



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DENVER – Two hundred people rallied on the west steps of the Colorado Capitol Tuesday to kick off efforts to collect the 125,000 voter signatures necessary to get a graduated income tax question on the November ballot.

Organizers of [Protect Colorado's Future](#), a coalition of 19 grassroots and policy nonprofits, are confident they will prevail, both in getting the question on the ballot and when they ask Colorado voters for their support this fall. An additional 16 organizations have signed on to support the measure as well as 28 state lawmakers and State Treasurer Dave Young.

“As a life-long Coloradan, a teacher, and your Colorado State Treasurer, I deeply understand the needs of families across our state,” said Young, who is a former chair of the legislature’s Joint Budget Committee. “Our current tax structure prevents Coloradans from becoming their best. I want to protect Colorado’s families and Colorado’s future. We need a fair and balanced tax structure — one that allows us to invest in ourselves by funding our schools, child care, and health care. That’s why I strongly support the graduated income tax structure that Initiative 195 will create.”

The proposed constitutional amendment will strike the sentence in TABOR requiring all income to be taxed at one rate, establish in statute a set of new rates and brackets that cuts taxes for the 97 percent of Coloradans making less than \$500,000 a year, and raise taxes on individuals and corporations making more. Because it’s a deletion of language in the state constitution — not an addition — the measure requires only a simple majority at the polls to succeed.

To be clear, *those making less than \$500,000 would not pay a penny more in state income taxes.*

The measure would raise about \$2 billion that would pay for health care, child care, and K-12 education. Those three areas, in particular, have suffered as Colorado has grappled with the

double-whammy of a state budget artificially constrained by the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR, and harsh federal budget cuts and policy changes.

The graduated income tax is officially [Initiative #195](#). Once it is qualified for the ballot, it will be given an amendment number. And because voters passed Proposition GG in 2022, Colorado voters will see an [income bracket table](#) on the ballot itself to help them understand how the tax change impacts families like theirs.

At the event Tuesday, the speakers were: Chris deGruy Kennedy, President & CEO of the Bell Policy Center and co-chair of the coalition, and Christina Soliz, Executive Director of New Era Colorado and co-chair of the coalition. Several people affected by Colorado's ever-tightening budget reality spoke about what it meant to them, their loved ones, and issues they care about. Deborah Sims Fard, an educator from Denver, spoke to education impacts; Jennifer Remington, of Jefferson County; spoke to Medicaid impacts; and Summit County Commissioner Tamara Pogue, spoke to rural and local government impacts.

Remington, who had a spinal cord injury 16 years ago and uses a wheelchair, said Medicaid's Home & Community Based Services are the "difference between existing and living."

"Because of Home & Community Based Services, I wake up in my own bedroom every morning," she said.

She said those services give her "the chance to continue being a partner, a parent and a member of the community."

The measure also has garnered support from others in Colorado's political ecosystem, including the Colorado legislature's Joint Budget Committee Chair Emily Sirota.

"Colorado is at an important crossroads in its ability to deliver the basic services that Coloradans need and expect from us," Sirota said. "It's a moment that calls for a restructuring of our tax system — not just another stop-gap measure — so we can change the state's budget trajectory. This graduated income tax proposal delivers an important solution in a way that underscores the very best values that unite us as Coloradans. I enthusiastically support it."

State Legislators Supporting the GIT

Rep. Andrew Boesenecker

Rep. Sean Camacho

Rep. Chad Clifford

Rep. Meg Froelich

Rep. Lorena Garcia

Rep. Lori Goldstein

Rep. Jamie Jackson

Rep. Junie Joseph

Rep. Sheila Lieder

Rep. Mandy Lindsay
Rep. Karen McCormick
Rep. Amy Paschal
Rep. Elizabeth Velasco
Rep. Gretchen Rydin
Rep. Emily Sirota
Rep. Rebekah Stewart
Rep. Tammy Story
Rep. Kenny Van Nguyen
Rep. Jenny Willford
Rep. Steven Woodrow
Rep. Yara Zokaie
Sen. Matt Ball
Sen. Jeff Bridges
Sen. Iman Jodeh
Sen. Cathy Kipp
Sen. Chris Kolker
Sen. Katie Wallace
Sen. Mike Weissman

Quotes from Coalition Members

Below are prepared quotes from leaders of the organizations that make up Protect Colorado's Future, the coalition pursuing the graduated income tax question. Each of them spoke to why, from the perspective of their organization's mission, the moment is right to pass a graduated income tax.

