



# GRAND JUNCTION AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## 2010 VOTER'S GUIDE



As the voice of business for the Grand Junction Area, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce has worked to represent business and promote a vision of economic growth since 1884. The November 2, 2010 ballot contains critical propositions that will impact the well being of Grand Junction area businesses and the economy for years to come. This voting guide is intended to provide the business perspective on these issues.

### STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURES

#### Amendment 60

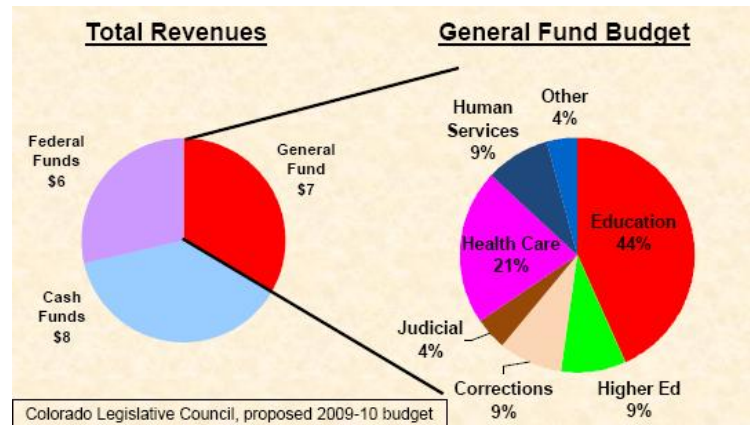
#### Chamber Position: Vote NO

*Amendment 60: Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning government charges on property, and, in connection therewith, allowing petitions in all districts for elections to lower property taxes; specifying requirements for property tax elections; requiring enterprises and authorities to pay property taxes but offsetting the revenues with lower tax rates; prohibiting enterprises and unelected boards from levying fees or taxes on property; setting expiration dates for certain tax rate and revenue increases; requiring school districts to reduce property tax rates and replacing the revenue with state aid; and eliminating property taxes that exceed the dollar amount included in an approved ballot question, that exceed state property tax laws, policies, and limits existing in 1992 that have been violated, changed, or weakened without state voter approval, or that were not approved by voters without certain ballot language?*

Amendment 60 is intended to lower property taxes, which if done properly the Chamber may be able to support such a measure. The reasons the Chamber **does not support** Amendment 60 are many. This measure overturns nearly 20 years of previous voter-approved property tax decisions. If property tax increases are approved in what must be a November vote, any increases will have an expiration date after which voters have to again approve maintaining such an increase. Furthermore, this measure requires all publicly owned enterprises to pay property taxes, which means that tax dollars go to pay for property

taxes. Not exempt from this requirement are institutions of higher education, which translates to higher tuition rates. High tuition rates often mean fewer members of the community are able to access higher education, which lowers attractiveness to relocating businesses.

Additionally the proposed cuts from property taxes are from school funding, which the amendment mandates the state provide aid for similar amounts so that schools will not notice a funding discrepancy. The unrealized implication with this portion of the measure is that Colorado must operate on a balanced budget. If funds are being reallocated to go toward K-12 education, they come from other state agencies providing services. The Colorado Legislative Council's Blue Book states clearly, "This amendment requires the state to spend so much more on public schools that .... state functions will have to be cut or eliminated in order to keep the state budget balanced." That means more lost jobs.



As the above figures show, the total budget for the state of Colorado is around \$21 billion. However, \$14

billion is allocated to be used by distinct programs; for example, lotto revenues can only be used for parks, it can't be used for another state funded program. The General Fund is left at about \$7 billion. Currently, many various services are provided to our state, as shown above. If the state were forced to backfill the revenue lost to school districts, these other sources would suffer.

