



2026 Fall Election Guide

Focused on Business Priorities for Economic Strength



FALL ELECTION GUIDE 2026

A message from the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce President & CEO

A strong business community needs a voice in the decisions that shape its future. At the Chamber, we work to ensure the realities of running a business are understood by those making public policy. That depends on employers who ask questions, share their experiences, vote, and sometimes step forward to serve.

This election, I am reminded of the importance of cultivating and supporting our business peers who are willing to run for office. Making payroll, building a team, navigating regulations, and taking risks provide perspectives that matter at the decision-making table. Public service requires time, resolve, and a willingness to face scrutiny. We need to encourage capable leaders to bring their experience to that responsibility.

That same perspective matters when evaluating the many measures on our ballot. Their reach often runs directly through our businesses, affecting costs, workforce, infrastructure, and growth. Some may support economic success. Others may create barriers that are not immediately apparent.

We cannot understand those impacts by reading a title, catching a headline, or watching a clever campaign ad. We have to look deeper. What would the measure actually do? Who would bear the cost? Would it accomplish its stated purpose? What consequences could follow, both intended and unintended? A worthwhile goal deserves careful consideration, and so does the approach proposed to achieve it.

This Election Guide brings together candidate perspectives, explanations of ballot measures, and the Chamber's positions to help you evaluate those questions through a business lens. Our focus is not on political parties. It is on policies and leadership that support a strong economy and a community where businesses and people can thrive.

Use this guide as a starting point. Ask questions, look beyond campaign messages, and consider the benefits and tradeoffs. Whether encouraging a business peer to serve or casting our own ballot, we share a responsibility to understand what is at stake and help shape our community's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Candace Carnahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Candace Carnahan

President & CEO

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 3, 2026. 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 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 up to the 100-word limit that candidates were instructed to follow. 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.

US Senate



Mark Baisley



John Hickenlooper

Businesses need regulatory certainty to make long-term decisions about hiring, expansion, and investment. What federal policies or reforms would you support to create greater stability and predictability in the regulatory environment while maintaining appropriate protections for workers, consumers, and communities?

In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson stated that “the sum of good government ... necessary to make people happy and prosperous is ... a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned.”

The overarching federal policy that I support is well captured in the quote by Henry David Thoreau, “That government is best which governs least.” Safety protections are an appropriate role for government and not much*

As a former small business owner, I understand what it takes to keep a business running. We slashed overburdensome red tape to support businesses as governor. Now, sitting on the Senate on the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, we’ve passed bills to help small businesses better access capital and offer retirement plans for their employees.

Businesses also need predictability to plan and budget. That’s why we’re fighting to end Trump’s illegal tariffs that are crushing small businesses and making it impossible to plan. We’ll continue pushing to secure refunds for you.

Western Colorado’s economy depends on reliable access to water, energy, public lands, and other natural resources that support agriculture, industry, communities, and key economic corridors. How would you approach federal policy affecting these resources to support both responsible stewardship and long-term economic growth?

Government can play a very constructive role by providing effective infrastructure to facilitate commerce and the liberty of mobility. As I learned at the Water Congress in Steamboat Springs this year, there are many experts in Colorado who should be called on to advise on adjustments and management of the interstate water compacts.

Colorado exceeded the capacity of I-70 and I-25 long ago. The federal government owns the primary responsibility for interstates. I will press for addressing these essential corridors and for developing the Ports to Plains Highway in Colorado’s eastern plains.

Everyone on the Western Slope, especially the farmers, ranchers, and outdoor rec companies, is painfully aware of our worst drought in 1,200 years. Our way of life hinges on how we address it. That’s why I convened the Senate Colorado River Caucus and fought for \$12 billion in federal funding for western water. We brought back hundreds of millions for Colorado, including \$40 million for the Shoshone Permanency Project.

We’re leading legislation to support water conservation, hire more grant navigators to help Tribes and rural communities secure resources for conservation projects, and stop the sell-off of our public lands.

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US Senate



Mark Baisley



John Hickenlooper

Federal tax policy can significantly influence where businesses invest, expand, innovate, and create jobs. What business tax policies, credits, or incentives would you support to encourage private-sector investment and innovation, and how would you evaluate whether they are delivering meaningful economic benefits?

I support minimal corporate taxation to incentivize businesses to locate in the US. Corporate taxes are necessarily passed on to the consumer in higher prices, creating less affordability. This is simply a way for government to raise taxes on consumers through corporations.

The United States average corporate tax rate is 25.8%. Those costs are paid by consumers. Ireland's corporate tax rate is 12.8% which attracts many companies to locate there.

Credits and incentives should be limited to critical priorities like drug manufacturing, defense related components and international priorities like AI. Evaluating results is performed by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

A good life starts with a good paying job. We're committed to supporting entrepreneurship and innovation to spur economic growth and create jobs. In the Senate, we've led bills to increase access to capital, especially for businesses in rural and low-income areas. We're working to improve the Small Business Investment Companies Program to attract and grow businesses, and to protect funding for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) from the Trump admin's attacks.

Strong businesses also depend on a strong workforce. That's why we're investing in workforce development programs and working to tackle the cost-of-living emergency hammering Colorado workers.

Rising health care and health insurance costs are placing increasing pressure on employers that provide coverage for their workforce, while also affecting employees through higher premiums and out-of-pocket costs. What federal policies would you support to address the underlying cost of health care and make employer-sponsored coverage more affordable and sustainable for businesses and their employees?

I support US Senator Rick Scott's (R-FL) bill known as the More Affordable Care Act (S. 3264). The purpose of this bill is to re-introduce the advantages of the free market in healthcare by placing more decisions in the hands of the patient.

I would add to this a policy of sending Healthcare Insurance back into its appropriate lane by putting an end to their second-guessing of doctor recommendations.

