



From the Director's Desk

Pay Attention in the Year of Election

Colorado Should Reclaim Status as a National Leader with Ranked Choice Voting

A last-minute amendment to an otherwise consensus bill is causing quite a kerfuffle at the Capital. At the time of this writing Governor Polis is weighing a veto that advocacy groups are saying [If voters adopt statewide ranked voting, Colorado may prevent it from taking effect](#) reports the Colorado Sun. Clerks across the state worked closely with lawmakers on the rest of the bill, but sound averse to one key provision of it added by an amendment that took “under a minute” to be added. That amendment provides an implementation to the possibility of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) statewide. Apparently, all agree that the idea needs to be tested in more municipalities to iron out the challenges, the disagreement is about the pace of change. Whether Polis vetoes SB24 - 210 or not, the article is worth a read.



The situation is confusing. Charter municipalities have been able to use RCV since its inception. The Colorado legislature *enabled* Ranked Choice Voting in 2021 along with two other election reform bills [applauded by Secretary of State Jena Griswold](#), who stated then, “as states around the country erect barriers to voting, I am proud that Colorado remains dedicated to voting access and security.” Colorado, for instance, is one of only 8 states that have gone all-in on mail-in ballots to expand access to voting. RCV could be an important reform for another issue – radicalized elected officials who are detached from the interests of the average voter. Colorado is an ideal testing ground for the concept that would make a big difference nationwide. A very

wealthy donor is backing a referendum this year to *implement* Ranked Choice Voting statewide (RCV) as soon as possible. He and the advocacy group see the amendment as a wrench in their efforts.

In the few states that have implemented RCV at a state level, especially Alaska, RCV has significantly moderated outcomes by overcoming gerrymandered districts where the majority party tends to determine the outcome at the primary level. The plurality of an open primary opens the door for moderates who would have to win over a larger segment of the voting public. Now, in those situations, the screening for representation is often established by fringe elements of either party, so the candidate goes into office with little motivation to compromise in office. It is a trend that has actively divided the nation.

I'm awkwardly going to back a veto because **we need every reform at our disposal to counter the macro forces that skew our elections today**. Unfortunately, that does toss the baby out with the bathwater for the rest of the bill. The forces radicalizing our elections are at the permission of the Judiciary and include widespread gerrymandering (now often protected by the Supreme Court), efforts to undermine the Voting Rights Act directly by the Supreme Court under the guise that racial bias no longer exists in the South, and the barn door of Dark Money opened by the Supreme Court through the Citizens United case, which ridiculously bestows the Bill of Rights on corporations just as it applies to people. In other words, we the people need every tool available to counter the growing polarization in America, and the systemic forces that seem determined to reinforce those issues.

Yeah, the idea of RCV is that revolutionary. Today only a handful of municipalities use RCV. It is complicated to administer. Aspen approved RCV in 2007 only to repeal it in 2010 ["over frustrations with the logistics of implementing it."](#) Basalt is one of the handful of municipalities that have RCV, but only for Mayoral elections. I spoke with Town Clerk, Pam Schilling who received crucial advice on how to do public outreach from the Telluride Town Clerk since VOTERS must rank candidates. The Mayor won by a landslide with many only voting for that one candidate. The preparation for using RCV and the "close call" of nearly needing to use it wizened Schilling who had this to say, "the hand count made it easier in the sense that we didn't have to prove the equipment. I can see it might be difficult for communities without the support of their County Clerk." Some contend that elections managed by Counties have an advantage with RCV because voting machines can be calibrated to "do the math," while many smaller municipalities still use paper ballots. Schilling said, "unless there is equipment that has an algorithm that can determine these races and the state can certify it, a hand count is the way to go. I can't see that as practical for large communities." Just because it is complex to administer doesn't mean it isn't worth Colorado putting energy into figuring out.

Few citizens appreciate that election administration structures have developed organically within each state such that ["no two states administer elections exactly the same way."](#) One of the most underappreciated aspects that safeguards our system of voting is that it's **extraordinarily decentralized**. Most people misunderstand that because there is a national voting day, confusing a calendar date for a singular process. In practice, there is no national vote in the U.S. There just isn't. Ironically, this also protects the system from widespread tampering. [A national vote is comprised of more than 10,000 participating local governments](#). It would be inconceivable to centrally "rig" an election across cities, counties and states as one Presidential candidate contends. This is we need to admire and support the amazing integrity of those who administer elections locally. This old-fashioned people-intensive methodology for local voting management whelps some of the most important innovators in civil society.

