

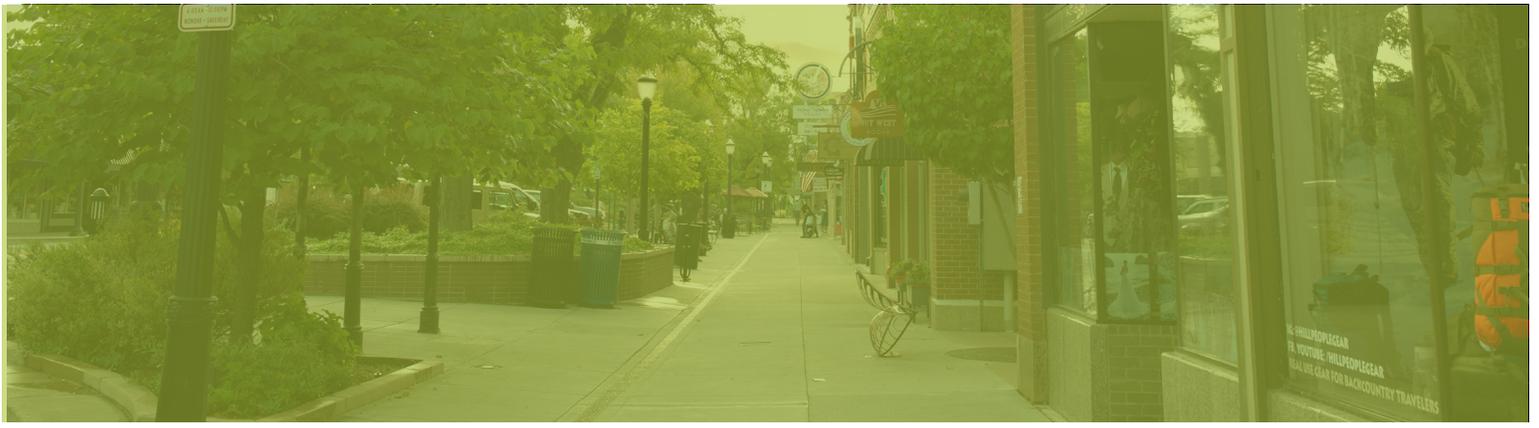


Grand Junction Area  
**CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE

# 2022 Fall Election Guide

Focused on Business Priorities for Economic Strength





# ELECTION GUIDE 2022

## A message from the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

Elections play a critical function in any healthy economy. Those chosen to represent us have a great impact on the ability of businesses in Mesa County to THRIVE, not just survive. That is why it is important that pro-business candidates are identified to ensure we effectively set the pace for community building, impact policy related to business priorities, and continue to foster a business-friendly environment.

It is also vital that we look at ballot measures that directly impact our local business community. These individual issues contribute to the “big picture” of our economic health and so we must ensure that we weigh both the intentions of the measure and the impacts (often unintended) that come with it.

Leading up to the November 8th election, our community will have several choices as we cast our ballots regarding both the selection of the most ideal candidate to meet our business needs and these pressing issues facing our community. We at the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce believe we have a duty to act as a resource, allowing our local business community to make informed choices on election day.

We want to express deep gratitude to all the candidates who responded to our call to participate in our endorsement process. The election season can be taxing and we fully appreciate the time given to engage with our business community over the past few weeks. By allowing us to meet with you and discuss the barriers facing our business community and how you would represent us, we were provided with meaningful conversations regarding how each candidate would positively impact our future economic success.

Lastly, let this be a call to action for you, our business community. While this guide represents a great starting point of information, we highly encourage you to take time to research the candidates and issues presented to you on the ballot. Learn and participate when opportunities present themselves in the coming weeks.

Get out there, and make democracy work for you!

At the service of our business community,  
The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

# INTRODUCTION

This Election Guide serves as a reference as you consider candidates in select races for the upcoming election on November 8th. Also included are a few ballot measures we have identified as having direct impact on the business community and economic base.

1. Introduction
2. Candidate Questionnaires and Endorsements
3. Local & Statewide Ballot Measures
4. Election Day Information

# CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES

Each Candidate was provided an opportunity to submit a questionnaire answering four questions about their candidacy. The answers to these questions are provided in each section. Please note that submitted answers are shown exactly as submitted. The Chamber does not correct grammar, spelling, and general editing errors. Each candidate followed a strict word count requirement to ensure consistency.

# CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

In addition to the written questionnaires, candidates were invited to participate in a panel interview with the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce Endorsement Committee. This committee includes one board representative and five additional representatives from the business community. Chamber staff is present only to facilitate the interviews and record the comments of the committee.

Candidates in each race were all asked the same questions related to business priorities in our community such as regulatory pressures on legacy industries, protection of natural resources, government transparency, and economic development.

