 time for multiple offices, so voters may receive ballots for the new system alongside ballots
27 for the existing system for offices not covered by the measure.

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

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

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

39 If voters do not rank all the candidates or if they select the same ranking for multiple
40 candidates, their ballots may not factor into the next round of counting. Such ballots are
41 excluded from counting once all of their ranked candidates have been eliminated and it is
42 not possible to redistribute votes to another candidate.

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

44 Figure 1 shows an example of an individual vote in a single race cast in a general election
45 using ranked choice voting. In this example, the voter selected Candidate C as their first
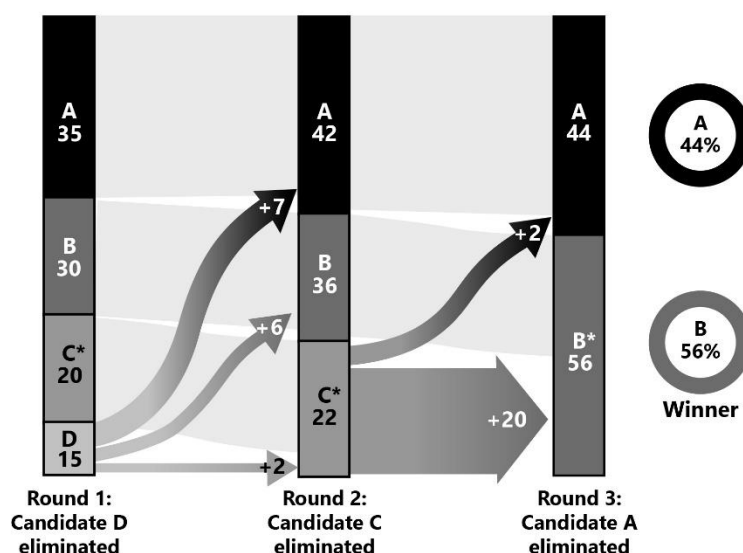
1   choice, Candidate D as their second choice, and Candidate B as their third choice. The voter
2   did not rank Candidate A. Please note that the actual ballot will look different depending on
3   future ballot design rules and decisions by election officials.

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

(rank candidates)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
CANDIDATE A (Party 1)	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE B (Party 2)	○	○	●	○
CANDIDATE C (Party 2)	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D (Unaffiliated)	○	●	○	○

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

16 **Figure 2**
17 **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. Ballots that ranked Candidate D first are now redistributed and
4　counted for the next highest ranked candidate on those ballots in round 2. Again in round 2,
5　no candidate has more than 50 percent of the votes, so the candidate with the fewest votes,
6　Candidate C, is eliminated. Finally, after Candidate C's ballots are redistributed to those
7　voters' next choice, Candidate B gets 56 percent of the votes in round 3 and wins the
8　election. Please note that, for simplicity, every ballot counts in each round in this example. In
9　practice, some ballots will run out of active candidates in their rankings and not factor into
10　all rounds of counting.

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

12　Under current law, Proposition __ cannot take effect until certain criteria are met. At least 12
13　municipalities that meet various demographic qualifications must use ranked choice voting,
14　and the state must audit these elections, before an election for state and federal offices
15　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

16　## Arguments For Proposition __

17　1) The all-candidate primary gives all voters an equal opportunity to decide which
18　candidates make the general election ballot. There are many districts in Colorado that
19　are safe for one major political party, which means that whoever wins that primary
20　election almost always wins the general election. Turnout is lower in primary elections,
21　and the voters who do participate are often the most partisan. Opening primary races to
22　more voters allows greater participation in these elections and could also make general
23　elections more competitive.

24　2) Proposition __ allows voters to rank multiple candidates in general elections, giving them
25　more choice to express their voting preferences. General election voters are not
26　necessarily limited to one candidate from each party, giving Coloradans more options.
27　Voters are more empowered to give a top ranking to their favorite candidate, while still
28　supporting backup choices. Ranked choice voting could lead to election results that
29　better reflect the will of the voters.

30　## Arguments Against Proposition __

31　1) The new election system proposed by Proposition __ is more complex and expensive.
32　Voters will have to vote in two different systems for each election and may receive
33　multiple ballots. Taxpayers will pay for extensive voter education and outreach efforts.
34　Even so, some voters will still be confused and will incorrectly fill out their ballots, which

1　could change election winners. The complexity of counting ranked results could lead to
2　questions about whether the results are fair.

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

Fiscal Impact of Proposition __

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

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

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

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