

Selection of Presidential Electors

1 The proposed amendment to the Colorado Constitution:

- 2 ♦ eliminates the current system in which the presidential candidate receiving
3 the most votes gets all of the state's electoral votes;
- 4 ♦ allocates Colorado's electoral votes for president and vice president based
5 on the percentage of ballots cast for each candidate; and
- 6 ♦ makes the changes effective for the November 2004 presidential election.

7 **Background**

8 In the United States, the president and vice president are elected using a system
9 called the electoral college. Under this system, each state is allotted electoral votes
10 equal to the number of the state's representatives and senators in the U.S. Congress.
11 The electoral college currently consists of 538 electors from all 50 states and the
12 District of Columbia. Colorado has nine of these electors. In all but two states, the
13 candidate who gets the most votes receives all of the state's electoral votes. A candidate
14 must receive at least 270 electoral votes to win the presidency. If no candidate obtains
15 a majority of electoral votes, the presidency is decided by the U.S. House of
16 Representatives, with each state allotted one vote.

17 In Colorado, each political party designates nine electors. Electors pledge to
18 support that party's candidate for president and vice president. After each presidential
19 election, electors from the winning party meet at the state capitol to cast their vote for
20 president and for vice president. All 50 states have a similar process for selection of
21 presidential electors.

22 Under this proposal, beginning with the November 2004 election, Colorado
23 would allocate its electoral votes according to the percentage of ballots cast for each
24 presidential ticket. Electoral votes would be divided, in whole numbers, among the
25 competing candidates according to the number of votes each candidate receives. The
26 proposal would also add to the state constitution procedures and timelines for the
27 certification of election results and recounts, however these new provisions would apply
28 only to the vote on this proposal.

1 **Arguments For**

2 1) Allocating Colorado's electoral votes proportionally among the presidential
3 candidates ensures that the electoral vote more accurately reflects the statewide vote.
4 The current system can lead to voter apathy because a winning candidate automatically
5 gets all of the state's electoral votes, regardless of the margin of victory. Voters may
6 not bother to participate if they believe that their vote will have no impact on the
7 outcome. This proposal may motivate more people to register and vote since Colorado's
8 electoral votes will be apportioned among the candidates.

9 2) The proposal may encourage greater participation by minor-party candidates
10 and weaken the grip of the two-party system. The current system of apportioning
11 electoral votes discourages minor-party candidates from running. Under the proposal,
12 it is more likely that minor-party presidential candidates could receive electoral votes.

13 **Arguments Against**

14 1) Capturing all of the state's electoral votes will be more difficult under the
15 proposal, making Colorado less influential in presidential elections. The current system
16 rewards the most popular candidate and encourages candidates to campaign in the state
17 on issues of importance to Coloradans.

18 2) By making it easier for minor-party candidates to win electoral votes in
19 Colorado, the proposal could lead to a situation where no candidate wins a majority of
20 the electoral vote nationally. If this happens, the presidency would be determined by
21 the U.S. House of Representatives with each state getting only one vote. This results
22 in smaller states having disproportionate power and further weakens the popular vote
23 by increasing the chance that the U.S. Congress, not the public, will elect the president.

24 **Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

25 This proposal does not significantly affect state or local expenditures.