

17 June 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This November, there will be two major ballot proposals that will undermine the sanctity of life, the family, and religious liberty. **It is imperative all faithful Catholics vote to oppose:**

1. # 89 “Right to Abortion”

The ballot proposal called “Right to Abortion” (yet to be officially numbered and titled), will remove the 1984 state constitutional amendment prohibiting public funding from subsidizing abortion and make abortion a “fundamental right” in the state constitution. The abortion lobby sponsoring ballot proposal intentionally drafted it to conceal its purpose: to allow the state legislature to allocate public taxpayer funding for abortion and make unrestricted abortion up until birth a “fundamental right” in the state constitution.

2. Senate Concurrent Resolution # 003 (SCR24-003) “Protecting the Freedom to Marry”

This resolution was passed by two-thirds of the Colorado House and Senate members in April to be placed on the November ballot. The ballot proposal will remove language from the Colorado Constitution defining marriage as between one man and one woman, [validating same-sex marriage in the Colorado](#) constitution.

These are the two most important issues for faithful Catholics to oppose on the November 2024 Colorado ballot. Ballot initiatives are either citizen-sponsored or legislature-sponsored measures that give voters the opportunity to either enact law or amend the state constitution. Citizen-sponsored initiatives require at least 124,238 signatures from Colorado voters to secure a spot on the November ballot. While the ballot initiative process serves an important role in fostering the democratic process, when citizens are uninformed on the impact of the laws they are voting for, such proposals can lead to damaging laws such as [Amendment 64](#) in 2012, which legalized recreational marijuana, and [Proposition 106](#) in 2016, which legalized physician-assisted suicide. It is therefore important that Catholics research each issue and form their conscience before signing a ballot petition.

There are three initiatives currently circulating petitions for signature collection which **affirm** Church teaching on parental rights and the dignity of children: *Initiatives 138, 142, and 160*. **The Bishops of Colorado support these initiatives.** Each initiative promotes the right of parents to make decisions that are best for children and affirms Church teaching that parents have the “first responsibility for the education of their children (CCC, 222).”

Here is a summary of the three initiatives to support:

1. Initiative 138: [School Choice in K-12 Education](#)

If passed, initiative 138 would create a right to school choice for every K-12 child and a right for parents “to direct the education of their children” in the Colorado Constitution. Despite bipartisan support for school choice programs across the country and research showing that a vast majority of school choice programs positively impact student outcomes,¹ Colorado lawmakers have consistently refused to pass legislation to expand education opportunities for

¹ Cargill, C. “There are 187 studies on impact of education choice,” Mountain States Policy Center, <https://www.mountainstatespolicy.org/there-are-187-studies-on-impact-of-education-choice-and-the-results-are-overwhelming> (January 2024).

children. The right for parents to pursue the education that best works for their children should be enshrined in the Colorado Constitution as a way to provide all children with the opportunity to have a great education, regardless of their parents' income-level.

2. Initiative 142: Parental Notification of Gender Incongruence

If passed, initiative 142 would mandate that a public school notify a child's parent within 48 hours if a student is experiencing gender incongruence. This is a measure to protect parents from government overreach and is necessary after the passage of [HB24-1039](#) "Non-legal Name Changes," which allows students to identify as a new name and gender without parental consent or even knowledge. It is the parents' right to know, and primary responsibility to address, their child's mental health.

3. Initiative 160: Public Athletics Programs for Minors

If passed, initiative 160 would limit participation in girls' sports programs to biological females. This initiative affirms the biological reality of male and female differences and protects girls from playing against boys in athletic competition. Permitting males to compete in girls' sports is both unfair and unsafe due to the physical advantages that men and adolescent boys possess.² Just as girls should have the right to compete against other girls, parents should be able to place their daughter in a sports league without being concerned that they will be playing against boys.

While we support these initiatives, pastors are invited to allow signature collection to happen in their parishes as they consider convenient. Please check with your parish pastor before collecting signature on parish property.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



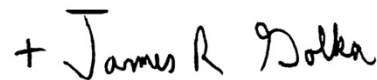
Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila
Archbishop of Denver



Most Reverend Stephen J. Berg
Bishop of Pueblo



Most Reverend Jorge H. Rodriguez
Auxiliary Bishop of Denver



Most Reverend James R. Golka
Bishop of Colorado Springs

² Alliance Defending Freedom, "Report Confirms Women Need a Level Playing Field," https://adflegal.org/article/new-expert-report-confirms-women-need-level-playing-field?utm_source=grant&utm_medium=ppc (July 2022).