

MOVING COLORADO FORWARD



Advance Colorado 2025 Legislative Policy Agenda

Coloradans are increasingly embracing common-sense solutions to our state's most difficult challenges. While partisan progressive legislators too often ignore Colorado's pressing problems – or enact laws to make them worse – citizens across the political spectrum are demanding, and often voting for, policies that work.

Advance Colorado's 2025 Agenda – **Moving Colorado Forward** – proposes innovative, practical solutions to reduce the twin scourges of crime and illegal drugs, expand economic opportunity, protect taxpayers and improve public education. In addition, we would take effective local solutions to help address mental illness and provide incentives for their use statewide.

In 2024, several items on our agenda were enacted by the Legislature on a bipartisan basis, including our plan to cut and cap local property taxes. Other proposals, specifically to make Colorado communities safer, were approved by voters on the November ballot.

This year, we can build on these successes and continue this momentum to reverse Colorado's decline and Move Colorado Forward.

{FISCAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES }



INCREASE OPPORTUNITY FOR HOME OWNERSHIP

Costly regulations around construction liability – including high insurance because of often frivolous lawsuits – have prevented enough new homes from being built across Colorado. Because current law needlessly drives up housing costs, too many families are unable to purchase their first home or move into a home that better fits their time of life. Bipartisan construction defect reform is necessary to make our state more affordable for first-time home buyers, families, and seniors. The building market needs to be opened up again with lowered regulations.



REPEAL THE DELIVERY AND GAS FEES

Colorado constantly raises taxes on people and ducks our right to vote on tax hikes by calling them "fees". Families are paying excess taxes to the state every time they order from Amazon, have a meal delivered, or fill up at the pump. These unnecessary taxes should be repealed. Going forward, the state government should stop its end run around TABOR, accurately label tax increases and submit them for voter approval.



PROTECT TABOR

The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) is supported by 70% of Coloradans across the political spectrum because it helps keep a rein on some politicians' desires for unchecked spending. Each year there are a wide range of bills introduced to weaken taxpayer protections – and each year citizens must work to protect our rights.



{CRIME}



HEIGHTEN PENALTIES ON DANGEROUS DRUGS & CRACK DOWN ON DRUG DEALERS

Illegal poison, including fentanyl peddled by drug dealers, takes thousands of lives in Colorado each year. Fentanyl overdose deaths have increased by 440% in the last five years. Nearly every type of drug is being laced with fentanyl, and it is addicting and killing children, teens, and adults. Stiffer penalties for drug dealers will give communities a powerful new deterrent. Further, when the legislature decided to heighten the penalty for fentanyl (our current statistics and death rate shows it's still not high enough), they left all other hard-core drugs behind. Right now, dealers can carry four grams of cocaine, heroin, meth, and the date rape drug and be charged with only a misdemeanor. Colorado needs to crack down on dealers and heighten penalties across the board.



ELIMINATE PR BONDS FOR VIOLENT & REPEAT OFFENDERS

Letting violent and repeat criminals back on the streets with no-cost personal recognizance bonds (where the judge trusts that they will just keep their word) is unacceptable, but common in Colorado. Auto thieves and criminals who assault peace officers are also getting out immediately and re-offending, endangering our communities and those who work to keep us safe. Too many judges help dangerous criminals evade real justice by allowing them to be released on \$1 and \$2 bonds. These practices must be eliminated. To increase transparency and accountability, a website should be created where every PR or \$1 or \$2 bond and the judge who granted it is disclosed to the public.



REFORM THE JUVENILE BED CAP IN COLORADO

Colorado's cap on the number of juvenile offenders it can house – the “bed cap” -- is too low. As a result, the justice system is unable to adequately serve and rehabilitate young offenders. Colorado's District Attorneys have advocated for a legislative reform to raise the juvenile bed cap which will help get juvenile offenders off the streets and make communities safer.



BACK THE BLUE: IMPLEMENTATION OF PROP 130

In November 2024, voters passed Prop 130 – a \$350 million allocation to a new Law Enforcement Fund that will help hire, retain, train and equip law enforcement officers – without raising taxes. The legislature should pass implementing legislation in coordination with law enforcement across the state to ensure that (1) the funds are fairly distributed, (2) the \$1 million death benefit for the families of law enforcement officers who die in the line of duty begins November 6, 2024 and is permanent, and (3) the Law Enforcement Fund continues after the original \$350 million is allocated.

{EDUCATION}



PROTECT SCHOOL CHOICE AND OPPOSE ATTACKS ON SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

School choice has been a successful bipartisan pillar of Colorado's education system for decades. While the 2024 ballot measure fell just short, nearly 50% of voters agreed that the right to school choice should be cemented in our constitution. Additional efforts should be made to cement these rights, particularly for charter schools and open enrollment. School choice also recognizes that there are different needs in different areas of Colorado. Rural schools should be granted flexibility for hiring teachers and substitutes so they can be fully staffed and students can get the education they need no matter where they live. Attacks on charter schools, open enrollment, homeschooling, and other options must be strongly opposed so that equal opportunity in education remains available to all families.



ENSURE A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF THE EDUCATION BUDGET GOES TO TEACHERS AND THE CLASSROOM

Right now, only 55% of education dollars end up in classrooms. Far too much of the budget is dedicated to administration and bureaucracy. Funding for administrative roles continue to rise in public schools, even as the student population decreases. At least two-thirds of the funds should be required to go to teachers, instruction, and the classroom.

{MENTAL HEALTH}



SUPPORT GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Failing to aggressively address the needs of Coloradans with serious mental health problems is an issue of public safety – and compassion. The state should give block grants to counties and localities to support and train community response teams that pair law enforcement with mental health professionals for people experiencing mental health crises. These grants should encourage local governments to collaborate with nonprofits, local mental health providers, law enforcement, emergency services, and healthcare to cohesively address mental health needs.