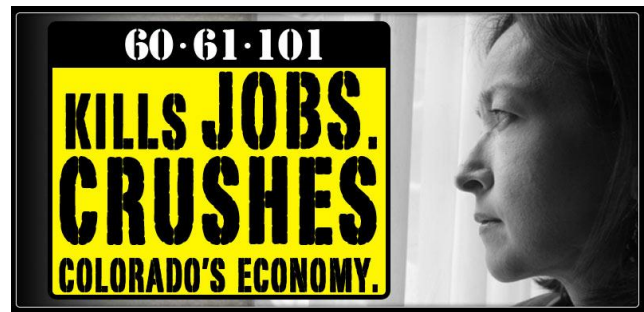
## Amendment 61

### Chamber Position: Vote NO

*Amendment 61: Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning limitations on government borrowing, and, in connection therewith, prohibiting future borrowing in any form by state government; requiring voter approval of future borrowing by local governmental entities; limiting the form, term, and amount of total borrowing by each local governmental entity; directing all current borrowing to be paid; and reducing tax rates after certain borrowing is fully repaid?*

The unspoken premise that understates Amendment 61 is that government spending is out of control and needs to be put back in check. Nationally, the premise may be true; however, this measure goes too far. First, as was mentioned in the Amendment 60 discussion, the state of Colorado operates on a balanced budget. The deficit that is commonly heard in the news is the federal deficit as the state of Colorado does not have a deficit. The proponents of this measure cite that borrowing is expensive because payments are going to interest. The reality is that borrowing is how governments build and maintain safe infrastructure. Much of the private sector receives work from constructing these public improvements. Additionally, borrowing allows the current generation to pay a fair share. If governments are forced to save money, the taxpayers during the time of savings may never realize the benefit of the infrastructure. If governments can borrow, as determined by a vote, the terms of such loan are shorter than the life of the infrastructure built. For instance, if a building is constructed, the building must be paid off in 10 years, rather than the 30 or more years the building will be in use. The taxpayer

that arrives in the 5<sup>th</sup> year must pay for the benefit of the taxpayer that arrives in the 15<sup>th</sup> year. For the taxpayer that stays in the area, the taxes will fluctuate as the local jurisdiction must reduce taxes once the borrowing is fully repaid rather than use the money for another infrastructure improvement. On a final note, state borrowing that occurs to compensate for unpaid property taxes will no longer be able to occur. For example, in school districts that rely on short-term borrowing to pay teachers before property taxes are realized those districts will have to consider reducing or suspending teacher pay, or other more drastic measures.



## Proposition 101

### Chamber Position: Vote NO

*Proposition 101: Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado Revised Statutes concerning limits on government charges, and, in connection therewith, reducing vehicle ownership taxes over four years to nominal amounts; ending taxes on vehicle rentals and leases; phasing in over four years a \$10,000 vehicle sale price tax exemption; setting total yearly registration, license, and title charges at \$10 per vehicle; repealing other specific vehicle charges; lowering the state income tax rate to 4.5% and phasing in a further reduction in the rate of 3.5%; ending state and local taxes and charges, except 911 charges, on telecommunication service customer accounts; and stating that, with certain specified exceptions, any added charges on vehicles and telecommunication service customer accounts shall be tax increases?*

The elephant in the room preempting this measure was the state's recent increase in vehicle registration fees, rather than asking for more transportation money from voters. This translated to an average increase of approximately \$44 per car in the state according to the

Colorado Legislative Council. Though increasing fees rather than asking voters to increase funding may not have been the way to go, this proposition is an overreaction to the situation. Furthermore, the amount of spending in recent years has increased by unacceptable amounts, yet this measure does not adequately address the problem. Adoption of Proposition 101 would cut funding to road and bridge construction; dollars the Grand Junction area community sees in the road construction project near Mesa Mall. But road and bridge construction and maintenance projects are just the beginning. During a downturn in the economy, a reduction in income tax *sounds* good. However, since the state has already lost 110,000 jobs that were paying income tax before the recession began, the state budget is already down. This measure would lower the state income tax rate from 4.63% to 4.5% next year then subsequent years lower the income tax rate for a total of about 1%. Given Amendment 23 dictates much of state funds go to K-12 education, other services would receive cuts in funding. Recall the General Fund discussion under Amendment 60. If K-12 education receives more of the budget the other services will be impacted including colleges, prisons, firefighters, police, water and sewer systems. It is estimated that state transportation funding would be cut by 28 percent. These services reduce the quality of life in our state which is a factor that relocating businesses examine before entering the state. Finally, this measure also may impact rural communities as much of the fees collected with telecommunications are associated with installing infrastructure in rural areas.

