



Position Statement

2010 Amendments 60 and 61, Proposition 101

Adopted July 23, 2010 by the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado, Inc.

On November 2, 2010, Colorado voters will consider three citizen initiatives—Amendment 60, Amendment 61 and Proposition 101—promoted to "Cut car, income and phone taxes," "Limit debt" and "Reform property taxes." Proponents state the intent is to reduce the size of government; opponents believe they will eliminate basic functions of government and cripple the state's economy.

The EMS Association of Colorado finds fault with these critical portions of each initiative and believes that their passage threatens the health, welfare and safety of patients served by Colorado's emergency medical service (EMS) agencies: :

Constitutional Amendment 60

- Would require local taxpayer-owned services (e.g. an ambulance district, county or municipal ambulance service) to pay property taxes. This effectively taxes residents twice by paying taxes on property financed with taxes. Would necessitate higher ambulance bills, reduction of EMS services to communities (fewer ambulances, paramedics) or a combination of both.
- Overturns every successful TABOR-allowed "De-Bruce" election that has occurred since 1992 in communities that have already chosen to tax themselves to pay the cost of services. Would require those same taxing entities (e.g. county, ambulance district, fire protection district, city or town) to expend taxpayer dollars to hold another election to re-De-Bruce again, and again every four years.

Constitutional Amendment 61

- Purports to eliminate Colorado deficits with a balanced budget, which the State constitution already requires—the State cannot carry a budget deficit.
- Limits lease-purchase agreements, now categorized as "debt."
- Debt limit for special district (e.g., ambulance district, hospital district, fire protection district) borrowing would drop by 80%. Debt borrowing, such as for construction of an ambulance station and training facilities, or a fire station, could no longer be financed for 20-30 years, but would be limited to ten years. This forces current residents to pay for long-term improvements before future residents arrive and begin to pay their share. Eliminating longer-term bonds for large projects could raise repayment (interest) costs; budgeted amounts for services would be reduced to pay for higher costs of capital improvements, resulting in fewer EMS resources available for emergencies.
- Requires local taxing entities (e.g., ambulance district) to lower tax rates equal to debt payments as debts are repaid; necessitating increased service rates to maintain level of service, or service cuts.
- Prohibits the State from borrowing any money. The State facilities we have today—universities and colleges, State Patrol offices, courts, prisons, laboratories—that we have today are all we will ever have.

Proposition 101 (to place in statute)

- Would eliminate, or catastrophically cut, the \$2 fee paid on motor vehicle registrations that is dedicated to emergency medical services statewide. If eliminated, Colorado would lose a statewide EMS grant program that helps protect residents when they travel anywhere in the state outside their home area, by supporting ambulance services around Colorado with equipment and training; could eliminate the entire State office that certifies EMTs and paramedics, licenses air ambulance services, regulates EMS training and continuing education, designates and reviews trauma centers, funds regional EMS coordination and planning, reviews and approves waivers from prehospital medical protocols for critical advanced procedures in ambulances.
- Would freeze telephone-service taxes for emergency 9-1-1 call centers at 2009 rates, regardless of the future cost of delivering the service, including potential capital expenditures. This includes the ability to keep up with ever-growing technological changes, replace telephone and radio equipment, maintain necessary wages or increase needed staffing.
- Drastically cuts vehicle taxes used for road and bridge construction across the state. Decreased vehicle taxes dedicated for local schools would be required to be back-filled by the State, funds which the State does not have due to the requirement that the state operate under a balanced budget. This could cause local government to shift funds from other purposes, including emergency services, to fund schools.

The members of the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado—both paid and unpaid professionals—are diligent in, and dedicated to, delivering the highest quality care achievable within the limits of their local EMS system. We believe the provisions of Amendment 60, Amendment 61 and Proposition 101 above—together or singly—will cripple our ability to deliver emergency care now to Colorado citizens and visitors who are traumatically injured or suffer a medical emergency, at work and at play; and severely obstruct our ability to meet our future service needs.

The Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado opposes Amendment 60, Amendment 61 and Proposition 101 and encourages Colorado voters to read carefully and fully understand each and vote "no" on November 2, 2010.

The Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado is a not-for-profit society of emergency medical service professionals, founded in 1973. EMSAC is involved in many facets of EMS, with three primary missions, to:

- *Advocate,*
- *Communicate,*
- *Educate.*

Membership of nearly 4,000 comprises EMS agencies; paramedic-, intermediate- and basic-level EMTs and EMS first responders; physicians and nurses; and emergency dispatchers, medical educators and researchers and EMS training institutions.

Members are both paid and volunteer professionals, from the urban centers of the state as well as our wide open rural and frontier regions. Our members serve with ambulance services, fire departments, search and rescue teams and ski patrols; and in hospitals, industrial plants, dispatch centers and the military.