I would generally like to see our culture move away from employer-sponsored health care coverage as it reduces the market forces of individual choice and leaves small business employees uncovered.

Where you live shouldn't determine IF you live. When the president cut \$1 trillion from our healthcare system to give tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy, he created a healthcare crisis in rural areas, where healthcare was already strained. Families on the Western Slope face the highest premium increases. Six rural hospitals in Colorado are at risk of closing or cutting services – including the Delta County Memorial Hospital. We're fighting to restore those cuts and actually fix our healthcare system. We've advanced our bipartisan bill to create real transparency and let patients and businesses finally compare prices and drive down *

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US Senate



Mark Baisley



John Hickenlooper

Reliable transportation, energy, water, broadband, and other critical infrastructure are essential to business growth and economic competitiveness, particularly in rural communities. What federal infrastructure investments or policies would you prioritize to strengthen Western Colorado's ability to compete, attract investment, and support future growth?

As stated above, there are experts in Colorado who should be called on to advise on adjustments and management of the interstate water compacts. I will press for addressing the more recent capacity on I-70.

Colorado has effectively addressed broadband coverage through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, unlocking \$420.6 million in federal funding from the Infrastructure. I participated in the oversight committee as a State Legislator.

Where Colorado has failed in infrastructure is from chasing energy producers out of the state through zealous state legislation. I would team with Colorado's own Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

Our infrastructure is the basic building block that our communities rely on. That's why we joined a group of 22 bipartisan senators to negotiate the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We secured billions to fix our roads and bridges, bring reliable and affordable internet to every home in Colorado, and make our communities more climate resilient. That funding included millions to improve the Grand Junction Regional Airport and the Westward Three project, connecting Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, and Rifle. We'll continue to fight for additional federal funding to not just improve our current infrastructure, but invest in our future needs.

Our business community needs a strong voice in Washington who understands how federal decisions affect employers, their employees, and Mesa County's economic future. In evaluating candidates for U.S. Senate, the Chamber sought clear alignment with those needs and confidence in their ability to advance them.

Our review did not result in an endorsement in this race. Endorsements are earned through our evaluation process, and we did not find a sufficient basis to support either candidate.

We value the opportunity to hear the candidates' perspectives and share the challenges facing local businesses. Regardless of this decision, we remain committed to working with Colorado's elected representatives to strengthen our economy and ensure Mesa County employers are heard at the highest level of government.

U.S. House of Representatives District 3



Dwayne L. Romero



Jeff Hurd

Businesses need regulatory certainty to make long-term decisions about hiring, expansion, and investment. What federal policies or reforms would you support to create greater stability and predictability in the regulatory environment while maintaining appropriate protections for workers, consumers, and communities?

I've built a business here and employ over 120 Coloradans, so I know that when the rules keep changing, you can't plan or invest. Businesses need Washington to be predictable, and that is certainly not the case now. Just look at the tariffs' impact on supply chains, or energy prices. I'll push for clear, consistent rules and faster answers from federal agencies, cutting genuine red tape like the outdated permitting that slows construction, while keeping the commonsense protections. Stable rules that let businesses plan years out — that's the pragmatic work I'll do in Congress.

Business owners calculate risk every day. Washington shouldn't add unnecessary uncertainty. That's why I supported the bipartisan SPEED Act and the PERMIT Act, which included my legislation to clear the Army Corps' backlog so we can build roads, water systems, energy projects, and other critical infrastructure without years of unnecessary delay. The same principle applies to trade. I've opposed broad emergency tariffs because sudden changes raise costs and disrupt long-term planning. Businesses should know the rules, know the timelines, and have confidence Washington won't move the goalposts without good reason.

Western Colorado's economy depends on reliable access to water, energy, public lands, and other natural resources that support agriculture, industry, communities, and key economic corridors. How would you approach federal policy affecting these resources to support both responsible stewardship and long-term economic growth?

Out here, our economy is our natural resources. As a member of my local water and sanitation district board, I see what's at stake, from the Colorado River Compact to a historic drought. Protecting our water is job number one, and I'll keep foreign entities out of Colorado water and farmland. On energy, I'm a realist: we use our legacy resources while pressing hard on alternatives — an all-of-the-above approach. And I'll fight for our public lands, opposing efforts to sell them off, supporting our wildland firefighters, and investing in fire resilience. Stewardship and growth depend on each other.

In Western Colorado, natural resources aren't abstract policy. They are part of the economy. Our public lands should be managed for multiple use: agriculture, energy, recreation, conservation, and responsible development. Water is the lifeblood of the West, which is why I helped secure release of \$40 million for the Shoshone water rights project, protecting critical Colorado River flows for communities, agriculture, and recreation. On energy, we should responsibly develop traditional resources while expanding nuclear, geothermal, and emerging technologies. Stewardship and economic use aren't mutually exclusive. Good policy does both.

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U.S. House of Representatives District 3



Dwayne L. Romero



Jeff Hurd

Federal tax policy can significantly influence where businesses invest, expand, innovate, and create jobs. What business tax policies, credits, or incentives would you support to encourage private-sector investment and innovation, and how would you evaluate whether they are delivering meaningful economic benefits?

I judge tax policy by one test: does it help working people and the businesses that employ them? I'll support policies that reward real investment here — expanding the Family Tax Credits and targeted incentives that bring jobs and capital into rural areas, like the RECOMPETE Program's flexible block grants for job training and business development. I want incentives that help small and mid-sized employers compete, not just the biggest players, and I'll repeal these disastrous tariffs that tax every family. My measure of success is simple: good-paying jobs close to home and businesses that are actually growing.

The tax code should give small businesses confidence to invest and grow. One of the most important provisions I supported made the 20 percent qualified business income deduction permanent for eligible pass-through businesses, providing lasting tax relief for many small businesses. We also made 100 percent bonus depreciation permanent, increased Section 179 expensing, and restored immediate deductions for domestic research and development. Those are practical tools for businesses deciding whether to buy equipment, expand, or innovate. I judge tax provisions by results: private investment, American jobs, greater productivity, and stronger competitiveness.

