CCLP's Positions on 2018 Ballot Measures

With mail ballots scheduled to go out today and the Nov. 6 election less than one month away, here's where Colorado Center on Law and Policy stands on three ballot measures:

CCLP OPPOSES Proposition 109, the so-called "Fix Our Damn Roads" initiative backed by Jon Caldara's Independence Institute. If approved, Proposition 109 would require the state to issue $3.5 billion in bonds that would be repaid over a 20-year period. Annual payments would be $260 million.

We strongly oppose Proposition 109 because that $260 million would have to come from existing revenue, under the current TABOR revenue ceiling, which would require deep cuts to appropriations for other pressing needs. To find such a large amount of funds over a 20-year period, the legislature will have to reduce spending on higher education, leading to yet more tuition increases on top of already sky-rocketing tuition costs; reduce spending on behavioral health, which is already underfunded; reduce spending on other health care needs; and ignore many other pressing but underfunded needs of our growing and aging population.

Because the state would be locked in to repaying the bonds for 20 years, Colorado would not be able to address emerging needs such as meeting the growing need for in-home care providers for our aging population, responding to the growth in population living with dementia, meeting the housing needs of an exploding population, expanding access to preschool and reducing the already unaffordable cost of child care.

In addition to causing drastic reductions in services of all types, Proposition 109 would actually fail to address the most pressing transportation needs in our state. Transportation infrastructure should provide mobility for people as well as goods. The proceeds of the bonds would be dedicated exclusively to highways. None of the funds would provide mobility to those who cannot drive, reduce reliance on automobiles or allow Colorado's transportation infrastructure to be modernized to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CCLP SUPPORTS Proposition 111 which limits the interest rate on payday loans to 36%. Current caps on interest rates do not include fees and surcharges, and allow up to 45% interest on the principle loan. These rates force borrowers into a "debt trap" where they go deeper and deeper into debt just to pay the growing interest charges on their original loan. Payday lenders are concentrated in neighborhoods with residents that are struggling for economic security and where there are few to no banks. Almost a quarter of payday loan borrowers default on the loan, which harms their credit rating and often leads to bankruptcy. These consequences affect employment, the ability to rent a home at a reasonable rent, the cost of car insurance and the cost of any future borrowing, to say nothing of the borrower's ability to buy a house. Payday lending is a highly profitable enterprise. It will remain profitable even if the overall interest rate is capped at 36%. The wages of Colorado's hard-working families should not be stripped by irresponsible lenders.

CCLP SUPPORTS Amendment A to prohibit slavery or involuntary servitude under all circumstances. Colorado's constitution currently allows slavery or involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. We that it is inconsistent with fundamental notions of human dignity to compel labor, particularly in a coercive environment such as a correctional institution. Prohibiting slavery under all circumstances is an idea that is long overdue. The fact that slavery is still permitted in any form is an insult to generations of Americans whose ancestors were enslaved.

- By Claire Levy