



Week's Worth

July 9, 2010

Earlier this year, the CAHSA board heard a presentation from the Coloradans for Responsible Reform Coalition, a group working to defeat three ballot issues this November: Amendment 60, Amendment 61 and Proposition 101. The Board voted unanimously to have CAHSA sign a Statement of Resolution in support of the Coalition and their efforts. Further, the Board directed that we share with members information about these ballot issues and urge you to educate your staff, residents/participants, board members and volunteers.

According to the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, these three ballot measures could force cuts of up to 60 percent of all senior services at the state level, including potentially forcing the state to withdraw from Medicaid. In addition, every other service in state government, including public schools, would also be forced to make dramatic and unthinkable cuts. Just as the economy is beginning to grow, the three measures would stamp out any further progress and worsen Colorado's precarious fiscal situation. Now is the time to prepare for the future, not undermine it. The full consequences of these three ballot measures are impossible to predict, but here is a short summary of the minimum amount of damage they would cause:

Amendment 60

Amendment 60 dramatically decreases community control over local budgets. It automatically overturns all local and school tax elections since 1992, thereby substituting state voter control for local decision making. It reduces local funding for schools by half and requires the state to make up the difference.

Amendment 61

Amendment 61 prohibits the use of public finance as a tool of government. This amendment prohibits the state from borrowing money to pay for new roads, buildings on college campuses, and other important projects. This initiative will stunt, if not virtually eliminate the development and preservation of Colorado's infrastructure. It also reduces the ability of local municipalities to do voter-approved bonds and requires existing public finance projects to be grandfathered in. Once the projects are paid off, taxes must be decreased by the annual debt service eliminating, for example, the state's ability to pay for the maintenance of projects.

Proposition 101

Proposition 101 will result in a nearly \$3.5 billion shortfall in an already depleted state budget. This proposal strips away hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for the maintenance of local roads and bridges, reduces state funding for health care, universities, children's services, water-quality programs and other environmental protection activities by nearly half, and forces middle-class families to shoulder more responsibility for critical public services.

The combination of all three measures passing would be devastating. If these three measures pass, \$4.2 billion will be eliminated from the State's budget. The Coalition estimates that 73,000 primary jobs will be lost. One of the measures (Proposition 101) cuts state revenue dramatically, while another (Amendment 60) places a new huge mandate on state spending for schools. The state would be required to make unimaginable changes to government services that would affect the lives of all Coloradans, including seniors. Opting out of Medicaid, and as a result losing hundreds of millions of dollars, would become a real possibility.

For more information on these ballot items, go to the website for Coloradans for Responsible Reform, <http://www.donthurtcolorado.com/>. We urge you to have your organization sign the resolution, which may be found on the site. You can also request a speaker to come to your organization if interested. In addition, a tool kit is expected to be available early this month to use in educating others and will be available at the website.

We have scheduled a conference call with a representative of the Coalition and our lobbyist on August 10th from 11 am to 12 noon for Q&As and to provide additional information. Please call Karen at 303-837-8834 or email karen@cahsa.org if you would like to participate and we will advise you of the telephone number to use when it's closer to the date.