



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Alicia Caldwell
(303) 810-9909
caldwell@bellpolicy.org

Coalition Delivers 157,000 Signatures for Graduated Income Tax Ballot Measure

DENVER, CO — Aug. 3, 2026 — The [Protect Colorado's Future coalition](#) on Monday delivered more than 157,000 signatures to the Colorado Secretary of State to get the graduated income tax on the November ballot, setting the stage for a historic rebalancing of the state's income tax code to make the state more affordable for working Coloradans.

The measure would cut taxes for 97 percent of Coloradans, raise them for those making more, and bring in \$2 billion for child care, healthcare, and K-12 at a time when the state has been struggling to overcome the double-whammy of federal tax cuts that enrich the wealthy, and stranglehold that TABOR has had on Colorado's budget since its passage in 1992.

Over the past two years, Colorado has had to cut approximately \$3 billion from the state budget. Without the graduated income tax, Colorado likely will have to take more money out of your neighborhood schools, cut healthcare, and continue being unable to invest in affordable child care so parents can work.

"Every signature represents a Coloradan who believes our tax system can be fairer," said Kathy White, Executive Director of [Colorado Fiscal Institute](#), a coalition steering committee member. "No matter what happens at the ballot or before, thousands of people have laid the groundwork for a future where working people pay less and the wealthiest pay their fair share. None of these hours, conversations or miles were for nothing. They showed what we can build when we work together."

Unlike some of the other measures that likely will be on November's ballot, the graduated income tax measure is the product of an enormous collaborative effort by more than 100 grassroots and policy nonprofits, which organized 1,000 volunteers and coalition members to gather nearly 70 percent of the signature total. The remainder were collected by paid petition gathering firms.

The grassroots nature of the coalition's effort was underscored Monday by the parade of dozens of volunteers and coalition members who struck a celebratory tone as they walked to the Secretary of State's Office to deliver dozens of boxes of petitions.

The coalition includes organizations focused on education, healthcare, child care, food security, rural needs, local governments, environmental groups, older adults, and more. The coalition's breadth of support for the graduated income tax, which is currently called Initiative 195, shows a broad recognition of Colorado's fiscal problems.

"Initiative 195 is arriving at a critical inflection point for our state," said Sara Schueneman, [AARP Colorado](#) State Director. "Coloradans of all ages are struggling with the cost of living while the state's

population continues to age. This measure will provide great relief to many, while also strengthening the services and supports older Coloradans need to survive and thrive.”

On the other end of the lifespan spectrum, New Era Colorado Action Fund has been very active in working to get the graduated income tax to the ballot.

“Young people have been constantly told that our ideas are too big, too radical, too much,” said Christina Soliz, Executive Director of [New Era Colorado Action Fund](#), and co-chair of the Protect Colorado’s Future coalition. “Our generation refuses to accept that change is not possible. In fact, we continue to show up and prove that not only is it possible, it’s also within our power to make it happen. This effort is yet again another example of young people’s resilience and determination to make the world a fairer place.”

The graduated income tax also has strong support on the Western Slope and rural Colorado.

“People across Western Colorado support a fair tax system that will address funding shortfalls to crucial services our communities rely on,” said Emily Hornback, Executive Director of [Western Colorado Alliance](#). “From rural hospital budgets to small town school districts and child care deserts, our communities feel the impact of budget cuts in our lives everyday. Western Colorado Alliance is proud to be part of the Protect Colorado’s Future coalition and ensure that rural Coloradan voices are part of the effort to pass Initiative 195.”

For 50 years, Colorado used a graduated income tax system, in which those with higher incomes paid higher tax rates. This system ended in 1987, when an anti-tax legislature replaced it with an inequitable “flat tax,” lowering taxes on those making the most and gradually draining the state budget. The coalition aims to ask voters to fix that injustice by passing a graduated income tax. The coalition has a [tax calculator](#) on its website so you can see exactly how much you would pay if the measure were to pass.

“Fiscal policy is people policy,” said Lydia McCoy, Chief Executive Officer of the [Colorado Center on Law & Policy](#), a coalition steering committee member. “This measure will make life more affordable for Coloradans by cutting taxes on most individuals and small businesses, reducing childcare costs, funding critical healthcare needs, and increasing pay for our teachers and health care workers.” – Lydia McCoy

Now that signatures have been submitted, the Secretary of State will review signatures and confirm that the coalition has met filing requirements, which set a high bar for getting on the ballot. The coalition is [required](#) to have delivered at least 124,238 valid voter signatures, with at least 2 percent of registered voters from each of the 35 Colorado state Senate districts.

“Reaching this signature milestone means Coloradans are one step closer to a fair tax code and the essential investments our families have gone without for too long,” said Renee Ferrufino, President & CEO of the [Women’s Foundation of Colorado](#). “Initiative 195 would dedicate funding for early childhood education, the educators who make it possible, and the families who depend on it. The Women’s Foundation of Colorado is proud to support Initiative 195, knowing the difference it will make for women, their families, and our entire state. We commend the hard work of the Protect Colorado Futures coalition to put it before voters.”

Protect Colorado’s Future Steering Committee:

Bell Policy Center, Colorado Center on Law & Policy, Colorado Fiscal Institute, Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, Great Education Colorado, New Era Colorado, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Colorado PTA, Colorado Workers for Innovative and New Solutions, Conservation Colorado,

Counties & Commissioners Acting Together, Growing Our Future coalition, Hunger Free Colorado, Progress Now Colorado, Provecho Collective, Save the Children Action Network – Colorado, Western Colorado Alliance