

2018 BALLOT GUIDE TOOLKIT

Get Informed & Help Others “Vote Smart”

Why It Matters: Getting to Know the 2018 Ballot

As Colorado voters, we are part of a unique democratic structure where we take critical issues into our own hands. We have a special responsibility to educate ourselves and vote our full ballot. One way to fulfill our civic duty is to talk with friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors about the issues on our ballot.

But having productive political conversations can be tricky. That’s where this toolkit comes in.

Whether you want to talk with friends over coffee or host a get-together to spread the word about an issue you care about, the Bell has you covered. Read on for:

- Sample conversation starters
- Sample event invitations and agendas
- Tips for keeping the conversation comfortable
- Frequently asked questions about the issues

Breaking the Ice: Ask Questions to Start a Conversation

- Have you received your ballot yet?
- Can you believe how many measures are on the ballot this year?

Following Up: How to Continue the Conversation

- There are so many different issues on the ballot this year. Gerrymandering fixes, transportation funding, education, slavery, payday lending – I can barely keep up/wrap my brain around it all.
- What are you most worried/excited about on this year’s ballot?
- This nonpartisan organization I trust has put together an analysis for every statewide measure, including the pros and cons for each to give both sides of the argument. Would you be interested in seeing it?
- I’m watching [*one of the issues you’re paying attention to and why*].

Taking the Conversation Further: Tools to Help You Host a Gathering About the 2018 Ballot

Coloradans are hungry for reliable resources and opportunities to connect as they decide how to vote this fall. Hosting an informal gathering about this year’s ballot measures is a great way to help the people you care about get connected and informed.

Sample Invitation Language

- (*In writing*) There are so many measures on the ballot this fall. To help cut through the noise, I’m hosting [*small backyard BBQ, dinner party, game night, etc.*] to talk about the pros and cons of the different measures. I would love to hear your thoughts. I hope you can join us!
- (*In conversation*) There’s so much on the ballot this year! Luckily, I have an awesome, nonpartisan resource that looks at everything we’re voting on statewide. I’m hosting a [*small backyard BBQ, dinner party, game night, etc.*] to talk about the pros and cons of the different measures. I would love to hear your thoughts. I hope you can join us!
- Be sure to provide important information to your guests, including when and where your gathering will be, as well as a way to RSVP so you can plan accordingly.

Sample Event Agenda

- Welcome and Why We're Here: Keep it short and sweet (*see conversation points*)
- Conversation Expectations: To make sure we keep the conversation friendly and constructive, what respectful standards should we stick to?
 - This step is most helpful when guests aren't acquainted, or a heated exchange feels likely. Some possibilities: Give everyone a chance to be heard/don't dominate the conversation, be respectful, speak loudly so everyone can hear.
- Review Ballot Guide
 - You can do this measure by measure or ask people which issues they are most interested in and jump around.
 - Use suggested discussion questions as needed (*provided below*).
 - Suggested Format: Have a guest give a brief summary of an issue and the major pros and cons listed in the guide, then open it up for questions.
 - Whenever anyone has a question that can't be answered (by you or another guest), no worries! Just point people to the additional resources listed (*provided on the next page*) or ask the Bell Policy Center on social media. We'll get back to you right away!
- Closing & Thanks
 - Review pending questions and next steps for getting answers.
 - Thank everyone for being there.

Tips for Keeping it Comfortable

- Have people set expectations at the beginning. This can be as simple as stating what the goals of the event are or be more specific, as shown in the sample agenda above.
- Sometimes people like to take over the conversation. When that happens, you can say something to affirm their concerns (or enthusiasm!) and bring the conversation to the next point or ask someone who hasn't spoken for their point of view.
 - For example: I know! We don't want to make reckless decisions. This is an issue where people hold really strong, often differing views. I want to make sure everyone feels comfortable and heard tonight. _____, you haven't said anything. Do you have something you'd like to add on this?
- What if people won't leave? Put on your PJs. Yawn a lot. Tell people you have another commitment.

Suggested Discussion Questions (Find the Answers in the Bell's [2018 Ballot Guide](#))

- [Amendment 73](#)
 - How do we know schools are using their funding wisely/appropriately? What kind of metrics are in place to measure successful use of funds?
 - Do we think this measure will solve the crisis in Colorado's education funding? Why/Why not?
- [Amendment 74](#)
 - Would this amendment apply to laws and regulations that are not related to energy development?
 - What people would benefit most from this amendment?
- [Amendment 75](#)
 - This seems like an easy way to level the playing field for non-millionaires – is it?
 - What's the best way to limit the influence of money in elections?
- [Prop 109](#)
 - Why do we need taxes to pay for roads if we can just get bonds?
 - Isn't it helpful to have all of the projects spelled out prior to voting and not leave it to bureaucrats to figure out?

- Prop 110
 - Was there no other way to pay for this other than a sales tax hike?
 - Why was the transportation measure passed earlier this year in the legislature not enough to fund transportation needs?
- Prop 111
 - Why would we want to get rid of these lenders?
 - What are the alternatives to taking out payday loans?
- Prop 112
 - Is there any reason for the 2,500-foot number, or is that arbitrary?
- Amendment A
 - What are work programs like in prisons currently?
 - What impact would this amendment have on community service programs?
- Amendment V
 - How will allowing representatives younger than 25 to serve in the general assembly affect Colorado?
- Amendment W
 - How do voters elect judges in Colorado now?
 - If we aren't electing judges, does it even matter if we vote to retain them?
- Amendment X
 - How/will this amendment affect the production and sale of marijuana in Colorado?
- Amendments Y & Z
 - Would this create fairer, more competitive districts?
 - I don't like my elected official. Would this get them out of office?

Continue the Conversation with Us on Social Media

Have questions that aren't answered in the ballot guide? We're here to help! Just find the Bell on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (@bellpolicy) and ask your question with the hashtags #AskTheBell and #BallotWithBell. Our expert policy analysts will get back to you as soon as possible. You can also contact us by emailing info@bellpolicy.org.

Help other Coloradans #VoteSmart by sharing the guide with your networks, too!

Where to Find More Info on Each Measure

Check out the Bell's [2018 Ballot Guide online](#) for more about each issue. As we get closer to Election Day, we'll continue to update our resources and research.

To see the issue committees, including proponents and opponents on any ballot measures, go to the Colorado Secretary of State's site: <https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Initiatives/titleBoard/index.html>.

For Questions About How to Vote

Check out www.OnlyVoteColorado.org for everything you need to vote this November.