

I wanted to say something about elections. The presidential election, though important, is not nearly as affecting to your life as local elections. Even if you don't want to vote for any presidential candidate, you should absolutely get out and vote on the 9 Colorado specific ballot measures.

One that I think deserves a lot of attention is the proposal to increase our minimum wage to \$12. This is a huge deal for our state's economy, and one that I am likely voting against. While I'm not necessarily against the idea of a 12 dollar minimum wage in a metropolis with climbing rent, this proposal is troubling in three ways:

1. Our current minimum wage of \$8.31 is relatively high compared to most states, and is adjusted every year already for inflation.

2. This is a statewide increase that would make our minimum wage higher than any other U.S. State by 2018 (as the proposal raises the min wage incrementally each year to hitting \$12 by 2020). Even though U.S. cities like Seattle have not had as terrible effects as predicted under a gradual increase in wage (towards \$15 by Jan 1 2017), these cities already had large minimum wages to begin with (Seattle was at \$11 to start), and, more pertinent to this amendment, Seattle didn't ask the State of Washington to raise their wage along with them. Rents in Denver are climbing, but it isn't right to hold other Colorado cities to Denver's economic situation.

3. Very few people in Colorado make minimum wage: 3% of our workforce; 60% of min wage earners are between the ages of 18 to 24- a statistic that doesn't include minors who almost exclusively work minimum wage jobs. Admittedly, this will affect more than just min wage earners over the next 4 years- anyone who makes between \$8.31 and \$11.99 per hour would be affected. While it's possible that some people in this demographic lose their jobs, I find it way more likely that less jobs will come to this demographic under a higher minimum wage, and our population is getting younger. This means less entry level positions for people trying to kick start their careers and get work experience and a financial base going.

This link shows the current minimum wage in each state:

[https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado\\_\\$12\\_Minimum\\_Wage,\\_Amendment\\_70\\_\(2016\)#2016\\_minimum\\_wages](https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_$12_Minimum_Wage,_Amendment_70_(2016)#2016_minimum_wages)

Currently D.C. is highest with \$10.50, and California and Massachusetts tie with \$10 each, and both of these states are higher taxed than most- Colorado, with its relatively much lower taxes, is still incredibly high ranked as is. By 2018 Colorado would have a min wage of \$10.20, and even if these states adjust for two years of inflation, we'd easily surpass them in 2019 with a min wage of \$11.10, placing us above even D.C.

Though it's unlikely to pass, we also have a Colorado level Universal Healthcare System on the ballot that would raise payroll taxes by 10% (two thirds paid by the employer, the last third by the employee, the full 10% if you make direct profit). While I love the idea of state universal health care- personally I think UHC would be better done at the State level than at the Federal level- I don't think it's economically smart to vote for both higher taxes and higher wages. It feels like bad math overall.

Anyway, just sharing my opinion on one of our more divisive ballot measures. Whether or not you agree, the much bigger point is that stuff like this is way more relevant to your life after November 9th than Hillary or Trump. If you're on the fence about voting because our presidential nominees are two of the worst in history, I implore you to vote regardless. Leave the Presidential box blank if you have to, but things like open primary elections, minimum wage, UHC, and end of life options are all up for a vote this year. Heck, if you're a smoker, there's a ballot to increase the cigarette tax by a lot- about \$2 per pack. So read up on these measures, and vote.

Also here's an article by an economist from the more Democrat aligned Washington Post on the subject of Seattle's similar wage increase:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/07/29/study-raising-the-minimum-wage-did-little-for-workers-earnings-in-seattle/>