***Evaluation of all three:***

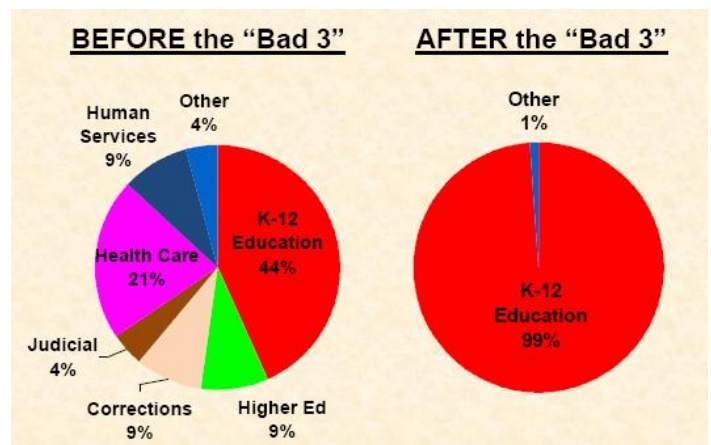
To summarize the impacts of all three of these measures, two areas will be affected: jobs and money. Individually each measure will have an impact, but combined the three will be devastating.

It is estimated that over 73,000 jobs will be lost in addition to the 110,000 jobs lost in the recent recession. Furthermore, nearly 8,000 teaching positions will be eliminated forcing larger classroom

size statewide. (Coloradans for Responsible Reform, [www.donthurtcolorado.com](http://www.donthurtcolorado.com).)

All three measures allocate decision making to the voters – tax increases, borrowing, etc. It is not free to place something on the ballot, it costs money. The notion of a representative democracy on which the United States is founded is intended for the people to elect individuals to government representing their interests so the people do not have to vote on each decision. Bringing each decision to the ballot is costly.

The chart below shows how funding allocation would change by passing all three measures. Nearly all the General Fund would be forced to go to K-12 education, leaving an estimated 1-8% of the General Fund for all the rest of the state’s services (higher education, corrections, judicial, health care, human services, etc.). These measures would cut this portion of the state General Fund budget down to 10% of current rates.



For further information on the impacts of Amendment 60, 61 and Proposition 101, please see the Legislative Council’s Blue Book.



The Chamber has not taken an official position on any of the following Ballot Measures. See the Colorado Legislative Council Blue Book for further information.

**Amendment P** - Transfers the licensing of games of chance from the Department of State to the Department of Revenue.

**Amendment Q** - Process for moving the state seat to a temporary location during a declared disaster emergency.

**Amendment R** - Eliminate property taxes for individuals or businesses that use government -owned property for a private benefit.

**Amendment 62** - Applies the term 'person' to every human being from the beginning of biological development.

**Amendment 63**- Protect the individual's right to make health care decisions.

**Proposition 102**- Amends the criteria for setting bail and type of bond.



## Candidate Guide

Candidates were given the same questions in each race. The questions and answers appear under the respective candidate.

### FEDERAL LEGISLATURE

#### US HOUSE DISTRICT 3



**John Salazar (D)** -

*1. What is your vision for balancing the federal budget?*

Passage of PAYGO will restore budget discipline by requiring non-emergency changes in spending or revenue not add to the deficit.

Passage of health care reform will reduce the deficit by \$1.2 trillion. We must examine the budget for cuts without harming defense, veterans or seniors. I look forward to the recommendations of the Deficit Reduction Commission this December for additional ideas to balance the budget.

*2. What do you think should be the government's role in job creation?*

The government can play a role, but ultimately the private sector will create long-term, sustainable jobs. I supported legislation providing a lending fund and preferential interest rates to community banks that increase loans to small firms. It includes \$14 billion in tax incentives to assist small businesses. We should extend the Bush tax cuts for one year. We should also invest in the new energy economy to create new jobs.

A better system must be in place to govern organization in the work place. Ultimately, how can employees have a fair chance to organize while at the same time ensuring the opportunity for employers to present their side of the argument. I will support any bill that accomplishes this goal.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?*

I'm committed to public service and to making people's lives better. I have fought to protect western slope water, for the ability of our farmers and ranchers to work the land, to protect our seniors and veterans, and for the needs of all of my constituents. As a veteran and a farmer, I believe in service, and will continue to take rural Colorado values to Congress.

*4. Why should business people who live in District 3 vote for you?*

I am working to promote job creation and economic development. I've secured funds for road and airport improvements - good infrastructure is vital to economic development in rural areas. I support tax cuts for small businesses and other incentives for small business growth. I support extending the Bush tax cuts for one year. I believe that, by working together, we can restore strength to our economy.



