Sisters of
Benet Hill
Monastery

November 2026 Colorado Ballot Measures through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching strongly promotes active citizenship. Through our opportunities as citizens, we can help shape a world more committed to protecting the dignity of human life and promoting justice and peace.

A key task of religious institutions like Benet Hill Monastery is to help our worshiping community members understand how the lessons of Scripture and the teaching of the Church provide guidance for the many issues facing our communities, nation and world. This task should be carried out continuously, but it is especially important during the year leading up to a major election.

Today, we will examine some of the fourteen ballot measures for the midterm election through the lens of Catholic Social Teachings (CST) and non-partisan voter resources. Together, let us seek to faithfully live our gospel values and beliefs while exercising our civic responsibility and democratic rights as informed voters.

What is Catholic Social Teaching?

See CST 101 Themes from Catholic Social Teaching

The foundational core of faith based social teachings, developed over the past 150 years, is that all God's children are endowed with dignity and the right to achieve our full human potential. This can only be achieved with concrete efforts to ensure that all of us seek knowledge and understanding of how our government is or is not serving all the people justly.

A few questions rooted in Catholic Social Teaching will help determine if the amendment or proposition is in alignment with our faith traditions:

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

We will use these three questions to evaluate each ballot issue, but first, let's examine where all these ballot measures originated!

Sponsors of the Ballot Measures

Advance Colorado, a conservative political group led by conservative strategist Michael Fields, drafted eight of the fourteen ballot measures. Advance Colorado paid solicitors to gather voter signatures to qualify for the ballot and they are running media campaigns to promote the measures. Major donors of Advance Colorado include the Walton Family Foundation, Phil Anschutz, and the Adolph Coors Foundation. Founded in 2020, Advance Colorado has focused on using the ballot initiative process to advance its policy agenda and has spent millions on the process according to public records. The Advance Colorado's 2026 Ballot Agenda includes:

Prop 132 – Penalties for Fentanyl Crimes
Prop 136 – Income Tax Rate Limit
Amendment 81 – Law Enforcement Reporting to ICE
Amendment 82 – Constitutional Right to Natural Gas
Amendment 83 – Constitutional Right to Hunt & Fish
Amendment 84 – Mail Ballot Voter Identification
Amendment 85 – Plain Language Ballot Titles
Amendment 86 – Off-Cycle Congressional Redistricting

Protect Kids Colorado is the force behind three ballot measures. From their website, they identify as "a grassroots, We the People movement to educate, unify, and mobilize dads, moms, grandparents, business owners, community leaders, elected representatives and any concerned citizen to protect kids from becoming victims of a dangerous and false ideology." They identify this ideology as "indoctrination concerning sexualization & gender transition" and the teaching of LGBTQ in public schools. They state, "Our heart is to mobilize the people of Colorado and the Church to engage with biblical and biological truth." The Protect Kids Colorado 2026 Ballot Agenda includes:

Prop 133 – Penalties for Human Trafficking of a Minor
Prop 134 – Male and Female Participation in School Sports
Prop 135 – Prohibit Certain Surgeries on Minors

The three other ballot measures are:
Amendment 87 – Graduated Income Tax (sponsor is Protect Colorado's Future)
Prop NN - State Public K-12 Education Funding (referred by the state legislature)
Prop 137 – Designate Sporting Goods Sales Tax Revenue for Conservation (sponsor is Protect Colorado's Land and Water, Prevent Wildfires)

A Statement Concerning the Colorado Catholic Bishops and their support of Props 133, 134 & 135

The Colorado Catholic Conference, comprised of the three bishops, is in support of the ballot measures created by Protect Kids Colorado. The Benet Hill Monastery leadership team recognizes and appreciates the intent of the Colorado Bishops to protect children from harm by supporting these propositions. After reading the letter from the Colorado bishops, we reached out to friends at organizations in Colorado Springs who work with victims of human trafficking or transgender youth and their families. After considering information from people who work closely with individuals and families who would be affected by these measures, we have concluded that these ballot measures will generate more harm than good for Coloradans.

