



## Statement on the 2016 election results

*Claire Levy, Executive Director of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy, issued the following statement about the 2016 election results:*

The 2016 election generated both good news and bad news for the low-income families who the Colorado Center on Law and Policy serves.

First, the good news: **We are delighted and thankful that Colorado voters resoundingly approved Amendment 70, the ballot initiative that will incrementally raise the minimum wage from a dismal \$8.31 an hour to \$12 by 2020.** When Amendment 70 is fully implemented, nearly 480,000 hardworking Coloradans will get a much-needed boost in earnings.

CCLP worked hard on the Executive Committee of the Colorado Families for a Fair Wage campaign to build a factual case for raising the minimum wage. Our Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard 2015 showed that the minimum wage is insufficient to support families anywhere in the state. In a testament to the voters' understanding of the struggles of hard-working Coloradans, they voted to strengthen economic security and put more families on a path to self-sufficiency. Approval of Amendment 70 will be a win for all of Colorado and make a difference for hundreds of thousands of Colorado families.

Amendment 70's success shows the importance of having avenues to effect change when legislators will not or cannot act. In 2015, CCLP supported a bill to refer a minimum wage increase to the voters, which did not pass. By organizing the ballot initiative, gathering signatures and informing the electorate about the need to raise the minimum wage, the campaign demonstrated that voters will take action to improve the lives of their fellow Coloradans even when their elected representatives will not.

Unfortunately, our "bad news" has diminished that ability. **CCLP is disappointed that Colorado voters approved Amendment 71, the so-called "raise-the-bar" initiative which will make it more difficult to amend the state's constitution.** CCLP opposed Amendment 71 because the measure's restrictions created unreasonable barriers to effecting change that is needed to address Colorado's fiscal straight-jacket.

Given the state's limited ability to fund Medicaid and other services for low-income Coloradans at a level that's even close to adequate, CCLP is concerned that the criteria outlined in Amendment 71 will make any changes to the amendment known as the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (or TABOR) nearly impossible. It could further cement the fiscal constraints that hurt low-income families and limit our ability to improve

education and the health and well-being of all Coloradans.

The national campaign gave voice to the economic anxiety experienced by people across the country. While there was disagreement about the cause and the remedy, the voters appeared to be unified in demanding that their elected representatives make the economy fairer and create opportunities for everyone to achieve a middle-class lifestyle. **We embrace the challenge of creating widespread prosperity and an economy that works for everyone.**

As a nonpartisan organization, CCLP will continue to work across the aisle in the state Capitol, with the governor's office and stakeholders to protect and improve human service programs like Medicaid, SNAP, child care assistance as well as policies that can help low-income Coloradans forge pathways from poverty.

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*The Colorado Center on Law and Policy is a nonprofit, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that engages in legislative, administrative and legal advocacy on behalf of low-income Coloradans.*