Rising health care and health insurance costs are placing increasing pressure on employers that provide coverage for their workforce, while also affecting employees through higher premiums and out-of-pocket costs. What federal policies would you support to address the underlying cost of health care and make employer-sponsored coverage more affordable and sustainable for businesses and their employees?

Health care tops my priority list, and rising costs are hammering employers and workers alike. Step one is undoing the damage from HR1, whose cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, ACA subsidies, and SNAP jeopardize access and shift costs onto hospitals, employers, and the rest of us. We must keep rural hospitals open — they're lifelines for care and jobs. I'll protect the rural add-on payments that keep their doors open and strengthen the workforce. That's how we make employer-sponsored coverage sustainable for businesses and employees both. Finally, the biggest lever is letting Medicare negotiate lower drug prices.

The fundamental problem is that health care costs keep rising, and employers and workers pay through higher premiums, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs. We need more competition, greater transparency, lower prescription-drug costs, and stronger rural providers. In rural Colorado, access and affordability go together. I also supported the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program to strengthen rural hospitals, workforce, and technology. Colorado received about \$200 million in its first-year award. My focus is not simply shifting who pays the bill. It is lowering the cost underneath it.

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U.S. House of Representatives District 3



Dwayne L. Romero



Jeff Hurd

Reliable transportation, energy, water, broadband, and other critical infrastructure are essential to business growth and economic competitiveness, particularly in rural communities. What federal infrastructure investments or policies would you prioritize to strengthen Western Colorado's ability to compete, attract investment, and support future growth?

You can't grow a business if the water's uncertain, the roads are crumbling, the power's unreliable, and you can't get online. I have three priorities. First, water: the storage, delivery, and treatment infrastructure that keeps our basins productive and towns supplied through drought. Second, the transportation and energy backbone — the roads and rail that carry our products to market and the reliable, affordable energy businesses count on. Third, broadband: fixing the BEAD Program to reach unserved areas faster. And I'll make sure small towns get real help navigating federal programs they too often lack the staff to chase.

Reliable infrastructure is basic economic policy. Businesses will not expand where they cannot count on roads, water, power, broadband, or a functioning airport. On the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I have focused on those needs. I introduced bipartisan legislation to preserve low-cost TIFIA financing for airport improvements and helped secure more than \$11 million in FY26 funding for Third District projects, including water infrastructure. But funding is only part of the equation. We also need faster permitting so communities can build critical projects on time and at a reasonable cost.

The Chamber Endorses Jeff Hurd

The Chamber endorses Jeff Hurd based on his demonstrated record representing Western Colorado, his accessibility to employers, and his understanding of our regional economy. His responsiveness and established working relationships with the Grand Junction Chamber and business organizations across the district provide confidence in his ability to represent our business community in Washington.

Hurd's leadership on water, along with his engagement on tariffs and trade policy, tax provisions, infrastructure, and regulatory certainty, reflects attention to issues critical to local employers. His record and continued engagement with businesses provide a strong foundation for the Chamber's endorsement.

Colorado Governor



Victor Marx



Phil Weiser

What do you believe are the greatest challenges to Colorado's economic competitiveness, and what specific actions would your administration take to make Colorado a more attractive place to start, grow, and invest in a business?

Colorado's greatest competitiveness challenges are rising costs, regulatory complexity, housing affordability, and difficulty attracting and retaining workers. My administration would review regulations and fees for duplication and unnecessary cost, accelerate responsible permitting, expand workforce pipelines, and improve transparency around state spending and performance. I would also support a predictable tax and regulatory environment so employers can plan and invest with confidence. Colorado should compete for businesses by being a place where entrepreneurs can start, workers can afford to live, and companies can grow without unnecessary government barriers.

No response

Colorado's agriculture, energy, and natural resource industries are significant contributors to our economy, particularly in rural and Western Colorado. How would you balance environmental and other statewide policy goals with the need to protect the economic vitality, jobs, and continued competitiveness of these industries?

Colorado can protect its environment while maintaining strong agriculture, energy, and natural-resource industries. My administration would pursue clear, predictable rules; faster permitting; responsible water stewardship; and realistic compliance timelines developed with input from the communities and industries most affected. I support an all-of-the-above energy strategy that includes renewables, oil and gas, hydroelectric power, and emerging technologies. Environmental policy should be based on measurable outcomes, sound science, and economic impact so Colorado can protect its land, air, and water while preserving jobs, investment, and rural economic vitality.

No response

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Colorado Governor



Victor Marx



Phil Weiser

Colorado employers continue to raise concerns about the cumulative cost and complexity of state regulations. As Governor, how would you evaluate existing and proposed regulations to ensure they achieve their intended purpose without unnecessarily limiting business growth, investment, or job creation?

Every regulation should have a clear purpose, measurable benefit, and transparent accounting of its costs. My administration would systematically review existing rules for duplication, effectiveness, economic impact, and unintended consequences, while requiring meaningful cost-benefit analysis for proposed regulations. We would pay particular attention to the cumulative burden on small and midsize employers that do not have large compliance staffs. Necessary regulations should be clear and workable. Rules that are outdated, duplicative, unnecessarily burdensome, or failing to achieve their intended purpose should be revised or eliminated.

No response

The cost of housing, energy, health care, insurance, and workforce are increasingly affecting the cost of doing business in Colorado. What would your administration prioritize to improve affordability for employers and employees?

Affordability affects employers and employees alike. My administration would prioritize increasing housing supply by reducing unnecessary permitting delays and cost-inflating mandates, protecting reliable and affordable energy, improving transparency in health-care costs and government spending, and addressing insurance pressures through risk mitigation and greater market transparency. I would also expand career and technical education, apprenticeships, and employer partnerships to strengthen Colorado's workforce. Our goal should be straightforward: lower the structural costs that make it harder to hire, invest, build, and for working Coloradans to afford to live near the communities where they work.