Prop 133 mandates life sentences without parole for human trafficking offenders with no judicial discretion, effectively eliminating for these human beings any opportunity for rehabilitation for the remainder of their natural lives. This ballot measure goes against the Hierarchy of Values to Guide Voting as a Catholic provided by the Colorado Bishops. Specifically, this ballot measure denies the values of sanctity of life, human dignity and the call to work for restorative justice.

Props 134 and 135 would allow the government to make decisions that belong to families by creating blanket regulations for situations involving human dignity and self-actualization. These are deeply complex and private situations that our youth and their families face. These propositions violate the rights and responsibilities of the family unit to be decision makers and fails the test of a core Catholic Social Teaching principle: subsidiarity. The principle of subsidiarity states that matters should be handled by the smallest, lowest, or most competent local authority, and that higher-level bodies should not interfere or take over unless necessary to help or protect the common good. We believe that Colorado families, consulting with their child's mental health providers and medical providers, should continue to make these decisions, not the State of Colorado. The Hierarchy of Values to Guide Voting as a Catholic provided by the Colorado Bishops state that healthcare should be patient-centered, respect human dignity, protect life, and assure conscience rights. These two propositions are not patient-centered and do not respect the human dignity of children and their families.

After digging deeper into these ballot measures, we are not convinced that the common good of Colorado's children will be protected by these propositions. Rather, we believe Prop 133 is unnecessary, cruel and provides no real solutions for the scourge of human trafficking of minors. We believe that Props 134 and 135 are based on anti-trans and LGBTQ biases that fail to respect the human dignity of certain children made in the image of God.

As the Colorado bishops state, “It is the duty of each person’s conscience to adhere to objective truth.” We invite you to read the three attachments to this document:

A - Statement on Props 134 & 135 from the Advocacy Director, Inside Out Youth Services
B – Protect Victims From Life in Prison: Vote “No” on Prop 133
C – Hierarchy of Values to Guide Voting as a Catholic

If you wish to explore the position statements by the Colorado Catholic Bishops and the voting guide prepared by the Colorado Catholic Conference, visit https://www.cocatholic.org/2026-voter-guide.

Ballot Measures through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

Prop 132 – Penalties for Fentanyl Crimes

Criminal penalties for fentanyl possession, distribution, manufacturing or sale. Mandatory sentence of 8 – 32 years in prison for selling or sharing any amount. A person with one tablet receives the same punishment as a major drug trafficker. No sentencing or treatment discretion allowed for the judge or district attorney in extenuating circumstances. Projected to send 900 more people to prison each year and cost at least $433 million over 5 years while providing no new funding for treatment for fentanyl addiction.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Right to human dignity and compassion.
- Right to due process and reasonable penalties.
- Right to life and full human potential.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Prop 136 – Income Tax Rate Limit

Caps Colorado’s individual and corporate income tax rates at 4.4%, their current rate. The cap would restrict the state’s ability to raise income taxes in the future and conflicts with the graduated income tax measure also appearing on the 2026 ballot (Amendment 87).

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Along with our rights to human dignity and self-actualization are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.
- The responsibility to care for the poor and marginalized – the option for the poor.
- Distribute resources justly and equitably.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 81 Law Enforcement Reporting to ICE

Amends the Colorado Constitution to require state and local law enforcement to report certain people, based on how they look, talk, or other characteristics, to federal immigration authorities if their lawful status in Colorado cannot be confirmed within 72 hours. This requirement is triggered by charges, not convictions, of certain crimes so individuals would be reported before they were found guilty of a crime.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Welcome the stranger. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world of resources.
- Care for the marginalized.
- Human rights are to be protected including the right to due process.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 82 Constitutional Right to Natural Gas

Amends the Colorado Constitution to guarantee the right to purchase and sell natural gas for cooking and heating. This could limit future state and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, or transition buildings to cleaner energy.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- The right to health and a safe environment including clean water.
- Moral and ethical responsibility to care for the earth and all of God's creation.
- People are more important than profits.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 83 Constitutional Right to Hunt & Fish

