

# 2024 BALLOT MEASURES

## *What are our stances?*

### **PROPOSITION JJ: RETAINING ADDITIONAL SPORTS BETTING TAX REVENUE**

#### **RMFU POSITION: SUPPORT**

In 2019, Colorado voters approved Proposition DD, which legalized sports betting. Proposition DD also allowed the state of Colorado to collect taxes on sports betting revenue. While a portion of the tax funds collected are used for the regulation of sports betting and gambling addiction programs, the majority of the funds collected are set aside to implement portions of the Colorado Water Plan and other water conservation projects. Proposition DD required that the state only retain \$29 million in sports betting taxes and return anything over this cap to casinos and sports betting operations.

Proposition JJ, on the ballot this year, would allow the state to retain any tax revenue associated with sports betting instead of returning funds over the previously established cap to casinos. The tax revenue collected by the state above the cap established in Proposition DD will be used to provide additional funding to water projects in our state. These funds would go to multi-benefit water projects intended to improve our water systems' resiliency. If approved, the additional funding allowed by Proposition JJ will make those projects much more impactful and allow the state to better address the increasing scarcity of water affecting our state.

**RMFU supports Proposition JJ due to the investment in the Colorado Water Plan and other water conservation projects without increasing taxes on Colorado citizens.**

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### **PROPOSITION 127: PROHIBIT BOBCAT, LYNX, AND MOUNTAIN LION HUNTING**

#### **RMFU POSITION: OPPOSE**

Although Proposition 127 states that it bans trophy hunting of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions, if this ballot measure were to pass, it would actually ban the hunting of these animals entirely and would only allow a few narrow exceptions for when these animals may be killed. One of the few exceptions is when these animals are attacking livestock. Although there is an exception for protecting livestock, the unregulated population growth of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions and the inability to manage these populations will likely lead to an increase in wildlife interactions and livestock depredations.

RMFU believes that the wildlife management teams (biologists, game wardens, etc.) at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources are best equipped to manage bobcat, lynx, and mountain lion populations, which includes allowing and regulating hunting permits for these populations. If this proposition were to pass, it would make it much harder for folks at Colorado DNR to effectively manage bobcat, lynx, and mountain lion populations.

**RMFU opposes Proposition 127 due to its attempt to alter wildlife management through ballot box biology and the inevitable increase in livestock depredations.**

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### **PROPOSITION 131: CONCERNING THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS**

#### **RMFU POSITION: NO POSITION**

Proposition 131 would make two major changes to Colorado's election system. First, it would change Colorado's primary election system to an all-candidate system where all candidates regardless of party are on the ballot for every primary voter. Second, it would implement a ranked-choice voting system for the general election where voters would rank candidates according to their preference for every candidate rather than voting for just one. While RMFU has policy that supports ranked choice voting, RMFU does not have any policy on all-candidate primary systems.

**Therefore, RMFU has no position on this proposition.**

# DENVER CITY AND COUNTY BALLOT INITIATIVES

## **ISSUE INITIATED ORDINANCE 308: PROHIBITION OF FUR PRODUCTS**

### **RMFU POSITION: OPPOSE**

Ballot Initiative 308 is a citizen-initiated ordinance that, if passed, will ban the sale of fur products in Denver. This far-reaching ban would impact local vendors selling everything from fishing flies to cowboy hats. The group behind this ban and the slaughterhouse ban in 309—has explicitly stated that their long-term goal is the total ban of animal agriculture.

Various groups from the agricultural community, indigenous community, and retail industry have expressed concern over this ban. Those involved in the National Western Stock Show have come out against this initiative, as they economically depend on the sales of fur products at that event and similar events. Groups that participate in other annual events such as the Denver Powwow and Indian Market are also concerned about the financial impact of this ban. While the ban does carve out an exception for traditional products from Native Americans, the narrow way the exception is defined will likely not cover many indigenous sellers. In addition to the groups that sell products affected by this ban at major events, there are at least 20 brick-and-mortar retail stores in Denver that would either lose significant business or potentially even be forced out of business due to the ban.

**RMFU opposes this initiative due to the negative impact this will have on the agricultural community and our local economy.**

## **ISSUE INITIATED ORDINANCE 309: PROHIBITION OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES**

### **RMFU POSITION: OPPOSE**

Ballot Initiative 309 is a citizen-initiated ordinance that, if passed, will ban slaughterhouses in Denver. There is one facility that would be impacted by this: Superior Farms, an employee-owned lamb-processing facility that accounts for 15-20% of the total lamb processing capacity in the U.S. The impact of this ban, if passed, would spread beyond Denver and Colorado - it could harm the entire nation as it would set a precedent for future campaigns, emboldened by this one, to further ban animal agriculture.

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union firmly stands against this ballot initiative because a ban would have horrible impacts on workers, producers, consumers, the environment, and the economy. On the producer side, this facility is the largest lamb processing plant in the U.S. If it were to close, sheep producers across the country could be forced to either ship their sheep to other parts of the country for a higher cost or get out of the sheep industry entirely. On the consumer side, closing this plant would cause food prices to increase and destroy a source of local food. A ban would have major cultural implications as Superior Farms is a major producer of Halal-certified meat. As an employee-owned business, this ban would put over 160 workers not only out of a highly specialized job, but also tear them away from a business that they own. If passed, most, if not all, sheep would be sent out of state for slaughter, which negatively impacts the environment due to increased transportation emissions and the welfare of the animal as they endure longer transportation. 2,700 Jobs could be lost - ranchers, truckers, distributors, retailers, butchers, and restaurant owners and employees. The final estimated economic cost of this ballot initiative is over \$860 million based on the loss of economic activity closing this facility would cause.

**RMFU opposes this initiative due to the impact on agricultural producers' access to processing, the decrease in locally available food, and the negative impact this would have on Colorado's economy.**

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# STOP THE BAN

## *How do we talk about it?*

### WHAT IS PROP 309?

Ballot Initiative 309 is a citizen-initiated ordinance that, if passed, will ban slaughterhouses in Denver. There is one facility that would be impacted by this: **Superior Farms**, an employee-owned lamb-processing facility that accounts for 15-20% of the total lamb processing capacity in the U.S. The impact of this ban, if passed, would spread beyond Denver and Colorado - it could harm the entire nation.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Here are some talking points that we encourage you to share with others to put a stop to this devastating ban:

- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union firmly stands **against** this ballot initiative because a ban would have horrible impacts on workers, producers, consumers, the environment, and the economy.
- On the **producer** side, this facility is the largest lamb processing plant in the U.S. If it were to close, sheep producers across the country could be forced to either ship their sheep to other parts of the country for a cost or get out of the sheep industry entirely.
- On the **consumer** side, closing this plant would cause food prices to increase and destroy a source of local food.
- A ban would have **major cultural implications** as Superior Farms is a major producer of Halal certified meat.
- As an employee-owned business, this ban would put over **160 workers** not only out of a highly specialized job, but also torn away from a business that they own.
- If passed, most, if not all, sheep would be sent out of state for slaughter, which negatively impacts the **environment** due to increased transportation emissions and the **welfare of the animal** as they endure longer transportation.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT FAST FACTS

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### 160

*employee-owners will lose their careers and business investments*

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### 15-20%

*of the US lamb processing capacity will be lost*

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### \$861 million

*Potential cost to our local economy*

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### 2,700

*Jobs could be lost - ranchers, truckers, distributors, retailers, butchers, and restaurant owners and employees*

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Questions? Contact Tyler Garrett  
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