All interviews were held to a strict time limit for consistency.

# CANDIDATE FORUM

The final step in our endorsement process included invitations to participate in our Candidate Forum as part of the September Quarterly Membership Luncheon. Candidates faced a variety of questions provided by attendees related to business issues, each having an opportunity to answer each question related to their race.

This forum is open to both Chamber members and the community as an opportunity for Candidates to express their perspectives on business-related topics prior to the upcoming election. The Candidate Endorsement Committee is also in attendance as part of the endorsement process.

# County Commissioner District 2



**Bobbie Daniel** (R)

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

As Commissioner, I will work with our businesses, schools, and community partners to build a more robust workforce pipeline to meet the ever-changing job markets and regional unemployment needs. I will work with our Mesa County Workforce Center, Business Incubator, CMU, SD51, WCCC, GJEP, and local City and Town Council members. In addition, the Grand Junction Chamber has built a stellar Career Link committee and an impactful Air Service Alliance. I look forward to working with and supporting GJ Chamber initiatives whenever possible to unleash Mesa County's future full potential.

## As the county continues to grow, what are the most critical capital and infrastructure needs that must be invested in by the county?

As our county grows, we all want to preserve the ease of commuting and getting to where you are going in a relatively short time. Therefore, I will work to address concerns around maintenance and repairs of our streets, rural roads, traffic flow management, bus transportation options, and critical infrastructure growth projects. On the commercial side, I will support expanding methods for businesses to have greater access to shipping products. I will support more manufacturing options for more affordable transportation of raw materials and finished goods. As we look toward the future, I will work with the State on options for the closure of I-70 Glenwood Canyon. In addition, I will assist the airport in enhancing flights and strengthening our broadband infrastructure.



**Charles Pink** (D)

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

As a Western Slope native, I've watched our economy ebb and flow. While I recognize that the prosperity of our county depends on development, without responsible limitations, we are at risk of becoming overcrowded with poor infrastructure, unsanitary public arenas, and increased crime. With no development, we become stagnant, and employment and housing become concerns. We need to balance this.

I surround myself with educated and diverse groups of perspectives to be the most informed. I will reach out to all parties and players on how we can ensure a viable economy. I will meet with small and large business owners, residents, agricultural agencies, educators, and politicians for their input rather than placate my constituents' agendas.

I will analyze budgets akin to Mesa County's demographics and ask other Commissioners what we can learn from their failures and successes.

## As the county continues to grow, what are the most critical capital and infrastructure needs that must be invested in by the county?

I have watched the population and cost of living skyrocket up valley. It has continually pushed development down valley. This will put stress on existing wastewater treatment systems and power grids. To compensate, I will build a partnership between city planning commissions, the oil and gas industry, and renewable energy sources.

As a solar installer, I recognize how renewables can take pressure off the existing power grid and reduce costs for the average person or business owner. This can also supplement the power required to run our wastewater treatment systems.



**Bobbie Daniel** (R)

**What do you believe is the county’s role in helping to build a strong economy and assisting in business growth?**

As I’ve met with businesses, finding employees is one of the biggest challenges facing businesses. I will support the Mesa County Workforce Center and its partnership with Mesa County workers and employers, additionally search for ways to expand its ability for outreach. The Mesa County Workforce Center offers numerous programs, including Veteran Service Officer, Workforce Development Liaison, Career Development Program, Employment Services, and Workforce Innovation. In addition, I will look for areas where the Board of Commissioners can be a strong voice for business at the State level. I will also lean into our seven opportunity zones in Mesa County and support diversity in economic drivers. Finally, I will work to keep the county government stable and consistent as our economic engine continues to pick up speed. Together, we will make Mesa County the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

**Housing is of utmost importance to our local workforce. What policies, partnerships, or methods are you considering to create more housing supply in Mesa County?**

Affordability and attainable housing are significant issues impacting Mesa County. With Colorado’s high regulatory burden coupled with the labor and energy shortage, rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and often complex land use regulations, the outlook for affordability for our workforce and starter homes can be significantly improved. Mesa County is currently updating its 1996 Land Use Plan with community input that will help guide land use policy and development in the incorporated areas of Mesa County. There are opportunities to help reduce housing costs when looking at land use codes to help encourage the private sector to build dwelling units at a lower price point with multi units, adjusting impact fees and streamlining the process. As a county, we can continue to work together to make homeownership a reality for more people.

*After careful consideration of the questionnaire, candidate interview, and participation in the candidate forum, the GJACC endorses Bobbie Daniel.*



**Charlie Pink** (D)

As an electrician, I see jobsites that promote infrastructure every day. I know that the oil and gas industry is pivotal in Mesa County’s prosperity. However, fossil fuels are finite and need to be supplemented by renewable sources to maintain energy availability. As such, both industries must work together.