"This diverse coalition — including advocates for public education, child care, health care, food security, disability rights, and other state needs, stretching from our metro areas to rural Colorado — represents a long-standing concern about our broken tax system and a growing recognition that the best solution for 2026 is one that acknowledges the pain voters are feeling with the high cost of living. Our graduated income tax proposal meets the moment by helping Coloradans afford health care and child care and securing new revenue from those who have benefited the most from our growing economy to allow Colorado to invest in better education, better health care, better child care, and a brighter future for our kids." ~ **Chris deGruy Kennedy, President & Chief Executive Officer, [Bell Policy Center](#) and Co-chair of the Protect Colorado's Future coalition**

"Bringing this ballot measure to the people of Colorado provides some much-needed hope during dire times in our state. Coloradans want our tax code to change, and this is an opportunity to create a fairer system that benefits everyone." ~ **Lydia McCoy, Chief Executive Officer, [Colorado Center on Law & Policy](#)**

"Tax systems are often invisible, but they shape children's lives. A graduated income tax would help Colorado's opportunities for children reflect our true prosperity, allowing us to build the

schools, health care and early childhood systems, and strong communities every child needs to thrive. This ballot initiative will allow Coloradans to create a tax system that is fair and effective, and that allows our state to be strong and flexible at a moment when the federal government is an increasingly unreliable partner in supporting children's well-being.” ~ **Heather Tritten, President and Chief Executive Officer, [Colorado Children’s Campaign](#)**

“Colorado families are struggling with rising health care costs, often choosing whether to prioritize their health or other necessities like groceries and rent. With a graduated income tax, we can preserve and expand health care programs, prioritize affordability over cuts, and keep Coloradans healthy. That is the health care future we’re dreaming of for our families, neighbors, and community members.” ~ **Mannat Singh, Executive Director, [Colorado Consumer Health Initiative](#)**

“The passage of this ballot initiative is imperative for people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for life sustaining services. Our state is currently contemplating large cuts to Medicaid that will cause pain for our members and the only way out of this budget crisis, and the only way to protect Medicaid, is to pass #195.” ~ **Hillary Jorgensen, Co-Executive Director, [Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition](#)**

“A lot of Coloradans are working hard, playing by the rules, and still watching the cost of living climb while our state struggles to fund the basics. A graduated income tax is about common sense and fairness. If you make less than \$500,000 a year, your taxes would go down. If you’ve done extraordinarily well in Colorado’s economy, you’d contribute a little more so we can invest in the schools, child care, and health care that keep our communities strong. That’s the kind of Colorado most people want to live in.” ~ **Kathy White, Executive Director, [Colorado Fiscal Institute](#)**

“We are proud to support the Graduated Income Tax because Colorado’s tax system is broken. Working families shouldn’t have to carry the burden while the wealthiest receive tax breaks. A Graduated Income Tax will make our system fairer and allow for greater investment in the services hardworking families depend on — including child care, health care, and K-12 education.” ~ **Lorena García, Chief Executive Officer, [Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition](#)**

“Colorado’s tax system didn’t become unequal by accident. TABOR was designed to restrict public investment and limit what communities can build together, and it has done exactly that for decades. The result is underfunded schools, strained health systems, and families, including many in our Latine communities, carrying the consequences of policy choices that protect concentrated wealth over community well-being. A graduated income tax is one step toward changing that trajectory and allowing Colorado to invest in the people who make our communities strong.” ~ **Vanessa Martinez, Vice President of Policy, [Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights](#)**

“Colorado’s state workers don’t just pay a higher percentage of their incomes in taxes than wealthier Coloradans, they’re also told year after year that they have to do more with less because we can’t adequately staff and fund the services they provide. It’s time to force the

wealthy to pay their fair share so we can finally invest in the services and programs that keep Coloradans safe and healthy.” ~ **Hilary Glasgow, Executive Director, [Colorado WINS](#)**

“You can’t have a healthy environment without a healthy state budget. For too long Colorado has had to tackle important things like clean air and water on the cheap. But that does not have to be the case if we modernize our tax code to ensure the very wealthy pay their fair share.” ~ **Kelly Nordini, Chief Executive Officer, [Conservation Colorado](#)**