Amends the Colorado Constitution to establish a right to hunt and fish, making them the preferred methods of wildlife management. This could limit the state's flexibility to adopt different wildlife-management or conservation approaches as science, populations, habitats, and environmental conditions change.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Moral and ethical responsibility to care for the earth and all of God's creation.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 84 Mail Ballot Voter Identification

Amends the Colorado Constitution to require a voter to sign and provide the last four digits of Social Security Number or their CO license or identification card number on the outside of their mail ballot. This poses a significant identity theft risk. If the information is missing or cannot be matched with voter records, the ballot would go into a curing process. If the ballot is not cured, the case will be referred to the attorney general as voter fraud.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- The right to human dignity and respect.
- The right to privacy and the protection of sensitive information.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 85 Plain Language Ballot Titles

Amends the Colorado Constitution to require ballot titles to use plain language at or below an eighth-grade reading level. It also eliminates information currently required in some ballot titles, including showing voters how proposed tax changes would affect taxpayers and government budgets.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Rights and responsibilities to be informed and fulfill our civic duties.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 86 Off-Cycle Congressional Redistricting

Amends the Colorado Constitution to require off-cycle congressional redistricting processes to go through the independent redistricting commission and receive Colorado Supreme Court approval. This could limit the state's ability to respond if other states redraw their congressional maps between censuses.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Rights and responsibilities to be informed and fulfill our civic duties.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Amendment 87 Graduated State Income Tax

Amends the Colorado Constitution to remove the requirement that the state income tax be set at a single flat rate and replaces it with a graduated state income tax that sets lower rates for lower incomes and higher rates for higher incomes. Additional revenue collected would be spent on K-12 education, health care, and early childhood care and education. The additional revenue collected would be exempt under the measure from the state's constitutional revenue limit.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Rights to human dignity and opportunity.
- Responsibilities to society.
- Resources should be stewarded with justice and equity.
- Care for the poor and vulnerable, especially children.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Prop 133 Penalties for Human Trafficking of a Minor

Mandates a sentence of life in prison without parole for child sex trafficking convictions and expands child sex trafficking to include buying sexual activity with a minor. Removes judicial discretion in sentencing. It would not provide funds to prevent child trafficking, shield victims from prosecution or give victims immunity from life in prison without parole. It will not invest in evidence-based, specialized investigation, enforcement or prevention of child trafficking.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Right to human dignity and compassion.
- Right to due process and reasonable penalties.
- Right to life and full human potential.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Prop 134 Male and Female Participation in School and Collegiate Sports

Requires that all elementary through collegiate school-based athletic teams and sports be designated as male-only or female-only based on biological sex, unless the team or sport is designated as open to participation by individuals of any sex or gender. Requires schools and school districts to implement policies to ensure that students are assigned to geder-designated teams that align with their biological sex. Prohibits investigations of, or penalties for, a school that designates a team or sport as female-only.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Right to human dignity and compassion for students and parents.
- Right of parents to make decisions with their child (subsidiarity).

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Proposition 135 Prohibit surgery on minors in response to perception of sex or gender.

Prohibits surgeries on minors that alter their biological sex characteristics as a treatment in response to a minor's perception of sex or gender, with certain exceptions. Prohibits the use of state or federal funds or insurance coverage to pay for these surgeries. Prohibits health care providers from performing, prescribing, administering, or providing any surgery to a minor to alter their biological sex.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Right to human dignity and compassion.
- Right for each person to have personal respect as a child of God who loves each person just as they are.
- The rights of parents and child with guidance from doctors and therapists to determine what is best for their child.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?

Prop NN Keep and Spend Money for Education and Other Purposes

Allows the state to keep and spend revenue that would otherwise be refunded to taxpayers under TABOR, up to a newly established limit. The new limit is higher than the current limit and is based on the amount the state government spends on public education. In the first ten years, this revenue must be spent on K-12 education and

programs that support children (teacher pay and retention, smaller class sizes, career and technical courses, school services, disability services, and more instructional hours.

Catholic Social Teaching Lens

- Responsibility for the care of children.
- The right to respect and human dignity.
- Workers deserve safe workplaces and adequate pay.

1. Who will benefit from this?
2. Who bears the cost?
3. How is this going to affect the most vulnerable in our community?