Grand Junction should improve the quality of our bridges and roads. Without adequate capital and efficient implementation, we are constantly behind our growing population’s needs. This makes Mesa County less appealing to a stable work force.

**What do you believe is the county’s role in helping to build a strong economy and assisting in business growth?**

I believe the county’s role in helping build a strong economy is to promote new business avenues while supporting existing businesses.

Without maintaining our rivers, public lands, we are at risk of losing our existing recreational income. Tourists support local restaurants, stores, and outfitters.

A business that has been under supported in this county is allowing and taxing marijuana use. Municipalities have used this revenue to build schools and recreation centers. Debeque would have ceased to be a town without having voted in support of this income.

The development and maintenance of downtown and north avenue businesses is important. The county should evaluate how we have supported and created struggles for these owners and make changes accordingly.

**Housing is of utmost importance to our local workforce. What policies, partnerships, or methods are you considering to create more housing supply in Mesa County?**

I will collaborate with county and city officials to zone property in ways that support responsible development. I will work with local contractors to assist in making jobs profitable and timely. Appealing housing needs to be available for our residents. I believe this should be developed according to their ratio of the workforce.

# State House District 54



**Matt Soper** (R)

## **What issues are critical for the next General Assembly to address in light of ongoing inflation and uncertain economic times?**

Protecting West Slope water, ensuring transportation dollars actually result in paving roads on the West Slope, and helping the business community by cracking down on sky rocking crime rates, fighting over-regulation, and finding ways to reduce healthcare costs.

Currently, I am considering legislation to rein in how the state determines which drainages are listed on the TMDL. This is important because the business community stands to pay millions over the next decade in making water cleaner than it naturally is in the river. Also, I am looking at legislation to abolish the business-personal property tax to encourage businesses to make investments in technology and needed capital.

## **How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?**

My role as a state legislator is to fight for the best interests of Mesa and Delta Counties and the West Slope! Determining what to advocate for comes from listening to constituents and stakeholders within my district, such as the Grand Junction Chamber's Government Affairs Committee.

Denver and the suburbs will always have access to healthcare, water, broadband, and emergency services, even if these are privatized. Many of my constituents lack access to broadband, healthcare, timely emergency services, and even our water is being stolen by greedy downstream and Front Range interests. To help our economy, it is important that we see public investments in our airport, highways, water projects, broadband, and law enforcement, along with public investments to spur private development. Without basic infrastructure in our community, all other efforts to develop our economy and attract innovators and entrepreneurs to make investments and create jobs will be lost.

## **In recent years, we've seen a trend of the legislature implementing fees, which are not subject to TABOR, to fund various enterprises. What are your views on the legislature implementing fees to supplement state revenue?**

Every single bill that attempts to circumvent TABOR, I have fought hours and hours against! Last session, I ran a bill, HB22-1059, which would have required that any bill that imposes, increases, or authorizes the imposition of a fee to be approved by a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate. Unfortunately, this was killed in the House.

A major problem has been that Colorado is mono-party ruled, meaning only the Democrats control the Legislature, Executive, and Judicial branches of government. The legislature has plenty of money, \$ 38,143,893,792.00 to be exact. For example, the \$0.27 delivery fee literally nickels and dimes Coloradoans and won't actually result in better roads. A fee is nothing more than a tax and should be voted on by the people, in the spirit of TABOR and good governance.

## **We hear from many businesses about increased frustrations and confusion navigating local and state regulations about employment, housing, climate action, etc. Please describe how you will increase trust and transparency and improve communication with our local business community about policies that affect them.**

During my first two terms, I have worked closely with the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce and plan to continue. Transparency comes from listening from those in the business community, but also by letting business know what I am seeing from the front lines. It is a war and the ruling party has no empathy for anyone executing a business plan or working a balance sheet. All I can do is continue to push back and listen to where business is asking for amendments or delay tactics. Unless the Republicans take the majority, I can only delay legislation or once and a while get an amendment, so we need a majority to stop the pain! No matter how good of a legislator I am, I cannot pull heroics when we are always down in the trenches.

*After careful consideration of the questionnaire, candidate interview, and participation in the candidate forum, the GJACC endorses Matt Soper.*

*NOTE: Candidate Alice Marie Slaven-Emond declined to participate in our endorsement process.*

# State House District 55



**Damon Davis** (D)

## What issues are critical for the next General Assembly to address in light of ongoing inflation and uncertain economic times?

Two drivers of inflation are housing costs and medical expenses. The legislature can address housing two ways. First, it should override local zoning regulations that prevent building higher density, less expensive housing, such as condos, apartments, and starter homes. Second, the state should fund building of starter homes through public-private partnerships, similar to what was done with Levittowns, recouping the funds when the houses are sold. On medical expenses, the legislature should work to reduce the cost of health insurance to small businesses. It should also allow insurers to incentivize insureds to use cheaper medical providers. And it should require medical providers to bill and accept the same amount for medical services regardless of who is paying, so that the uninsured can benefit from the lower prices negotiated by large insurance companies.