No response

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Colorado Governor



Victor Marx



Phil Weiser

Western Colorado's economy and business environment differ in important ways from the Front Range. How would your administration ensure state policies and economic development strategies recognize the needs, opportunities, and competitive advantages of Western Colorado?

Western Colorado should not be treated as an extension of the Front Range. Its economy depends on a distinct mix of agriculture, energy, natural resources, tourism, outdoor recreation, small business, and emerging industries. My administration would involve local governments, employers, producers, and community leaders before adopting policies that materially affect the region. We would prioritize water, infrastructure, broadband, housing, workforce development, and predictable permitting while supporting regional economic-development strategies built around local strengths. State policy should recognize that what works in Denver may not work in Grand Junction or rural Colorado.

No response

The Governor plays a central role in shaping Colorado's business climate through statewide policy, budget priorities, and leadership. Our endorsement process evaluates which candidates we believe are best positioned to advance the needs of Mesa County employers, their employees, and our local economy.

After evaluating the candidates in this race, the Chamber has decided to endorse neither candidate. We reserve endorsements for instances where our evaluation gives us clear confidence in a candidate's alignment with the business priorities we considered.

We appreciate the candidates' willingness to share their perspectives and discuss the needs of our business community. Maintaining an open dialogue with Colorado's next Governor remains important to us, and we look forward to continuing that conversation.

Colorado State Senate District 7



Janice Rich

Colorado businesses face a growing number of regulatory and compliance requirements, often resulting from multiple pieces of legislation over time. How will you evaluate the cumulative cost and impact of proposed legislation on employers, particularly small businesses, before casting your vote?

Representing Senate District 7, when reading bills, I reach out and ask how a bill will effect Mesa or Delta Counties? What will this look like for the Western Slope? In my 8 years in the State Legislature, rather than making Colorado a more competitive place to start and grow a business, the majority party has piled new regulations, mandates, and compliance costs onto small businesses, making it harder to create jobs and drive economic prosperity. In contrast, I support advancing proposals to reduce red tape, eliminate unnecessary regulations, and foster the kind of economic environment where businesses can grow,

Many employers are increasingly concerned that the role businesses play in creating jobs, supporting communities, and driving Colorado's economy is not adequately considered in the legislative process. How would you ensure economic impacts are meaningfully considered when developing policy, including when balancing environmental, labor, social, or other policy objectives with Colorado's ability to retain businesses, jobs, and investment?

As your State Senator, I attempt to be a bridge between the administration/departments and residents of my district. Highlighting to my fellow legislators how our needs may differ and how statewide problems need to be addressed differently for the rural parts of the state is a key part of my role. I will continue to stand up for rural exceptions to any bills that come before me.

Political divisions within the Colorado General Assembly can make bipartisan policymaking increasingly difficult. How would you work across the aisle to advance practical policies that support a strong business climate, and where do you see opportunities for bipartisan agreement on issues affecting Colorado employers?

Having served in the minority party for the past 8 years in the State Legislature, working across the aisle is nothing new to me. It may not always be the majority party's agenda, but I attempt to make the case for our businesses, workers and families in my district. I will continue to do just that.

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Colorado State Senate District 7



Janice Rich

Rising health care and health insurance costs are placing increasing pressure on Colorado employers that provide coverage for their workforce. What state-level policies would you support to address the underlying cost of health care and make employer-sponsored coverage more affordable and sustainable for businesses and their employees?

I support patient protection bills to ensure Coloradans maintain access to life-saving treatments without the threat of government price controls. I would like to repeal the various government health enterprises that continue to increase costs to businesses and employees. I also support preventing the State from reducing or redistributing critical Medicaid payments through an untested performance-based formula (HB26-1432 was a good start to that last comment).

Statewide policies can have very different impacts on Western Colorado than on the Front Range, particularly for rural communities and industries such as agriculture, energy, and natural resources. How would you identify and address unintended regional or economic impacts of legislation and avoid one-size-fits-all policies that may work in one part of Colorado but create challenges in another?

During the last 8 years in the State Legislature, I have continue to address the urban/rural divide. Time and again, the debate revolves around how one-side-DOES NOT- fit-all policies. Like many of the rural legislators, I attempt to educate the urban legislators about our diverse state. I always point out the unintended consequences and/or unfunded mandates that bills may be placing on rural areas of the state. As your State Senator, I will continue to points those things out. On every bill, in every debate, what matters to the Western Slope will always be heard.

The Chamber Endorses Janice Rich

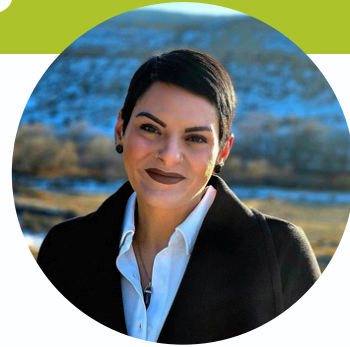
The Chamber endorses Janice Rich based on her legislative track record, accessibility, and consistent engagement with Western Colorado's business community. She has been responsive to the Chamber and attentive to the distinct economic and regulatory impacts state policy can have on Mesa County employers.

Rich's record aligns with many of the Chamber's business priorities. When concerns have arisen, she has listened to local stakeholders and demonstrated a willingness to reconsider her position when presented with additional information about business impacts. That combination of proven service, responsiveness, and meaningful dialogue provides the foundation for our endorsement.

Colorado House of Representatives District 55



Rick Taggart



Brittni Packard

Colorado businesses face a growing number of regulatory and compliance requirements, often resulting from multiple pieces of legislation over time. How will you evaluate the cumulative cost and impact of proposed legislation on employers, particularly small businesses, before casting your vote?