**Scott Tipton (R) -**

*1. What is your vision for balancing our federal budget?*

Balancing any budget requires adherence to basic principles. You don't have to be an expert to know right from wrong when it comes to balancing a budget. Thousands of working Colorado families do so every day, why can't our government? Our Congress must make the tough spending choices necessary to stay solvent, restart the economy, and keep America strong.

*2. What do you think should be the government's role in job creation?*

Along the same lines, what are your thoughts on the benefits of the Employee Free Choice Act (aka card check)? Government's role in job creation should be to facilitate a level playing field that sparks the free market - an economic atmosphere where private sector competition can thrive, where entrepreneurs and innovators are rewarded, where we can grow our economy the right way (without picking winners and losers), and above all - where decent, honest people can earn a living wage in an environment that's safe and productive. A secret ballot is a fundamental principle of our country.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?* As a 30-year southwestern Colorado business owner, I have developed a proven record of creating private sector jobs, balancing a budget and making tough choices - responsibilities the Democrat-controlled Congress has failed to uphold. I know what it means to create efficiencies, to deliver a quality product and invest profits for greater productivity - no matter the economic climate. If elected, I will take a business approach when it comes to Washington.

*4. Why should business people who live in District 3 vote for you?*

Not only will I take my common sense business principles with me to Washington, I pledge to return and hold public meetings all across the district to explain my votes and get feedback from constituents. If I have the honor of being elected, the citizens of this district will have a congressman who takes the initiative to reach out to the electorate to discuss my record - especially on the votes that impact us the most. Our members of congress are given a sacred trust. For me, representing you in Congress will be more than just showing up in Washington to vote. I will honor this position of public trust with regular face to face meetings as often as possible.

**COLORADO LEGISLATURE**

**STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 54 - Ray Scott (R) - Unopposed**

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**STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 55 - Laura Bradford (R) - Unopposed**

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★★★★★★  
election 2010

## STATE SENATE DISTRICT 7



**Claudette Konola (D) -**

*1. What are the top two policy changes you think the Legislature needs to enact in 2011 in order to make*

*Colorado a better state in which to do business?*

Change the constitutional amendment process so that when voters vote on potential amendments, they have been vetted by a deliberative body and unintended consequences could be avoided. And look for ways to give small businesses tax credits for creating jobs.

*2. What do you think should be the government's role in job creation?* Jobs are created by small businesses. Incentives should be created that encourage businesses to create jobs.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?* I have played leadership roles in both civic organizations

and corporate entities for over 40 years. I bring a lifetime of achievement and experience to this job that will benefit the citizens of Mesa County.

*4. Why should business people in Senate District 7 vote for you?* My background is business and finance. I have supported small business for over 40 years. My background also includes doing due diligence on banks that were target for acquisition by what is now U.S. Bank. The experience I gained by inspecting the books and records of these banks is directly translatable into finding waste in government. Colorado's budget will need to be cut again in the next legislative session. Wringing waste out of a business is not all that different from wringing waste out of government, and I have experience doing so on a large scale.



**Steve King (R) -**

*1. What are the top two policy changes you think the Legislature needs to enact in 2011 in order to make Colorado a better state in which to do business?* The first

would be to repeal the 11 new taxes that were passed this year, also known as the "Dirty Dozen" taxes. These new taxes are breaking the backs of small business during a recession. The second change would be to repeal the Business Personal Property Tax.

*2. What do you think should be the government's role in job creation?* The government should create an environment that helps private business be successful by limiting bureaucracy, fees, taxation and

regulations. Government is a consumer of prosperity, not a creator of jobs.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?* I have served 4 years in the State House and have a record of solid conservative votes. I will continue to fight for the Western Slope in the Senate, bring back jobs in the energy sector and protect Western Slope water rights, while continuing to give every Colorado citizen a value for their dollar.

*4. Why should business people in Senate District 7 vote for you?* I am committed to the success of private business and to the limitation of governmental intrusion into people's lives. The record is quite clear that there is no alternative way yet discovered to improve the lot of the average citizen's life that can hold a candle to the free enterprise system.