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

The Western Slope needs economic diversity, because dependence on extractive industries leads to boom-bust cycles and economic uncertainty. My role will be to help set up the Western Slope to allow that economic diversity to develop and to attract new businesses and industries to the area. This includes protecting the environment, especially water. Two of our major industries, agriculture and tourism, are dependent on the environment. It is the surrounding natural beauty that attracts people here. We also need to expand broadband access to attract new businesses, especially in the service sectors. Improved internet service will also attract remote workers, who will bring more money into the area. Improving transportation infrastructure would also set up the Western Slope for future growth.



**Rick Taggart** (R)

## What issues are critical for the next General Assembly to address in light of ongoing inflation and uncertain economic times?

The General Assembly needs to curtail and or reverse legislation that has or will contribute to inflationary pressures. There are numerous examples of legislation that have or will have significant impacts on our cost of living.

SB21-260 increases fees on gasoline, on retail deliveries and on most rides from apps like Uber and Lift. While transportation infrastructure needs are significant and vital to Colorado and the Western Slope, skirting the TABOR Amendment with fees was not the proper approach to solving our infrastructure deficiencies. Proposition 118 in 2020, that goes into effect in 2023, creates a new payroll tax to provide most Colorado employees with up to 12 weeks of partial pay for sick leave. While the tax is split between the employer and employee this additional tax will most likely add to the price of services and products. The General Assembly should delay the implementation of this tax.

The legislature needs to curtail and roll back regulations on our energy industry. The consistent attacks on our Oil and Gas industries have led to a 30%+ increase in the cost of natural gas and 50%+ increase on propane. For families struggling with the cost of food and housing, heating their homes this winter is going to be difficult.

Hopefully these examples help illuminate my point. The legislature needs to stop adding to the cost of doing business and the cost of living in Colorado.



**Damon Davis** (D)

**In recent years, we've seen a trend of the legislature implementing fees, which are not subject to TABOR, to fund various enterprises. What are your views on the legislature implementing fees to supplement state revenue?**

I have mixed feelings on this. Often the services provided by the government produce positive externalities, benefits that extend beyond the recipient. Therefore, the cost should be shared by taxpayers. Fees may also unfairly condition receipt of government services on ability to pay. Yet there is only so much money to go around due to TABOR. And despite the talk, few people actually want the government to do less, they just want it to cost less. But the world doesn't work that way. And the services provided still need to be paid for. Thus, I'm okay with using fees, so long as they are truly fees: the money is going to the service provided and in the approximate amount it costs to provide the service.

**We hear from many businesses about increased frustrations and confusion navigating local and state regulations about employment, housing, climate action, etc. Please describe how you will increase trust and transparency and improve communication with our local business community about policies that affect them.**

As a small businessman I share this frustration, even as an attorney. I personally am a proponent of the "plain language" school of law: that laws should be written, and lawyers and judges should speak and write, in plain English. I would push to have all statutes written in plain English. I have some experience with this on the Colorado Supreme Court Civil Rules Committee, proposing changes to court rules to make them understandable to those without attorneys. I would propose requiring that all regulation be written in plain English and provide an affirmative defense to first time offenders when the regulations are not so written. And I'd like the regulatory regime to emphasize securing compliance rather than focusing on punishment.



**Rick Taggart** (R)

**How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?**

I bring to the legislature 30 years of experience as a CEO and senior executive. As well, I bring 7+ years of experience in municipal government having been a Grand Junction City Council Member and Mayor. As a Council Member I have crafted strategies that have helped our economy reach a decade-high of jobs creation.

I will continue my commitment to Western Colorado, as a legislator, by listening to the needs of citizens and businesses. A key focus in my listening and research will be on the economy of Western Colorado. My strong yet rational voice and experience will assist in budgeting and financial accountability while minimizing or rolling back taxes, fees, regulations, and unfunded mandates. These efforts will help businesses grow and prosper and add to the longterm viability of our economy.

**In recent years, we've seen a trend of the legislature implementing fees, which are not subject to TABOR, to fund various enterprises. What are your views on the legislature implementing fees to supplement state revenue?**

I have discussed this subject a bit in question #1. Fees as a strategy to skirt TABOR are not acceptable.

**We hear from many businesses about increased frustrations and confusion navigating local and state regulations about employment, housing, climate action, etc. Please describe how you will increase trust and transparency and improve communication with our local business community about policies that affect them.**

I will make myself available to business leaders to listen to their concerns and suggestions on subjects, legislation and regulations that impact their businesses. I will then carry forward these concerns and suggestion to my colleagues in the General Assembly. I will respond to emails and calls in an expeditious manner and when home I will set aside time to directly communicate with leaders of businesses. I have always worked hard to be an open book and dedicated to serving my constituents to the best of my abilities. This commitment is an integral part of who I am.

