

**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE  
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: June 27, 2016  
TO: Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council Members  
FROM: James A. Hayes, AICP, City Manager *JH*  
SUBJECT: **Council Resolution #72**  
Let Colorado Vote – Resolution of Support for Initiatives 98 and 140

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**BACKGROUND**

Let Colorado Vote is an organization dedicated to building consensus for policies to increase voter access, engagement and participation in Colorado. The Metro Mayor's Caucus formally requested each City consider adopting a resolution of support for two statewide ballot initiatives being proposed for the 2016 general election.

- Initiative 98 would open primary elections to Colorado's 1.3 million unaffiliated voters
- Initiative 140 would restore Colorado's presidential primary election, last held in 2000

An information sheet with additional facts and frequently asked questions (FAQs) is attached to this memorandum for additional reference.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Attached to this memorandum is a Resolution that, if approved, would:

1. Authorizes formal support for Initiatives 98 and 140.

Staff recommends approval of this Resolution.

**STAFF REFERENCE**

James A. Hayes, AICP, City Manager

[jhayes@northglenn.org](mailto:jhayes@northglenn.org)

303.450.8706

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Resolution
- Information Sheet from Let Colorado Vote



LetCoVote2016.com

**LET COLORADO VOTE**

# INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY ELECTIONS

## WHO WE ARE

Let Colorado Vote 2016 is dedicated to building consensus for policies to increase voter access, engagement and participation in Colorado.

## WHAT WE'RE PROPOSING

We are considering ways to increase voter participation in Colorado and have submitted measures to the Title Board in hopes of placing a statutory initiative on the ballot in 2016:

### ✓ INITIATIVE 98

To open primary elections to Colorado's 1.3 million unaffiliated voters.

### ✓ INITIATIVE 140

To restore Colorado's presidential primary election, last held in 2000.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Freedom and independence are core Colorado values. Because all taxpayers pay for elections, it's not fair to force voters who want to be independent to join a political party just to have their voices heard.

More than a third (37%) of Colorado voters are unaffiliated. It's not right to exclude more than 1 million Coloradans from our primary elections.

Turnout in primaries in Colorado is so low – roughly 1 in 5 Colorado voters in 2014 picked candidates to run in November – that the winners tend to appeal to the extremes of each party. We need more people involved if we want the best candidate options.

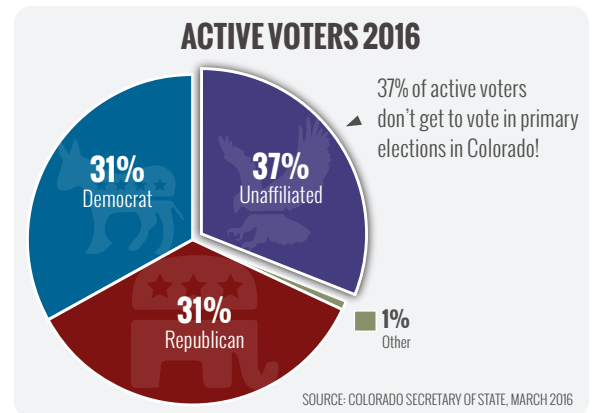
This is about encouraging participation in the election process, rather than closing the door to the largest group of voters in our state.

## WHAT WE KNOW

A majority of states open their primaries to unaffiliated voters, yet Colorado clings to an antiquated system that leaves out nearly 4 in 10 voters.

Colorado is one of just...

- ... 20 states where unaffiliated voters can't participate in the presidential nominating process;
- ... 17 states that close congressional primaries to unaffiliated voters;
- ... and 13 states where legislative primaries are closed to unaffiliateds.



