

**Amendment Q**  
**Temporary Location for the State Seat of Government**

1 **Amendment Q proposes amending the Colorado Constitution to:**

- 2       ♦ establish a process for moving the state seat of government to a  
3       temporary location during a declared disaster emergency.

4 **Summary and Analysis**

5       Since statehood, the Colorado Constitution has designated Denver as the state  
6       seat of government. The legislature is prohibited from moving the seat of government  
7       out of Denver unless it refers a constitutional amendment to the voters at a general  
8       election. The state constitution requires that an amendment to move the state seat of  
9       governmental be approved by at least two-thirds of those voting on the issue.

10       Amendment Q creates a process for temporarily moving the seat of government  
11       when a disaster emergency affects the ability of state government to operate in  
12       Denver. It defines a disaster emergency as the occurrence or threat of widespread or  
13       severe damage, injury, illness, or loss of life or property resulting from an epidemic or  
14       a natural, man-made, or technological event. For the purpose of addressing such  
15       emergencies, it also defines the seat of government as the location of the legislative,  
16       executive, and judicial branches of the state of Colorado.

17       After declaring a disaster emergency, and after consulting with the Chief Justice  
18       of the Colorado Supreme Court, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
19       House of Representatives, the Governor may designate a temporary meeting location  
20       for the state legislature. The legislature must meet at that location and decide  
21       whether to enact a bill designating a temporary location for the seat of government  
22       outside of Denver. Such legislation must include a date when the temporary location  
23       of the seat of government expires. Amendment Q does not change the process for  
24       permanently moving the state seat of government. Currently, 36 other states have  
25       created a legal process to temporarily move the state seat of government in an  
26       emergency.

27 **Argument For**

28       1) The state constitution does not provide a process to temporarily relocate the  
29       state seat of government — even during a disaster emergency. Amendment Q  
30       provides the legal authority for the temporary movement of state government in the  
31       event of a declared disaster emergency. It also enables state government officials to  
32       convene and respond to a disaster emergency and continue essential government  
33       services without requiring a statewide vote on whether to move the state seat.

1     **Argument Against**

2           1) The measure may be unnecessary because the Governor and the legislature  
3     have powers under current law and rules to address disaster emergencies. For  
4     example, legislative rules allow the legislature to meet temporarily in another location  
5     in Denver or elsewhere in the state during a Governor-declared disaster emergency.  
6     The Governor also has powers to address disasters including ordering evacuations,  
7     suspending statutory regulations that hamper emergency responses, reassigning  
8     state employees, and reallocating state moneys.

9     **Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

10           Amendment Q is not expected to affect state or local government revenue or  
11     spending.