

## News Release

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### DU research center finds a costly flaw in Colorado election laws

DENVER—A last-minute deal resulting in the withdrawal of four proposals from this year’s ballot has highlighted a costly flaw in Colorado’s election laws, according to a new report from the University of Denver’s Center for Colorado’s Economic Future (CCEF). The flaw is that the deadline for withdrawing ballot proposals falls *after* the sequence for verifying petition signatures, certifying the election ballot, publishing the text of the measures in newspapers throughout the state, and preparing and mailing the state’s “Blue Book” voter guide to every voter household.

The CCEF report, available for download at [www.du.edu/economicfuture](http://www.du.edu/economicfuture), analyzes how much it cost Colorado’s citizens and businesses to examine signatures for Amendments 53, 55, 56, and 57, publish the amendments throughout the state, and print and mail them in the state’s voter guide.

“If the deadline for withdrawing ballot proposals fell before these other deadlines, Colorado state government would have saved over \$300,000 in election expenses,” said Charles Brown, director of the CCEF. “It appears that the deadline for withdrawing the ballot proposals provided a strong incentive for business and organized labor interests to strike a compromise to withdraw the four amendments in exchange for business interests agreeing to oppose Amendment 47, the so-called right-to-work amendment. It seems reasonable to assume that if the deadline fell in late August or early September, the compromise would have been reached sooner and the state would have saved a significant amount of public funds. Business and labor interests were playing by the rules, but the rules allowed public funds to be wasted this year, and more could be wasted in the future if this problem is not fixed.”

In addition to the unnecessary spending, concern has been expressed over voter confusion arising from the four amendments appearing on the ballot even though they were withdrawn.

The center was created in 2007 after DU’s Colorado Economic Futures Panel (CEFP) completed its work in January 2006. The panel spent more than a year examining the fiscal health of Colorado’s state and local governments and their ability to sustain fundamental public investments appropriate to the state’s long-term economic vitality. Establishing a permanent center to study the state’s economic future was a recommendation from the CEFP.

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*The University of Denver Center for Colorado’s Economic Future is an independent, nonpartisan organization that conducts research on matters related to Colorado’s fiscal health, trends affecting the state’s economy and proposed legislation relating to taxation and public spending.*