*After careful consideration of the questionnaire, candidate interview, and participation in the candidate forum, the GJACC endorses Rick Taggart.*

# State Senate District 7



**Janice Rich** (R)

## What issues are critical for the next General Assembly to address in light of ongoing inflation and uncertain economic times?

Critical issues for the 2023 session are: making Colorado affordable; prioritizing public safety; expanding educational choice; and protecting our water. We need to deliver a state where middle-class families can afford their homes, gas, and groceries. It is time to reverse the excessive fees, taxes, and regulations that threaten our small businesses and families. I will support legislation where both can flourish. I will support legislation to address these four critical issues.

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

Part of my role is to continue as a strong voice for the under-represented part of our state. At every turn, in every bill, in every debate, the voice of rural Colorado will be heard. Highlighting to my fellow legislators how our needs differ and how statewide problems need to be addressed differently for the rural parts of the state is a key part of this role. I will continue to advocate for the Governor to make rural appointments to state boards and commissions. I will continue to argue for rural exceptions to bills, such as the county unionization bill in the 2022 Session.

## In recent years, we've seen a trend of the legislature implementing fees, which are not subject to TABOR, to fund various enterprises. What are your views on the legislature implementing fees to supplement state revenue?

Colorado taxpayers, realizing the abuse using the term "fee" instead of "tax", approved Proposition 117 which would require voter approval for fees that exceed \$100 million in revenue.



**David Stahlke** (D)

## What issues are critical for the next General Assembly to address in light of ongoing inflation and uncertain economic times?

The Colorado General Assembly has limited ability to affect and impact global issues like these. The best we can do is to maintain as stable a platform as possible, coupled with a long term perspective and a solid safety net.

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

I would focus on three things. First, water, particularly storage, conservation, and efficient use. Nothing happens without a stable, adequate supply of water. Second is affordable housing. Lack of it is an economic time bomb just waiting to go off. We must solve this problem. Third would be infrastructure, in particular a viable alternative to I-70 through Glenwood Canyon.

## In recent years, we've seen a trend of the legislature implementing fees, which are not subject to TABOR, to fund various enterprises. What are your views on the legislature implementing fees to supplement state revenue?

TABOR is a mixed blessing. The idea of keeping taxes subject to a vote of the people is a great one. The idea of deliberately ratcheting down the revenue available in order to shrink government is ideological stupidity that doesn't work in the real world, as evidenced by the fact that nearly every entity that could has "de-Bruiced" because they needed to do so. Sometimes "fee for service" is an appropriate model, but they should mostly be revenue neutral and go to the agency providing the service rather than the general fund.



**Janice Rich** (R)

However, the majority party figured out another avenue to charge fees by expanding the enterprise system. And, as long as fees in enterprises stay under \$100 million, voter approval is not required. One Bill (SB21-260) set up five enterprises; fees are included in each of those. During the 2021 Legislative Session, close to 83 bills were introduced and passed which included fees amounting to approximately \$579 million for FY2022-23. The abuse continues under the current administration. While technically legal, it's time to honor the intent of TABOR and Proposition 117, protecting the taxpayer's right to vote on new taxes and fees.

**We hear from many businesses about increased frustrations and confusion navigating local and state regulations about employment, housing, climate action, etc. Please describe how you will increase trust and transparency and improve communication with our local business community about policies that affect them.**

As your State Senator, I will be a bridge between the administration/departments and residents of my district. I will continue to encourage contacting me to assist with constituent services/problems. Another thing I would like to work with the Chamber on is hosting well-advertised open meetings in our community with department experts attending to meet with local businesses and the community to explain policies and address specific problems. Let's create a communication path for the solutions to be found.

*After careful consideration of the questionnaire, candidate interview, and participation in the candidate forum, the GJACC endorses Janice Rich.*



**David Stahlke** (D)

**We hear from many businesses about increased frustrations and confusion navigating local and state regulations about employment, housing, climate action, etc. Please describe how you will increase trust and transparency and improve communication with our local business community about policies that affect them.**

There's really only one good way to do that, which is to sit and listen. Sometimes Democrats don't do that very well because we're busy telling people how they SHOULD feel rather than listening to how they DO feel. For the record, listening does not necessarily imply agreement, and some people, say like election deniers, simply aren't serious people that need to be considered.

## Colorado Governor



**Heidi Ganahl** (R)

*After review of the candidates, the GJACC endorses Heidi Ganahl.*



**Jared Polis** (D)

# US Senate



**Joe O'Dea** (R)

## **How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?**

Colorado as a whole needs a voice. We can't have politicians in DC who represent one area of the state, or as a matter of fact, no parts of the state. We need someone who will advocate for rural Colorado, just as they would the front range. Someone who appreciates the nuances between the West Slope and the Eastern plains. I intend to be that voice for all of Colorado.