We are at present the 6th most regulated state in the country and we have the 4th highest cost of living. These statistics come from research that the non-partisan firm Common Sense Institute has conducted. These are alarming statistics and the pressure that they place on our businesses, particularly on our small businesses, is significant. I worry that entrepreneurs will think hard before forming their company in Colorado and I worry that existing businesses will think about relocating to other states that are more business friendly. I will not cast any votes in favor of legislation that adds to further*

No response

Many employers are increasingly concerned that the role businesses play in creating jobs, supporting communities, and driving Colorado's economy is not adequately considered in the legislative process. How would you ensure economic impacts are meaningfully considered when developing policy, including when balancing environmental, labor, social, or other policy objectives with Colorado's ability to retain businesses, jobs, and investment?

It is difficult in the State House, at present, to have a balanced policy when it comes to business. Unfortunately, a view has developed, within many members of the House, that the leaders of business are greedy and insensitive to the needs of their labor forces, their consumers and the environment. From my own business experience this view is tainted and it misrepresents the vast majority of leadership teams. I will continue to work with my colleagues, either through committees, on the House floor, or in informal conversations to clarify that we as business leaders care deeply about our people,*

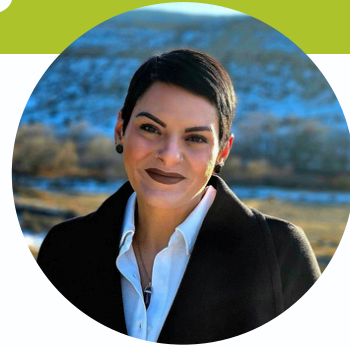
No response

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Colorado House of Representatives District 55



Rick Taggart



Brittni Packard

Political divisions within the Colorado General Assembly can make bipartisan policymaking increasingly difficult. How would you work across the aisle to advance practical policies that support a strong business climate, and where do you see opportunities for bipartisan agreement on issues affecting Colorado employers?

In my 4 years, as a State Representative, I have crafted over 100 bills that have passed through the General Assembly and have been signed by the Governor. All of these bills have been bipartisan. Of the 100+ bills, 22 of them have benefited business and economic development. The bills have been centered on: business tax credits, workforce and rural economic development, employee ownership and small business support. I have and will continue to reach across the aisle to create bipartisan legislation that supports our Colorado Employers.

No response

Rising health care and health insurance costs are placing increasing pressure on Colorado employers that provide coverage for their workforce. What state-level policies would you support to address the underlying cost of health care and make employer-sponsored coverage more affordable and sustainable for businesses and their employees?

This is a very difficult subject and it is getting more difficult every year. Unfortunately, the costs of uncompensated care, coupled with the partial financial reimbursements by way of Medicare and Medicaid place an ever increasing pressure on private insurance. This pressure results in higher insurance costs for our employers and their employees. Recent Federal Legislation (HR-1) places further pressure on the system. To help this situation I ran a bill this session to form a Medicaid Commission to address this very complicated problem. As a member of the Commission, with my Joint Budget Committee colleagues, we are moving toward*

No response

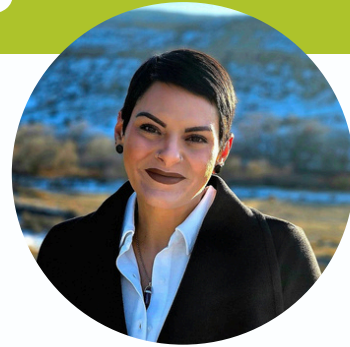
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**Each candidate was held to a strict word count requirement to ensure consistency. The Chamber does not correct grammar, spelling, and general editing errors.*

Colorado House of Representatives District 55



Rick Taggart



Brittni Packard

Statewide policies can have very different impacts on Western Colorado than on the Front Range, particularly for rural communities and industries such as agriculture, energy, and natural resources. How would you identify and address unintended regional or economic impacts of legislation and avoid one-size-fits-all policies that may work in one part of Colorado but create challenges in another?

This question identifies one of the most frustrating areas of serving in the legislature. To say the least our Front Range colleagues far out number those of us that represent rural areas of the State. They have limited knowledge on what works in Western and Rural Colorado. They come with the belief that what works in Denver/Boulder is good for the state as a whole. This belief is not true. I have an advantage here as I am the first appointed member of the Joint Budget Committee from the Western Slope in two decades. This allows me to significantly influence*

No response

The Chamber Endorses Rick Taggart

The Chamber endorses Rick Taggart for his active efforts to understand how legislation affects local employers, his commitment to workforce development, and his leadership on the Joint Budget Committee. He proactively seeks the Chamber's input on proposed policies and responds when we raise concerns.

With state spending and Colorado's fiscal direction top of mind for businesses, Taggart's budget role gives Western Colorado an important voice at the table.

His leadership, combined with meaningful engagement with employers, makes him a true friend to Western Slope business who can get things done even under tough circumstances.

Colorado House of Representatives District 54



Jason Bias



Mallory Martin

Colorado businesses face a growing number of regulatory and compliance requirements, often resulting from multiple pieces of legislation over time. How will you evaluate the cumulative cost and impact of proposed legislation on employers, particularly small businesses, before casting your vote?

First and foremost, I will be communicating with the Chamber of Commerces locally in my district. If it is a regulatory burden that will drive up costs of doing business or negatively affect the small businesses in my district and on the Western Slope my vote will be a solid NO!

As a small business owner since 2018 navigating a complexly regulated system, the Medicaid HCBS Waiver system, I understand very well the impact of legislation on small and rural business. I will use this knowledge to evaluate the real impacts of proposed legislation.

Many employers are increasingly concerned that the role businesses play in creating jobs, supporting communities, and driving Colorado's economy is not adequately considered in the legislative process. How would you ensure economic impacts are meaningfully considered when developing policy, including when balancing environmental, labor, social, or other policy objectives with Colorado's ability to retain businesses, jobs, and investment?