Local Elections 2010  
**YOUR VOTE**  
**YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Just**  
**V**  **ote**

## DISTRICT 2



**Steven Acquafresca (R) -**

*1. What should the county do to enhance the business climate in Mesa County?* a.) County government must avoid “over-regulating” private business with unnecessary or prohibitively burdensome regulations. b.) Local taxes and fees must be

reasonable for business – the fewer the better to get the job done. c.) County government efforts to retain existing businesses, industries and their employees should be a top priority as business is the backbone of the community. d.) Assisting existing and new industry to identify locations and space is an important service for county government to offer. e.) Carefully calculated tax incentives and benefits to encourage existing businesses to expand or new businesses to locate in Mesa County are appropriate. f.) County government should continue to facilitate a high quality education system to develop a prepared workforce. g.) County government can foster an attractive community with ample amenities and opportunities where people wish to live and stay.

*2. How do you intend to create jobs in Mesa County?* a.) Reduce county regulatory burdens and tax burdens. b.) Pursue an aggressive capital construction agenda that results in the recirculation of county resources back into the private sector. c.) Use private business to provide county services whenever possible. d.) Support economic development partnerships. e.) Support a top quality Mesa County Workforce Center that successfully articulates with the business community, the school district and Mesa State College.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?* a.) Lifelong private sector background and experience. b.) Proven supporter and ally of the local business community. c.) Tireless worker on the Board of County Commissioners and in private enterprise. d.) A political philosophy that is consistent with the Mesa County business community.

*4. Why should the business people in Mesa County vote for you?* For all of the reasons above.



**Stephen Saint (L) -**

*1. What should the county do to enhance the business climate in Mesa County?* The business climate needs to become neutral for both big business and small business. Any small business owner or entrepreneur needs to

feel they can approach the county with as much perceived importance as a big business. They need to feel that the county will sit down and develop a plan that helps them grow through, planning support, tax breaks and/or incentives the same as the county has been when luring large business to the area.

*2. How do you intend to create jobs in Mesa County?* By helping small business grow and expand a new base of jobs will be the natural result. Mesa County needs to create tax incentives to draw new business to this area. My above suggest plan would make this a supportive environment for new business thus bringing jobs and a diverse economic base to the county.

*3. Why are you qualified for this office?* I am not bound by perceived loyalties to any one sector, private or government. I am not a politician but one of the people who understands what the average citizen in Mesa County is experiencing. I do not come from a background of money or inheritance that removes me from the realities that the majority of my neighbors face who are trying to survive in this tough economic time. My decisions in office will have an effect on me.

*4. Why should the business people in Mesa County vote for you?* It's time to change the status quo of party driven and influenced politicians in office with no connection to the people they are supposed to be serving. There is a disconnect between today's politician and the constituents and the roles have shifted from what can I do for the people to what can I get out of this office. I am running as a Statesman as they are “Of the People” where as politicians are “Of the Government.”



## Chamber Candidate Endorsements

### US LEGISLATURE

US House District 3

Scott Tipton

### COLORADO LEGISLATURE

State Senate District 7

Steve King

### MESA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

District 2

Steven Acquafresca

## Local Ballot Measures

**Mesa County: Referred Measure 1A** - Prohibits medical marijuana dispensaries.

**Town of Debeque: Referred Measure 2A** - Permits medical marijuana dispensaries.

**Town of Debeque: Referred Measure 2B** - Outlines taxation of medical marijuana dispensaries.

**Town of Debeque: Referred Measure 2C** - Use tax, vehicle tax.

**DeBeque School District 49-JT: Referred Measure 3A** - Collection of property taxes for school district funding.

**Town of Palisade: Referred Measure 2D** - Recall of Mayor.

**Palisade Rural Fire Protection District: Referred Measure 5A** - Increase property taxes by 3.00 mills for use by Fire District.



Grand Junction Chamber | 360 Grand Ave. | Grand Junction, CO 81501 | 970-242-3214 | Fax 970-242-3694

Remember to Vote!

**Tuesday, November 2, 2010**

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**October 18-29, 2010**

Early voting begins.

Call 970-244-1662 or visit [www.vote.mesacounty.us](http://www.vote.mesacounty.us)  
for polling locations

**October 4<sup>th</sup>**

Last day to register to vote.

For additional copies of the GJACC Voting Guide,  
please call:

**Grand Junction Area Chamber: 970-242-3214**

An electronic version of the GJACC Voting Guide can  
be viewed by visiting [www.gjchamber.org](http://www.gjchamber.org).

For detailed analysis of individual ballot propositions,  
view the 2010 State Blue Book online at  
[www.leg.state.co.us](http://www.leg.state.co.us) and click on Ballot Issues.