While it was disappointing to see my opponent not fight harder to keep BLM headquarters in Grand Junction, it's critical the jobs that moved out West remain here and not be moved back to D.C. by the Biden administration. I'll use my Senate seat to ensure those jobs stay in Colorado.

I will talk to the communities and visit often to ensure I am up to date on the challenges different areas are facing, and I will take those messages directly back to DC and use my role as an elected official to ensure whatever policy Washington DC is moving forward has Colorado at top of mind.

## **What are your plans for addressing rising inflation and energy costs?**

Rising inflation and increased energy costs are the top issues I hear on the campaign trail that are impacting hard working Coloradans, and it is exactly why I am running.

For far too long politicians in DC have passed policy after policy that cost trillions of dollars with little acknowledgment of the inflation crisis they are causing. I plan to push legislation that will cut a substantial portion of spending to drive down the deficit. We need to reprioritize federal spending and cut federal bureaucracy in Washington D.C. Spending created the inflationary crisis. Slowing the pace of federal spending is the essential first step in putting the breaks on Joe Biden's inflation train. My second priority centers on restoring America's energy dominance and independence. Expanding energy production here locally is one of the most important things we can do to attack America's inflation crisis. Higher energy prices are the

primary driver of inflation, making food, gas, manufacturing more expensive. We need a government-wide focus that embraces American energy production of all kinds – wind, solar, nuclear, natural gas and oil. We need to unleash American innovation through modernizing permitting and bringing more energy infrastructure online faster. The Western Slope has one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world and we need to find a way to unleash that potential. We can become a stronger country and help struggling families by reversing Biden's war on energy.

## **Migrant workers are vital to our agricultural community. How will you work to strengthen relationships with migrant workers, and make sure our farmers always have access to H-2A workers?**

Migrant workers are critical to our labor force across Colorado. While I firmly believe we need to secure the border to prevent the influence of cartels from flooding into our communities, we also need to overhaul the immigration process, both the H-2A process and legal citizenship, to ensure that those who are coming into this country to actively work and be active citizens in the community can do so through a streamlined process. One of my first priorities will be to push to reprioritize spending away from hiring 87,000 new IRS bureaucrats and re-deploying those dollars to secure the border and fund the hiring more local law enforcement across the country. That bill should include citizenship for DACA kids. With the border secure, a wide-ranging fix on worker visas will be easier to build consensus around. I am committed to bringing true leadership on immigration issues. Michael Bennet talks, talks, talks about immigration and never gets anything done. I will.

## **Over 70 % of Mesa County is public land that has a significant impact on our local economy. How would you ensure that these resources continue to provide economic benefits to our region?**

As a US Senator I would work to protect the communities' rights to utilize public lands for multi-uses. What is important to recognize is that an economy cannot survive off of one single entity. Tourism is important, and so is agriculture. The government needs to ensure they are not picking winners and losers and are promoting policies that allow all of the different industries in the community to thrive and cohabitate. We also need to ensure we are protecting our public lands and watersheds from devastating forest fires. To do this we need to ensure we are completing proper mitigation measures on our public lands in a timely manner. Michael Bennet treats local input on the management of our federal lands as an inconvenience or an after thought. I will prioritize the input of the communities and the citizens who work, live, and recreate in the areas closest to our public lands.

***After careful consideration of the questionnaire and candidate interview, the GJACC endorses Joe O'Dea.***

***NOTE: Candidate Michael Bennet did not respond to our request to participate in the endorsement process.***

# US Congressional District 3



**Lauren Boebert** (R)

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

My job is to be a strong advocate for responsible energy development, lower taxes, and a business-friendly environment. That starts with making sure the federal government doesn't over-regulate our local economy or choose winners and losers. We want a level playing field where decisions are made locally and supported, not infringed upon, by our federal government.

## What are your plans for addressing rising inflation and energy costs?

I'm fighting every chance I get to stop Nancy Pelosi and the extreme leftists who have taken over the federal government with their reckless, inflationary spending. I'm also pushing to unleash the full potential of our oil and natural gas resources to help lower our energy costs and create more high-paying jobs in Western Colorado. The state used to approve 30 or more drilling permits a month. In 2022 they've only approved 22. Unsurprisingly, the cost of oil and natural gas has skyrocketed. It's time to drill.

## Migrant workers are vital to our agricultural community. How will you work to strengthen relationships with migrant workers, and make sure our farmers always have access to H-2A workers?