I will fight for a market-driven business sector. I believe when government gets out of the way and let businesses/business owners have full autonomy without legislation negatively impacting their production we allow the economy to thrive and grow in Colorado.

I believe that one of the weaknesses of our current legislative body is that there are 3 business persons on it. The strength that I bring is my experience as a small business right here in Western Colorado. I know the struggle to make payroll, keep in compliance, do proper reporting and fill the needs of the actual business.

Political divisions within the Colorado General Assembly can make bipartisan policymaking increasingly difficult. How would you work across the aisle to advance practical policies that support a strong business climate, and where do you see opportunities for bipartisan agreement on issues affecting Colorado employers?

Being in the minority, maybe even a super-minority, it is imperative that we work with the majority party in order to get anything meaningful done. I see opportunities for bipartisanship regarding deregulating builders and building jobs and increasing education/training opportunities for employers and employees alike.

I think that one of the reasons I am a great fit is that I am able to talk to and really listen to the concerns of people who I don't agree with. I will listen and make efforts to represent all residents of Mesa and Delta counties well.

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Colorado House of Representatives District 54



Jason Bias



Mallory Martin

Rising health care and health insurance costs are placing increasing pressure on Colorado employers that provide coverage for their workforce. What state-level policies would you support to address the underlying cost of health care and make employer-sponsored coverage more affordable and sustainable for businesses and their employees?

I will support policies that increase the availability of hospital care and specialty providers, lower high-cost pharmaceuticals, and promote competition. I will also fight for preserving access, especially in rural areas, and avoiding measures that add mandates which raise premiums.

I am interested in the research that the State of Colorado is currently doing about healthcare accessibility and affordability. I also have met with experts from the Department of Health in Mesa County to discuss current developments. I believe that by listening to experts, we find solutions.

Statewide policies can have very different impacts on Western Colorado than on the Front Range, particularly for rural communities and industries such as agriculture, energy, and natural resources. How would you identify and address unintended regional or economic impacts of legislation and avoid one-size-fits-all policies that may work in one part of Colorado but create challenges in another?

I will work with my constituents and the agricultural producers on the Western Slope to discuss how proposed legislation will directly impact their industries. If it negatively affects their livelihoods and production, then I will raise the awareness in the Capitol and kill a lot of the harmful legislation.

Again, my current position of being a small (10 employees) business owner here in Colorado has uniquely positioned me to understand the challenges that myself and other small business owners face because of our rural challenges. In short, because I've lived it.

The Chamber Endorses Jason Bias

The Chamber endorses Jason Bias based on his demonstrated desire to engage with the business community and draw on the experience and perspective of local employers. He recognized the Chamber and its members as a resource for understanding issues affecting business success and informing his approach to state policy.

We appreciate Mallory Martin's business experience. Personal experience brings valuable insight, and effective representation also requires a willingness to listen to industry voices and perspectives beyond one's own. Martin's absence from the committee interview limited our ability to explore her positions on issues affecting Western Slope businesses.

Mesa County Commissioner District 2



Bobbie Daniel

Mesa County has experienced significant economic growth and diversification in recent years. What do you believe are the greatest opportunities and risks to our economic strength over the next four years, and what role should county government play in supporting continued private-sector growth and investment?

Mesa County's greatest opportunity is our diverse economy—energy, agriculture, manufacturing, health care, recreation and entrepreneurship. Over four years, we've worked to create conditions for each to succeed: lowering our mill levy, reducing county spending, streamlining development and incentivizing significant business investment. We've also worked with our Chamber and economic-development partners to strengthen our business climate. Major risks include water uncertainty, housing costs, state regulatory burdens and millions in unfunded mandates that compete with local priorities. Government should keep costs competitive, remove barriers, provide reliable core services and ensure Mesa County businesses are heard.

Mesa County's continued growth depends on infrastructure and essential services that can keep pace with the needs of businesses and residents. What investments in transportation, water, public safety, broadband, or other critical infrastructure do you believe should be prioritized to support our economy and quality of life over the next decade?

Infrastructure is economic development. Roads, bridges, water and public safety allow businesses and communities to succeed. Mesa County committed \$1 million to protecting Shoshone water rights because Colorado River flows support agriculture, recreation, industry and our broader economy. Even while reducing spending, we've prioritized roads and bridges, public safety and retaining the workforce necessary to deliver essential services. Every funding source ultimately comes from taxpayers, which is why our approach is disciplined: prioritize needs, maintain existing assets, plan for long-term costs, increase efficiencies and reduce spending.

Housing availability and affordability continue to affect employers' ability to attract and retain workers. What actions within the County's authority would you support to increase housing supply and ensure our workforce can continue to live and work in Mesa County?

Housing is a workforce and economic issue. Our approach has been to remove barriers. We've kept development fees among the lowest in the state, expanded housing choices through land-use reform and streamlined permitting. Time is money, which is why we're incorporating AI into development review to identify missing information earlier, reduce back-and-forth and get housing online faster. Unincorporated Mesa County has also been recognized for its affordability and favorable building environment. We must continue allowing flexibility, protecting property rights and asking of every regulation: what are the unintended consequences, and does it make housing more affordable or increase the cost?

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Mesa County Commissioner District 2



Bobbie Daniel

Mesa County's quality of life is an important part of our ability to attract and retain businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers. What do you believe are the greatest threats to that competitive advantage, and what role should the County play in protecting and strengthening it?

Mesa County's quality of life is one of our greatest economic advantages. Protecting it means safe communities, reliable water, agriculture, access to public lands and an affordable cost of living. Agriculture is particularly important. We responded quickly to the

Japanese beetle threat with an eradication program protecting orchards, vineyards and producers, while AgriWest connects producers with business resources and strengthens their voice. We've also prioritized public safety while reducing overall county spending. Good government listens to those with boots on the ground, protects the foundations of our economy and works collaboratively without regulating away the qualities that make people invest *

State policies and mandates can create new costs or requirements for local governments that ultimately affect businesses and taxpayers. How would you advocate for Mesa County's interests while balancing state requirements with local priorities and economic realities?