- ✓ Colorado leads the nation in the growth of unaffiliated voters since 2008, and they now make up a plurality (more than 35%) of active voters. (Sources: nonpartisan group “Third Way”; Colorado Secretary of State)
- ✓ Roughly two-thirds of young people who registered to vote in 2014 chose not to affiliate with a party. (Secretary of State data)
- ✓ Colorado has some of the highest general-election turnouts in the nation, but primary turnout has declined from 31% of active voters in 2010 to just 22% in 2014. (Secretary of State data)
- ✓ Colorado was among 11 states (Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, and Wyoming) that utilized caucuses in the presidential nominating process this year.\* Idaho (D), Kentucky (R) and Washington (D) used caucuses for one party.
- ✓ Caucuses limit participation. There are more than 3.6 million registered voters in Colorado, and just 180,000 (5%) participated in 2016 caucuses.

## COLORADO PRIMARY TURNOUT

2016: ?

2014: 22% of active voters

2012: 23% of active voters

2010: 31% of active voters

\*Colorado Republicans did not conduct preference polls at their caucuses, but they were the starting point for the selection of delegates to the party’s national convention.

## FAQs

### Don’t parties have a First Amendment right to associate?

Yes. And Initiative 98, like measures that have been deemed constitutional elsewhere, protects that right by allowing parties to nominate their candidates through a process other than a primary election. But if taxpayer money is used to pay for an election, all voters should be allowed to have their voices heard.

### When did Colorado last hold a presidential primary?

Colorado held presidential primaries in 1992, 1996 and 2000. In 2003, lawmakers passed a measure to eliminate the presidential primary as a way to save an estimated \$2.2 million. Restoring the primary could generate 10 times that amount in economic activity, according to conservative estimates.

### So how do we nominate for president?

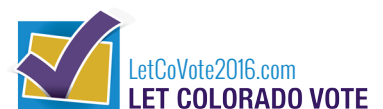
Colorado uses a caucus process, though this year Republicans chose not to conduct a presidential preference poll at their caucuses.

### Are you proposing eliminating caucuses?

No. Caucuses would still be a vehicle for parties to identify candidates for other offices, to advance delegates to their assemblies, to sign up precinct committee workers, etc.

## MORE INFORMATION

For a complete list of supporters, visit: [LetCoVote2016.com](http://LetCoVote2016.com) or contact Curtis Hubbard at [info@letcovote2016.com](mailto:info@letcovote2016.com).



SPONSORED BY: MAYOR DOWNING

COUNCILMAN'S RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO.

No. CR-72  
Series of 2016

\_\_\_\_\_  
Series of 2016

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR LET COLORADO VOTE – INITIATIVES 98 AND 140

WHEREAS, freedom and independence are core Colorado values;

WHEREAS, all Colorado taxpayers pay for Colorado elections;

WHEREAS, voters unaffiliated with political parties are currently excluded from primary elections in Colorado;

WHEREAS, unaffiliated voters comprise more than 37% of all Colorado voters;

WHEREAS, unaffiliated voters are the fastest growing segment of the voting age population with 2/3 of all new voters opting not to affiliate;

WHEREAS, Colorado's primary turnout has continued to decline with just 22% of active voters participating in the 2014 primary;

WHEREAS, a majority of states allow unaffiliated voters to participate in primaries;

WHEREAS, Initiative 98 would open up primary elections to Colorado's 1.3 million unaffiliated voters;

WHEREAS, Initiative 98 would allow registered democrats to receive a Democratic ballot, Republicans to receive a Republican ballot and unaffiliated voters to receive a single ballot with a column for candidates from each party;

WHEREAS, a mixed ballot would be invalidated to prevent election tampering;

WHEREAS, only 5% of registered voters participated in the party caucuses in 2016;

WHEREAS, Initiative 140 would restore Colorado's presidential primary last held in 2000;

WHEREAS, a Colorado presidential primary would both increase voter turnout, elevate issues of importance to Coloradans, and provide a projected net economic benefit to the state; and

WHEREAS; a voter passage of these initiatives would encourage participation in the electoral process by all Coloradans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The City of Northglenn supports the passage of the Let Colorado Vote Initiatives 98 and 140 on the November 2016 ballot.

DATED at Northglenn, Colorado, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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JOYCE DOWNING  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHANNA SMALL, CMC  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
COREY Y. HOFFMANN  
City Attorney