FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE: The Income Tax Fairness Act Qualifies for the 2026 Ballot

Initiative 195, which replaces Colorado's flat income tax with a graduated income tax, cuts taxes for 97% of taxpayers and raises them on the wealthiest 3% to pay for new investments in K-12 schools, healthcare, and childcare.

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DENVER, Colo. — Sept. 1, 2026 — The Colorado Secretary of State's office confirmed today that Initiative 195, the graduated income tax measure, has qualified for the November 2026 ballot. The Protect Colorado's Future (PCF) coalition submitted more than 163,000 signatures on August 3, and the Secretary of State's review found 130,938 valid signatures, exceeding the required threshold both statewide and in each of Colorado's 35 state senate districts.

If passed, Initiative 195 will replace Colorado's flat income tax system with a graduated tax structure that:

- cuts taxes for 97 percent of Colorado taxpayers, including small businesses, seniors, and veterans
- raises more than $2 billion strictly for K-12 education, healthcare, and childcare by asking the wealthiest Coloradans and largest corporations to finally pay their fair share
- increases taxes only on the wealthiest 3 percent of individuals and largest 5 percent of corporations making more than $500,000 annually
- requires graduated income tax revenues to be spent exclusively on K-12 education, healthcare, and childcare
- mandates annual, independent public audits to ensure funds are spent as required

"Every Colorado student deserves a great public school and real pathways to opportunity, with great teachers who are paid and supported the way they deserve," said **Lisa Weil, executive director of Great Education Colorado**. "Initiative 195 qualifying for the ballot means Coloradans will have the chance to vote their values and build a tax system where everyone pays their fair share and our neighborhood schools finally get what they need to do right by our kids."

Change in Income Taxes Owed by Income Category

Income Categories	Current Average Income Tax Owed	Proposed Average Income Tax Owed	Proposed Change in Average Income Tax Owed if Passed + or –
$25,000 or less	$59	$50	-$9
$25,001 – $50,000	$751	$632	-$119
$50,001 – $100,000	$1,877	$1,666	-$210
$100,001 – $200,000	$4,126	$3,828	-$298
$200,001 – $500,000	$9,344	$9,019	-$325
$500,001 – $1,000,000	$19,288	$18,963	-$325
$1,000,001 – $2,000,000	$29,432	$34,196	+$4,764
$2,000,001 – $5,000,000	$41,196	$55,110	+$13,914
Income categories use adjusted gross income reported to the federal Internal Revenue Service.			

"Young people in Colorado are facing increasing rent costs, stagnating wages, and the programs we rely on being cut, all while the wealthiest keep getting wealthier," said **Christina Soliz, coalition co-chair and executive director of New Era Colorado**. "Initiative 195 qualifying for the ballot means voters have the opportunity to create a fairer tax code that rebalances the scales. This is our chance to build a state where the wealthy pay what they owe and where young people can actually see a future here."

Issue Background:

Under current law, a teacher earning $50,000 a year pays the same tax rate as a millionaire or a large corporation. That's because Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), adopted by voters in 1992, requires the state to tax all income at a single flat rate and caps annual state revenue growth, forcing budget cuts even in years when the state's economy grows.

That flat-rate requirement, combined with two state income tax cuts over the last six years that primarily benefited wealthy individuals and large corporations, has helped drive a deepening fiscal crisis. Colorado has cut approximately $2 billion from its state budget over the past two years, driven by federal spending cuts under H.R.1 and by TABOR's revenue restrictions, with education funding, Medicaid, and other services taking the hit.

Initiative 195 would fix this broken tax system by asking households and corporations earning more than $500,000 a year to pay their fair share, while cutting taxes for everyone else.

The new tax rates are marginal rates, and those rates apply to Colorado taxable income for individuals and corporate net income, also known as profit, for corporations (as opposed to gross business income).

About the PCF Coalition

Protect Colorado's Future is a coalition of more than 100 organizations, including groups focused on education, healthcare, child care, food security, older adults, the environment, rural communities, and local government. Learn more at protectcoloradosfuture.com.

Protect Colorado's Future Steering Committee:

- Bell Policy Center
- Colorado Center on Law and Policy
- Colorado Fiscal Institute
- Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
- Great Education Colorado
- New Era Colorado
- Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
- 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

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