“Colorado’s counties are on the front lines of delivering essential services — from supporting strong public schools and early childhood programs to helping residents access health care and behavioral health services. Initiative #195 represents an opportunity to modernize Colorado’s tax system and provide more stable, sustainable revenue to invest in the services our communities rely on every day. Counties know that when the state is better equipped to fund education, health care, and early childhood programs, it strengthens the entire system of public services that local governments help deliver. CCAT appreciates efforts to ensure Colorado has the resources needed to support thriving, resilient communities across our state.” ~ **Thomas Davidson, Executive Director, [Counties & Commissioners Acting Together \(CCAT\)](#)**

“Every Colorado student deserves a great public school and real pathways to opportunity, guided and supported by great, well-resourced teachers. And every Colorado resident deserves a tax system where everyone pays their fair share. Initiative 195 gives voters a rare and exciting opportunity to make real progress toward both of those urgent goals.” ~ **Lisa Weil, Executive Director, [Great Education Colorado](#)**

“Hunger Free Colorado believes that every Coloradan should have equitable access to nutritious, culturally relevant food. That vision is only possible when other basic needs like health care and childcare are also met, and families are not having to choose between going to the doctor and putting food on the table. That is why we strongly support a graduated income tax measure that cuts taxes for 97 percent of Coloradans, while also securing the needed resources to support education, health care and childcare for all our communities.” ~ **Marc Jacobson, Executive Director, [Hunger Free Colorado](#)**

“While young people are fighting for livable wages, the rich get richer. We’re working hard to keep up with the extra hundred dollars added to our rent each year and paying off student debt that doesn’t match our financial reality or budgets. Young people, who make up over 30 percent of our state, won’t accept the status quo any longer. This ballot measure is an opportunity to level the playing field and fight for a future where the wealthy pay what they owe.” ~ **Christina Soliz, Executive Director, [New Era Colorado](#), and Co-chair of the Protect Colorado’s Future coalition**

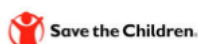
“The graduated income tax campaign follows the law voters passed a generation ago to let the people have a say on fiscal policy. This is our chance to make a big structural change to Colorado’s tax code that reduces the tax burden on everyone making less than \$500,000 a year while asking a little more from the wealthiest. Every year lawmakers face challenges of meeting

the state's basic responsibilities. A graduated income tax will give our state the resources to provide the high quality of life Colorado families deserve." ~ **Sara Loflin, Executive Director, [ProgressNow Colorado](#)**

"At Provecho Collective, we believe everyone should be able to access the food they choose, where they want it, and when they need it. However, food security doesn't exist in isolation. It depends on strong investments in systems like child care, health care, and education, which allow families and communities to thrive. A graduated income tax is a step toward a fairer system — one where those who have benefited most contribute their fair share, that way all can prosper." ~ **Dolores Ramirez, Executive Director, [Provecho Collective](#)**

"Every child deserves a strong start in life, and that begins with ensuring families have a strong foundation — including child care. A graduated income tax would help generate the resources our state needs to invest in early childhood, education, and healthcare so that all Colorado kids have the opportunity to thrive." ~ **Ana Bustamante, Colorado State Manager, [Save the Children Action Network](#)**

"We in Western Colorado believe in fairness and that we can solve problems in our communities if given the resources to do so. But right now, rural Coloradans face a double whammy. Income and wages here are generally much lower than the big cities and adding insult to injury, federal budget cuts have undermined basic services for rural health care, food security, and child care. We must act now to invest in these critical services. A graduated income tax will create a fairer tax code and give rural communities the resources we need to thrive. This, after all, is a moral issue." ~ **Kevin Williams, Board Chair, [Western Colorado Alliance](#)**



Additional organizations that have signed on to support the graduated income tax

- Alliance Colorado
- Bread and Roses Legal Center
- Business and Professional Woman of Colorado
- Caring for Colorado
- Center for Employment Opportunities

- Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- Colorado Common Cause
- Colorado PTA
- Food Security Network of Boulder and Broomfield Counties
- Good Food Collective
- Indivisible Colorado
- League of Women Voters of Colorado
- One Colorado
- The Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative
- The People's House