Decisions made in Denver and Washington have real consequences here. We've worked with businesses, our Chamber and other counties to stop harmful legislation and improve bills. We've also helped elevate the growing cost of unfunded mandates because every dollar dictated by another level of government is unavailable for local priorities. At home, we reduced spending by 10%, lowered our mill levy, returned TABOR dollars and are using priority-based budgeting to evaluate all programs and services. My approach is simple: listen locally, spend responsibly, bring real-world impacts to policymakers and advocate relentlessly for Mesa County so you can live your best *

The Chamber Endorses Bobbie Daniel

The Chamber endorses Bobbie Daniel for her demonstrated commitment to creating an environment where businesses can grow and succeed. Her record reflects fiscal responsibility, competitive development costs, and efforts to streamline county processes and reduce unnecessary barriers. Daniel has prioritized infrastructure and water security for long-term economic growth. She recognizes the challenges housing costs, state regulatory burdens, and unfunded mandates create for Mesa County employers.

Her accessible, productive relationship with the Chamber and local businesses strengthens our confidence in her leadership. By seeking employer input and considering the economic impact of county decisions, Daniel demonstrates the partnership and fiscal stewardship our business community needs.

Local Ballot Measures

Mesa County Valley School District 51 Ballot Issue 4A

Ballot Language: SHALL MESA COUNTY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT 51 TAXES BE INCREASED UP TO \$23.2 MILLION IN 2026 FOR COLLECTION IN 2027 AND BY WHATEVER AMOUNTS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER FROM AN OVERRIDE MILL LEVY IMPOSED AT A RATE NOT TO EXCEED 7.850 MILLS, WHICH MILL LEVY MAY BE INCREASED IN ANY YEAR FOR INFLATION BASED ON THE ANNUAL CHANGES IN THE DENVER-BOULDER CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, AND WHICH WOULD COST A HOMEOWNER AN ESTIMATED \$18.09 PER MONTH ON AN AVERAGE HOME VALUED AT \$400,000 BASED ON THE ASSESSED VALUE AND ASSESSMENT RATES AS OF DECEMBER 2025 AND DOES NOT REFLECT FUTURE CHANGES IN ASSESSED VALUE, ASSESSMENT RATE, OR LAW, FOR GENERAL FUND PURPOSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

MAINTAIN AND EXPAND EFFORTS TO ENSURE A SAFE AND SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF, SUCH AS ADDING ADDITIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY OFFICERS AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS;

MAINTAIN AND EXPAND WORKFORCE READINESS OPPORTUNITIES, SUCH AS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND STEM PROGRAMMING (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH), BY PROVIDING REAL-WORLD, HANDS-ON LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS AT EVERY LEVEL;

KEEP AND ATTRACT HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS BY BRINGING SALARIES AND BENEFITS CLOSER TO THE MARKET AVERAGE COMPARED TO PEER SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ANNUAL SALARY AND BENEFIT INCREASES FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF FOR CONTINUED SERVICE;

AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE SUBJECT TO AN ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT PUBLISHED ON THE DISTRICT'S WEBSITE; AND SHALL SUCH TAX INCREASE BE AN ADDITIONAL PROPERTY TAX MILL LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE LEVY AUTHORIZED FOR THE DISTRICT'S GENERAL FUND, PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 22-54-108, C.R.S.; AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT THE FULL AMOUNT OF REVENUE AUTHORIZED BY THIS QUESTION AND PRIOR MILL LEVY OVERRIDE QUESTIONS SUBJECT TO THE LIMIT ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 22-54-108(3)(B)(VI), C.R.S.; AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT, RETAIN, AND SPEND ALL REVENUES FROM SUCH TAXES AND THE EARNINGS FROM THE INVESTMENT OF SUCH REVENUES AS A VOTER APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE UNDER ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION?

Chamber Position: SUPPORT

A skilled workforce is essential to the success of our local businesses. The District 51 mill levy override supports that foundation through career and technical education, competitive teacher compensation, and safe learning environments.

Our Board carefully weighed these priorities against the additional property taxes employers would pay at a time when business costs continue to rise. The Chamber rarely supports measures that add costs for businesses, and this decision was not taken lightly.

The District's efforts in recent years to trim administrative costs, support teachers, and invest in curriculum that connects students with career exploration were central to the Board's support.

Addressing our skilled workforce shortage requires continued commitment to the programs and people preparing students for local careers. The Chamber supports this measure because maintaining CTE opportunities, supporting competitive wages for teachers, and protecting school safety are essential to building the workforce our business community needs.

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State Ballot Measures

Amendment 82 (Constitutional) | Right to Natural Gas

Ballot Language: Be it enacted by the People of the State of Colorado: SECTION 1. In the constitution of the state of Colorado, add section 17 to article XVIII as follows: Section 17. Right to natural gas. (1) CONSUMERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO PURCHASE NATURAL GAS FOR COOKING OR HEATING IN HOMES OR BUSINESSES THROUGHOUT THE STATE. (2) DISTRIBUTORS AND UTILITIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO SELL NATURAL GAS FOR HOMES OR BUSINESSES.

Requires 55% approval because it adds language to the state constitution.

Chamber Position: SUPPORT

Reliable access to affordable energy is fundamental to business operations and economic competitiveness. This measure would protect the ability of consumers to purchase natural gas for cooking and heating and of utilities and distributors to provide it.

For businesses that rely on natural gas, preserving that choice provides greater certainty when investing in facilities, equipment, and infrastructure. The Chamber supports this measure because employers should be able to choose the energy sources that best meet their operational needs.