I've previously written about increasing threats to Election Workers and other public servants due to persistent lies and inflammatory rhetoric about the last Presidential election being "stolen" (May 2024, January 2022 and January and April 2021). The urgency of our collective vigilance in countering these false claims has only grown more important. At the same time, we must continue to reform to improve access to voting, reduce the impacts of Dark Money and strive to protect this cornerstone of democracy that is the vote. (Opinion of Jon Stavney, Executive Director)

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**I've Seen Fire and Hail that Will Make
Colorado Uninsurable**

Profitability of homeowners insurance in Colorado



Source: AM Best - Ratio of costs to revenue for homeowners insurance statewide.

There is a reason that your home insurance is increasing. KUNC referred to it as an [“uninsurable future.”](#) Insurance companies loss projections are being overwhelmed by increasingly violent storms due to climate change. [Fox news Denver](#) reported “baseball sized” hail four days ago. A hail storm in 2018 caused over \$2.3B in damage, making it Colorado’s most expensive catastrophe. Some are speculating this recent storm will exceed that figure. That is without talking about wildfire. Here is a good opinion piece on the subject from the [Pagosa Daily Post](#). When insurance business becomes untenable, either the taxpayers have to step in through the Federal

Government or places become uninsurable.. and therefore unlivable for those who purchase with a home loan. Unfortunately, Colorado, in spite of being far from tsunami and hurricanes is a leader notes [Home Insurance Crunch NYT](#).

In the state of Colorado homeowners insurance was unprofitable in eight of the past 11 years, more than any other state. Colorado is setting up a high-risk pool in anticipation of more residents losing insurance.

I wish we had a cartoonist on staff. The vision of a house emerging from a large ink-jet printer doesn’t really capture what 3D home construction is about. It is much less dramatic in practice, though radical in its rarity. Picture a concrete home poured in layers by a concrete pump crane that is computer programmed with the outline of the building. It is a construction breakthrough ready for a rebranding because the very vision of “printing” makes it sound ridiculous. It is not.

In Greeley, a major donation of \$8.8M from a local philanthropic family covered both land and infrastructure costs setting the stage for a variety of affordable construction options in one of the most ambitious housing efforts in the state. The size of the [Habitat for Humanity](#) participation alone is groundbreaking. That article in [The Colorado Sun has a sub article with a video](#) of the 3D home under construction. Robots are not replacing humans in other aspects of construction, yet such as placing doors and window, finishes and framing a roof. The advantage of a foundation and walls being placed in a day is a real innovation.

Pouring Salt in Old Wounds

On behalf of NWCCOG Member, the Town of Granby—BOOO to [The Denver Post](#), which this month published a 20 year retrospective of the infamous day when an angry citizen terrorized a community causing millions of dollars of private property damage because of being a sore sport over two common land use decisions that he didn’t like. Every year the Town staff gets to re-live the very real copy-cat threats and harassment from people from across the internet who lionize the man, the destruction and the day. For some, it has become a symbol for resistance to government, even as they travel on government roads, use government infrastructure, benefit from government public safety, the rule of law protected by government.

Juneteenth: America's Second Independence Day

Recognizing Juneteenth

As we reflect on the significance of Juneteenth this month, we are reminded of the enduring struggle for freedom and equality in our nation’s history. Juneteenth, observed on June 19th, commemorates the day in 1865 when the last enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas, were informed of their freedom—more than two years



after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. This day is a poignant reminder that freedom, though declared, was not immediately realized for all.

Remembering Juneteenth is not just about recalling a historic moment; it is about honoring the resilience and perseverance of those who fought for their liberation. It is a time to reflect on the progress we have made and to acknowledge the work that still lies ahead in the quest for true equity and justice.

Juneteenth is a celebration of African American culture and heritage, a recognition of the contributions and sacrifices made by countless individuals. It serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of education, awareness, and action in the ongoing fight against racial injustice. By remembering Juneteenth, we pay tribute to the strength of the human spirit and reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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