It's critical that our local agriculture community have the labor they need to get their products to market. Over the years, the H-2A program has grown in size with over 200,000 visas issued in 2020, an increase from 50,000 in 2007. The H-2A program has been strained and often has complaints about delayed processing of applications and workers overstaying their visas. There is work to be done in fixing the system, but strengthening it starts with getting rid of the incentives to cheat the system on both sides of



**Adam Frisch** (D)

## How specifically do you see using your role as an elected official to ensure a viable Western Slope economy long term?

I've been a successful businessman for nearly three decades. I understand how to strengthen our economy. I know my role in Congress is to listen to local stakeholders - business owners, chambers, and groups like Club 20 - and support their efforts, fighting for resources and policies to spur our economy and against unnecessary regulations. Growing our economy is not about top-down policies; it is about supporting local economic development efforts and boosting key industries, from energy to agriculture. If we are going to produce a cubic foot of natural gas, we should do it in Colorado. We produce the cleanest energy in the world, it supports good jobs, and helps achieve energy independence. I will protect Colorado's water, the foundation of our agriculture and recreation industries, making sure any negotiations respect water rights and don't advantage the lower basin states. Finally, I will advocate for projects that boost local economies, like funding better rail infrastructure in Grand Junction. A strong economy will be my first priority in Congress.

## What are your plans for addressing rising inflation and energy costs?

I will attack inflation by advocating for an expansion of American energy production from - natural gas to solar - to drive down prices, passing legislation to address labor shortages by supporting smart visa programs and vocational and higher education, fixing supply chains bottlenecks, and cutting regulations on businesses. I will work to address the cost of housing by repealing red tape that makes construction more expensive. Without affordable housing, families can't make ends meet and businesses cannot find workers. It will take bipartisanship to solve this problem, and I will work with anyone to improve the economy and communities of the Western Slope.



**Lauren Boebert** (R)

the ledger. That means putting a stop to illegal immigration first by closing the border. I've introduced legislation to do that, and I've also pushed to impeach the Director of Homeland Security for his dereliction of duty in allowing over 3,000,000 illegal immigrants to cross the border during the Biden administration. I also think there is an opportunity to invest more in agriculture technology to help reduce the demand for foreign workers.

**Over 70 % of Mesa County is public land that has a significant impact on our local economy. How would you ensure that these resources continue to provide economic benefits to our region?**

I'd argue the Democrats have already stripped our local economy of economic benefits from our public lands. They've actively worked to shut down Colorado energy despite the benefits to our economy and environment. We produce some of the cleanest natural gas on the planet and we do so in a far more responsible way than countries like China. The United States has led the world in the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions since 2005, thanks to natural gas. Nothing would have more of an impact to our local economy than bringing the Jordan Cove pipeline online and opening the permitting process back up to address market demand. I've also introduced the most comprehensive forest management bill in decades, which would allow the responsible management of our forests to tackle beetle kill and the 6 billion dead standing dead trees in our western forests. Passing this bill would generate revenue for our local economy, help prevent forest fires and help keep our air cleaner as opposed to the Democrat's plan to further reduce access to our forests and continue down the path of making them a tinderbox ready to ignite.



**Adam Frisch** (D)

**Migrant workers are vital to our agricultural community. How will you work to strengthen relationships with migrant workers, and make sure our farmers always have access to H-2A workers?**

For years, immigration policies have been driven by politics, not the needs of our businesses or our communities. Having listened to ranchers, farmers, and industry representatives, I know we have to address this problem. I believe in a secure southern border and a system that makes sure businesses can thrive, which is why I support making the H-2A and J-1 visa processes easier. The current representative has opposed these kinds of changes in the past. I am realistic - our immigration system is in need of large-scale reform - but these are some areas we can start with to make sure CD3's economy can thrive going forward.

**Over 70 % of Mesa County is public land that has a significant impact on our local economy. How would you ensure that these resources continue to provide economic benefits to our region?**

I believe in mixed use on public lands and oppose efforts to warp that balance. I support energy producers' ability to make full use of their leases. In tourism and recreation, I will make sure the federal government works with communities to develop and support attractions like the Palisade Plunge. I will fight to protect grazing for our ranchers, and work to keep our lands and waters healthy and accessible to sportsman. Finally, I will protect our water. With the federal government calling for Colorado River basin states to reduce water usage, we need a serious leader who will listen to all stakeholders and secure our interests. I'm who you want in meetings that affect your families, businesses, and communities.

*As an organization, we are committed to only endorsing a candidate that we feel is the best representative for our community. Representation based on productive solutions is a key component to successfully advocating for business priorities in Western Colorado.*

*After careful consideration of the questionnaire, candidate interview, participation in the candidate forum, and past records, the GJACC has decided to endorse neither candidate.*

# Local & Statewide Ballot Measures

## **Proposition 121- State Income Tax Rate Reduction**

This measure would reduce the state income tax rate from 4.55% to 4.41% for individuals and C corps operating in Colorado.