Amendment 87 (see following page)

Proposition NN (Statutory)

Ballot Language: Shall state investment in K-12 public education increase two percent each year for the next ten years, with investments used to increase teacher pay, improve teacher retention, lower class sizes, and increase access to career and technical courses, without raising taxes but instead funded by raising the annual limit on state fiscal year spending only by the amount spent on public K-12 education as a voter-approved revenue change, and requiring an annual publicly released, independent audit to show how the new investments are spent?

Chamber Position: OPPOSE

Education, teacher retention, and career and technical learning are important to a strong workforce and economy. How those priorities are funded also matters.

This measure would allow the state to retain revenue above the TABOR limit that would otherwise be returned to taxpayers. Although it does not increase tax rates, it would reduce refunds businesses and individuals would otherwise receive, leaving more taxpayer dollars with government.

At a time when affordability and rising business costs remain central concerns, the Chamber supports fiscal discipline and careful consideration of the cumulative tax burden on employers. We oppose this measure because it increases the revenue retained by the state at the expense of taxpayer refunds.

Proposition 136 (Statutory)

Ballot Language: Shall there be a change to the Colorado Revised Statutes capping the state income tax rate at 4.4% of federal taxable income for individuals and corporations?

Chamber Position: SUPPORT

Predictable tax policy gives businesses greater certainty when planning for investment, expansion, and job creation. Proposition 136 would establish a maximum state income tax rate of 4.4% for individuals and corporations. It would not reduce the current rate, but would limit how high it could rise in the future.

The Chamber supports this measure because a stable, competitive tax environment helps employers make long-term decisions with confidence. Establishing this ceiling would help protect businesses and business owners from future income tax rate increases that add to the cost of doing business.

State Ballot Measures

Amendment 87 (Constitutional) | Graduated Income Tax

Ballot Language: SHALL STATE TAXES BE INCREASED \$2.7 BILLION ANNUALLY, IN ORDER TO INCREASE OR IMPROVE LEVELS OF PUBLIC SERVICES, INCLUDING K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, AND EARLY CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES, BY AN AMENDMENT TO THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND A CHANGE TO THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES REPEALING EXISTING LAW AND CREATING NEW LAW TO REPLACE THE UNIFORM STATE INCOME TAX RATE WITH A GRADUATED INCOME TAX STRUCTURE, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, AMENDING THE TAXPAYER'S BILL OF RIGHTS TO ELIMINATE THE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR ALL TAXABLE NET INCOME TO BE TAXED AT ONE RATE WITH NO ADDED TAX ON INCOME; ESTABLISHING VARIOUS INCOME TAX RATES BASED ON THE AMOUNT OF TAXABLE INCOME EARNED BY INDIVIDUALS, ESTATES, TRUSTS, AND CORPORATIONS, WHILE MAINTAINING THE CURRENT 4.4% TAX ON INCOME FROM THE SALE OF A PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE, WHICH WILL RESULT IN THE ESTIMATED CHANGE IN INCOME TAXES OWED BY INDIVIDUALS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE; AND AUTHORIZING THE STATE TO RETAIN AND SPEND ANY INCREASED REVENUE FROM THE NEW TAX STRUCTURE, AS A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE, TO SUPPLEMENT CURRENT LEVELS OF FUNDING FOR K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, AND EARLY CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Change in Income Taxes Owed by Income Category			
Income Categories	Current Average Income Tax Owed	Proposed Average Income Tax Owed	Proposed Change in Average Income Tax Owed if Passed + or -
\$25,000 or less	\$59	\$50	-\$9
\$25,001 - \$50,000	\$751	\$632	-\$119
\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$1,877	\$1,666	-\$210
\$100,001 - \$200,000	\$4,126	\$3,828	-\$298
\$200,001 - \$500,000	\$9,344	\$9,019	-\$325
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	\$19,288	\$18,963	-\$325
\$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000	\$29,432	\$34,196	\$4,764
\$2,000,001 - \$5,000,000	\$41,196	\$55,110	\$13,914
Income categories use adjusted gross income reported to the federal Internal Revenue Service.			

Chamber Position: OPPOSE

A competitive and predictable tax environment helps businesses grow, expand, and create jobs. This measure would replace Colorado's flat income tax with a graduated structure, increasing rates on higher-earning businesses and business owners and reducing capital available for those priorities.

For owners of pass-through businesses, income reported on an individual tax return can include business earnings they do not actually receive personally. Higher tax rates can therefore affect the resources needed to sustain and grow a business, even when an owner's take-home income does not reflect those earnings.

The proposed brackets also are not indexed for inflation. Over time, taxpayers could move into higher brackets without a corresponding increase in purchasing power, including those who initially receive a tax reduction.

The Chamber opposes this measure because it increases the cost of doing business and undermines the stable, competitive tax structure that supports long-term economic growth.

Election Day Information

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026

For additional information, please visit www.govotecolorado.com or visit the Mesa County Elections Office at: 200 S. Spruce Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 or (970) 244-1662

Secure 24-hour Ballot Drop Box Locations:

- **Clifton Community Campus** 3270 D ½ Rd, Clifton, CO 81520
- **Clifton DMV** 3225 I-70 Business Loop, Unit A2, Clifton, CO 81520
- **Colorado Mesa University** 1299 North 12th St, Robinson Theater Entrance, Grand Junction, CO 81501
- **Department of Human Services** 510 29 ½ Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81504
- **Fruita Civic Center** 325 E Aspen Ave, Fruita, CO 81521
- **GVT West Transfer Facility** 612 24 ½ Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81505
- **Mesa County Central Services** 200 S Spruce St, Grand Junction, CO 81501
- **Mesa County Fairgrounds** 2785 US Highway 50, Community Building, Grand Junction, CO 81503
- **Palisade Community Center** 120 W 8th St, Palisade, CO 81526

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