



November 8, 2022 General Election	
<b>Ballot Issue:</b>	<b>Proposition FF (Reduce Income Tax Deduction Amounts to Fund School Meals Program Measure)</b>
<b>Ballot Question</b>	<p><i>"Shall state taxes be increased \$100,727,820 annually by a change to the Colorado Revised Statutes that, to support healthy meals for public school students, increases state taxable income only for individuals who have federal taxable income of \$300,000 or more by limiting itemized or standard state income tax deductions to \$12,000 for single tax return filers and \$16,000 for joint tax return filers, and, in connection therewith, creating the healthy school meals for all program to provide free school meals to students in public schools; providing grants for participating schools to purchase Colorado grown, raised, or processed products, to increase wages or provide stipends for employees who prepare and serve school meals, and to create parent and student advisory committees to provide advice to ensure school meals are healthy and appealing to all students; and creating a program to assist in promoting Colorado food products and preparing school meals using basic nutritious ingredients with minimal reliance on processed products?"</i></p> <p>Full text of the Proposition can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>The Colorado State Legislature referred this measure to the ballot through House Bill 1414. The Colorado House of Representatives approved HB 1414 on May 6, 2022, by a 43-22 vote. on May 10, 2022, the Colorado State Senate approved the bill by a vote of 23-12. The bill was passed largely along partisan lines, with all Democrats in favor and 87% of Republicans opposed.</p> <p>A simple majority vote is required in both the Colorado State Senate and the Colorado House of Representatives to refer a legislatively referred state statute to the ballot. A bill that is referred to the voters does not require the governor's signature and cannot be vetoed.</p>
<b>Chamber Position</b>	No Position
<b>Some Basics</b>	<p>The state's flat tax rate (4.55% as of 2022) is applied to an individual's federal taxable income. Federal taxable income is calculated by taking a filer's adjusted gross income minus a standard deduction or itemized deduction. As of 2022, the standard deduction was \$12,950 for single filers or married filing separately and \$25,900 for married filing jointly. Colorado House Bill 1311, enacted in 2021, created a limit on federal itemized deduction amounts that could be used to reduce state taxable income. Beginning in 2022, filers with adjusted gross incomes of \$400,000 or more were limited to claiming itemized deductions of up to \$30,000 for single filers or \$60,000 for joint filers when</p>

	<p>calculating state taxable income.</p> <p>Under Proposition FF, those with a taxable income of \$300,000 or more (rather than the current law under which deduction limits apply to those with a taxable income of \$400,000 or more) would be limited to an itemized <b>or</b> standard deduction of \$12,000 for single filers and \$16,000 for joint filers.</p> <p>State officials estimated these changes would increase state revenue by \$100.7 million per year.</p> <p>The measure would create and fund the <i>Healthy School Meals for All Program</i> under the Department of Education to provide free school meals to all students in Colorado public schools, provide local food purchasing grants, and increase wages for employees that prepare and serve food.</p> <p>The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was established in 1946. Schools participating in the program receive reimbursements from the federal government for providing free or reduced-priced meals to eligible students based on the student's household income level. For families with an income of 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL), children are eligible for reduced-priced meals. For families with an income of 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL), children are eligible for free meals. For the 2021-2022 school year, the federal government reimbursed schools participating in the National School Lunch Program between \$3.66 and \$3.90 for free lunches and between \$1.97 and \$2.35 for free breakfasts.</p> <p>As of October 2021, there were 886,517 students in Colorado's public schools in pre-school through 12th grade. According to the Colorado Department of Education, as of 2019, 42% of public school students were eligible for either free or reduced-priced school meals under the National School Lunch Program. During the 2017-18 school year, Colorado public schools served approximately 60 million school lunches, of which 64% went to students that were eligible for free or reduced-price meals. In Colorado, school food authorities may not charge students a co-pay for reduced-price school meals. Rather, the school food authorities are reimbursed by the Colorado Department of Education School Nutrition Unit with state funding.</p>
<b>Arguments in support of the proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal free lunch for students attending public school allows students that now qualify for free or reduced lunch cost to shed the stigma associated with economic status. It assures all students have access to healthy meals while at school.</li> <li>• Assuring cafeteria workers are paid a competitive wage will help attract and retain the most qualified candidates.</li> <li>• The Proposition represents an investment in public education and our children while allowing families to redirect school meal costs to other important expenditures such as housing, transportation, and healthcare.</li> <li>• Healthy School Meals for All engages parents with school administrators in developing menus that reflect the needs and cultural preferences of individual schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Arguments against the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising taxes to feed all students effectively subsidizes households that don't require financial assistance. In fact, households making over \$300,000 per year</li> </ul>

<b>proposal</b>	<p>would not recognize the full value of increased taxes paid as bureaucratic overhead of the program reduces the amount available for providing actual meals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing income tax collections to fund wage increases for cafeteria workers effectively rewards poor management practices at school districts that are not paying a fair wage to those workers.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Considerations</b>	Participating school food authorities (i.e. school districts) that participate in the national school breakfast/lunch program are eligible. Charter schools that operate under agreement with a public school district are considered “public schools”.
<b>Where We Stand (NCLA)</b>	N/A