

# STATE OF COLORADO

## Colorado General Assembly

Mike Mauer, Director  
Legislative Council Staff

**Colorado Legislative Council**  
200 East Colfax Avenue Suite 029  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1716  
Telephone 303-866-3521  
Facsimile 303-866-3855  
TDD 303-866-3472



Dan L. Cartin, Director  
Office of Legislative Legal Services

**Office of Legislative Legal Services**  
200 East Colfax Avenue Suite 091  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1716  
Telephone 303-866-2045  
Facsimile 303-866-4157  
Email: olls.ga@state.co.us

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Horace Divine and Nicholas Hoover

**FROM:** Legislative Council Staff and Office of Legislative Legal Services

**DATE:** April 5, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Proposed initiative measure 2015-2016 #135 concerning the State Minimum Wage

Section 1-40-105 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, requires the directors of the Colorado Legislative Council and the Office of Legislative Legal Services to "review and comment" on initiative petitions for proposed laws and amendments to the Colorado constitution. We hereby submit our comments to you regarding the appended proposed initiative.

The purpose of this statutory requirement of the directors of Legislative Council and the Office of Legislative Legal Services is to provide comments intended to aid proponents in determining the language of their proposal and to avail the public of knowledge of the contents of the proposal. Our first objective is to be sure we understand your intent and your objective in proposing the amendment. We hope that the statements and questions contained in this memorandum will provide a basis for discussion and understanding of the proposal.

This initiative was submitted with a series of initiatives including proposed initiatives 2015-2016 #134, #136, and #137. The comments and questions raised in this memorandum will not include comments and questions that were addressed in the memoranda for proposed initiatives 2015-2016 #134, #136, and #137, except as necessary to fully understand the issues raised by the revised proposed initiative. Comments and questions addressed in those other memoranda may also be relevant, and those questions and comments are hereby incorporated by reference in this memorandum.

## **Purposes**

The major purposes of the proposed amendment to the **Colorado constitution** appear to be:

1. To increase the Colorado hourly minimum wage from the current minimum wage of \$8.31 to \$8.91 effective January 1, 2017;
2. To increase the Colorado hourly minimum wage to \$9.51 effective January 1, 2018;
3. To increase the Colorado hourly minimum wage to \$10.10 effective January 1, 2019;
4. To continue to adjust the hourly minimum wage annually for inflation as measured by the consumer price index for Colorado;
5. To eliminate the restriction that only \$3.02 per hour in tip income may be used by an employer to offset the minimum wage of employees who regularly receive tips;
6. To increase the Colorado hourly tipped employee minimum wage from the current minimum wage of \$5.29 to \$6.50 effective January 1, 2017, until the federal tipped minimum wage exceeds \$6.50 per hour; and
7. To adopt the federal minimum hourly tipped employee wage once the federal tipped minimum wage exceeds \$6.50 per hour.

## **Substantive Comments and Questions**

The substance of the proposed initiative raises the following comments and questions:

1. Article V, section 1 (5.5) of the Colorado constitution requires all proposed initiatives to have a single subject. What is the single subject of the proposed initiative?
2. Substantive comments in the memo for proposed initiative 2015-2016 #134 are incorporated by reference.
3. Under current legal drafting conventions, authority verbs such as “shall” are used to command a person or entity to do something. The proposed initiative increases, by operation of law, the minimum wage to \$8.91 per hour, \$9.51 per hour, and then \$10.10 per hour and increases the minimum wage of tipped

employees to \$6.50 per hour until the federal tipped minimum wage exceeds \$6.50 per hour, at which time Colorado adopts the federal tipped minimum wage. Replacing the verb “shall be” in this context in the second and eighth lines with “is” would be consistent with current legal drafting conventions.

## **Technical Comments**

The following comments address technical issues raised by the form of the proposed initiative. These comments will be read aloud at the public meeting only if the proponents so request. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about these comments at the review and comment meeting. Please consider revising the proposed initiative as suggested below.

1. Technical comments in the memo for proposed initiative 2015-2016 #134 are incorporated by reference.
2. In the last new sentence in Section 15, the phrase “COLORADO WILL ADOPT THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE OF EMPLOYEES” would read better as “COLORADO WILL ADOPT THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE FOR EMPLOYEES.”