

Amendment ___: Constitutional Right to Abortion

Placed on the ballot by citizen initiative • Passes with 55 percent of the vote

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

- 2 • make abortion a constitutional right in Colorado; and
3 • repeal the existing constitutional ban on state and local government funding for
4 abortion services.

5 **What Your Vote Means**

6 **YES**

7 A “yes” vote on Amendment ___ places the
8 right to abortion in the Colorado
9 Constitution and repeals the current ban
10 on state and local funding for abortion
11 services.

12 **NO**

13 A “no” vote on Amendment ___ maintains
14 existing statutes allowing abortion and
15 continues to ban state and local funding
16 for abortion services.

17 **Summary and Analysis of Amendment ___**

18 **What does Amendment ___ do?**

19 Amendment ___ makes abortion a constitutional right in Colorado and prohibits state and
20 local governments from denying, impeding, or discriminating against exercising that right.
21 Amendment ___ also repeals an existing Colorado constitutional provision banning the use
22 of public funds for abortion services.

23 **What is the legal history of abortion in Colorado and the United States?**

24 Beginning in 1967, Colorado law permitted abortions in specified circumstances, including
25 when the pregnancy would likely result in the death of the pregnant woman and in cases
26 involving rape or incest.

27 In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized a right to abortion, but allowed states to
28 individually regulate it depending on the stage of pregnancy.

29 In 1984, Colorado voters amended the Colorado Constitution to prohibit the use of state
30 and local government funds to pay or reimburse any person, agency, or facility for an
31 abortion. Colorado law makes exceptions to the funding ban in certain circumstances, such
32 as to prevent the death of a pregnant woman.

33 In 2022, the Colorado legislature placed many rights related to reproductive health care in
34 Colorado law, including the right to continue or terminate a pregnancy at any time until
35 birth.

1 Also in 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. Constitution does not prohibit each
 2 state from regulating or prohibiting abortion, and returned the authority of regulating or
 3 prohibiting abortions to states.

4 **What restrictions are there on government funding for abortion services and how does** 5 **Amendment ___ change this?**

6 The language added to Colorado’s constitution in 1984 bans public funding for abortion
 7 services for:

- 8 • Medicaid, the joint federal and state program that provides health care coverage to
 9 low-income individuals; and
- 10 • health insurance plans that are offered to state and local government employees.

11 There are exceptions in federal and state law that allow for Medicaid to pay for an abortion
 12 when the life of the pregnant woman is in danger, when the pregnancy is the result of rape
 13 or incest, or when a lethal medical condition is present in the unborn child.

14 Amendment ___ repeals the constitutional ban on public funding for abortion services,
 15 potentially allowing state and local money to be used to pay for abortions through Medicaid
 16 or state and local government employee health insurance plans. The measure does not
 17 guarantee government-provided abortion funding; future decisions on funding abortion
 18 services will be made by the Colorado legislature and local governments.

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>

19 **Arguments For Amendment ___**

- 20 1) Placing the right to abortion in the Colorado Constitution protects abortion access in
 21 Colorado, ensuring it will be available regardless of changing political climates. The
 22 measure safeguards an individual’s ability to make their own health care decisions, which
 23 is a cornerstone of a free society that values individual rights.
- 24 2) Abortion is an essential component of women’s health care. Amendment ___ may allow
 25 increased access to important medical care for Coloradans. Colorado’s constitution
 26 should not ban funding for health care; rather, policymakers should have the option to
 27 fund the care they believe state residents need.

28 **Arguments Against Amendment ___**

- 29 1) Amendment ___ is extremely broad and may prevent Colorado from passing statutes in
 30 the future to regulate or restrict abortion in any way. Placing the right to abortion in
 31 Colorado’s constitution limits the ability of lawmakers to pass policies preventing late
 32 stage abortions, establishing parental notification laws, or creating safeguards if they are

1 interpreted to impede a woman’s right to abortion. Abortion is already legal in Colorado,
2 and a constitutional amendment is not necessary to ensure abortion access in the state.

3 2) Many Coloradans are opposed to abortion for personal, religious, and moral reasons.
4 Taxpayers should be able to direct how their tax dollars are spent, and the government
5 should not be allowed to use taxpayer money to pay for services to which a significant
6 portion of the state may object. State law already allows exceptions for public funding of
7 abortions in cases where the mother’s life is in danger. Maintaining the current ban on
8 public funding ensures that taxpayer money is not funding elective abortions.

9 **Fiscal Impact of Amendment** ____

10 The measure will have no fiscal impact to state and local governments, as it places current
11 state law and practices around abortion services into the Colorado Constitution. To the
12 extent that additional abortion-related programs or legislation are created from allowing the
13 use of public funds for abortion services, state or local government spending will increase. At
14 this time, no change in spending is estimated, as it will depend on future decisions by the
15 state legislature and local governments.