### **Chamber Position: Support**

This measure would put more dollars into taxpayers' pockets, especially in times of inflation. Tax cuts stimulate growth and create a more attractive tax environment. It would only jeopardize state income if a TABOR refund was not in place.

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## **Proposition 123- Dedicated State Income Tax Revenue for Affordable Housing Programs**

This measure would dedicate a portion of revenues (one tenth of one percent) from existing income tax revenues and allocates funds to housing projects, including affordable housing financing programs that will reduce rents, the purchase of land for affordable housing development, assets for renters, services for persons experiencing homelessness, and support for local planning capacity

### **Chamber Position: Neutral**

While the Chamber recognizes the importance of addressing affordable housing and supports the intentions of this measure, many questions around the effectiveness of this effort remain. Vagueness in language provides no guarantee the funding will be spent as promised and the real issues is red tape, not capital.

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## **Proposition 124- Equal number of liquor licenses for drugstores, grocery stores, liquor stores**

This measure allows an equal number of licenses for drugstores, grocery stores and liquor stores. Current law limits the number of licenses a "liquor-licensed drugstore" or "retail liquor store" can have to sell beer, wine, and spirits.

Limits the total number of licenses that both of those licensees may obtain.

### **Chamber Position: Neutral**

While we recognize that this measure could expand commerce and provide more options for consumers, we as an organization must avoid picking "winners" and "losers" among our businesses and this measure has impacts on both larger chain stores and smaller mom-and-pop stores who are both important to our economy.

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## **Proposition 125- Sales of Alcohol Beverages**

This measure allows retailers currently limited to selling beer and FMBs (grocery stores, convenience stores, etc.) to also sell wine.

### **Chamber Position: Neutral**

While we recognize that this measure could expand convenience for consumers, we as an organization must avoid picking "winners" and "losers" among our businesses and this measure has impacts on both larger chain stores and smaller mom-and-pop stores who are both important to our economy.

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## **Proposition 126- Third-Party Delivery of Alcohol Beverages**

This measure allows third-party delivery services (DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc.) to deliver alcohol.

### **Chamber Position: Support**

This measure will continue the successful "cocktails-to-go" model piloted during the pandemic, eliminating its expiration. It is also a great source of revenue for restaurants and provides opportunity for expanded commerce for retail delivery.

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## **Mesa County Ballot Measure 1A**

This measure allows Mesa County to issue TABOR refunds from the county's capital fund instead of ONLY the General Fund.

### **Chamber Position: Support**

This measure allows refunds to be balanced between the two funds, providing increased financial stability within the Mesa County Budget.

# Local & Statewide Ballot Measures

## City of Grand Junction Lodging Tax Increase

This measure allows the City of Grand Junction to increase the lodging tax by 1% and dedicates said revenue to affordable housing projects/programs.

### Chamber Position: Oppose

While the intention of this measure addresses an issue that is a priority for our entire community by creating a sustainable income source for affordable housing, it will create additional burden on the lodging industry that is still recovering from the pandemic.

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## City of Grand Junction Short-Term Rental Excise Tax

This measure creates an 8% excise tax on short-term rentals and dedicates said revenue to affordable housing projects/programs.

### Chamber Position: Oppose

While the intention of this measure addresses an issue that is a priority for our entire community by creating a sustainable income source for affordable housing, this adds additional burden to small business owners who operate these units and could stifle creation of more.

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## City of Grand Junction Charter Amendment to Extend Lease to 99 Years

This measure allows city property to be leased for a maximum of 99 years (increased from 25 years) when the property “is to be used for affordable housing project(s).”

### Chamber Position: Support

This change will allow more lending options for affordable housing projects that require longer lease periods.

## ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, November 8th, 2022

To update your voter registration please visit

[www.govotecolorado.com](http://www.govotecolorado.com)

Or visit the Mesa County Elections Office at:

200 S. Spruce Street

Grand Junction, CO 81501

(970)-244-1662

## Mail Ballot Drop Off Locations:

Mesa County Central Services - 200 S Spruce Street, Grand Junction

Fruita Civic Center - 325 E Aspen Ave, Fruita

Clifton DMV - 3225 I-70 Business Loop, # A2, Clifton

GVT West Transfer Facility - 612 24 1/2 Road, Grand Junction

Department of Human Services - 510 29 1/2 Road, Grand Junction

Colorado Mesa University – 1299 N 12th St, Grand Junction (Robinson Theatre)

Mesa County Fairgrounds - 2785 US Highway 50, Grand Junction

Palisade Community Center - 120 W 8th Street, Palisade

## BALLOTS MUST BE RETURNED BEFORE 7:00 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY

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Electronic version of this GJACC Election Guide can be viewed by visiting [www.gjchamber.org](http://www.gjchamber.org).