

Amendment 85

**A clearer ballot.
A stronger Colorado.**

Amendment 85 fact sheet

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This source-backed partner resource summarizes the measure using the campaign's existing public-record citations. Read the official documents before publishing an adaptation.

At a glance

Amendment 85 puts a clear language standard in Colorado's Constitution. State and local ballot questions must use plain language at no more than an eighth-grade reading level. State law also cannot force citizen initiatives to use wording that conflicts with that rule. The measure does not tell anyone how to vote or decide what future ballot measures do. It focuses on the words voters see when making a choice. Because Amendment 85 changes the state constitution, it needs at least 55% approval. Colorado voters will decide in 2026. Always read the linked official sources before making your own voting decision.

What Amendment 85 does

1

Plain language

Questions on your ballot must be written in plain language.

Sources: [Final initiative text](#).

2

An 8th-grade reading level

Questions on your ballot must be written at an 8th grade reading level.

Sources: [Final initiative text](#).

3

The same rules for politicians

Politicians must follow the same requirements when adding language to ballot questions.

Sources: [Final initiative text](#).

[Read the official amendment](#)[Visit VoteYesOn85.org](https://VoteYesOn85.org)

What it does not do

- It does not tell anyone how to vote. Sources: [Final initiative text](#).
- It does not decide the substance of future ballot measures. Sources: [Final initiative text](#).
- It does not create a new state agency. Sources: [Final initiative text](#), [Fiscal impact statement](#).
- It does not force the state to use one specific formula to measure the eighth-grade reading standard. Experts, community advocates, and the public can help shape the evaluation process. Sources: [Final initiative text](#), [Fiscal impact statement](#).
- It does not restrict other information, charts, or details shown alongside a ballot question, as long as they meet the plain-language and reading-level rules. Sources: [Final initiative text](#).
- It does not stop lawmakers from requiring specific wording on a measure, provided that wording satisfies the plain-language and eighth-grade readability standards. Sources: [Final initiative text](#), [Enacted legislation](#).
- It does not repeal Proposition GG or HB21-1321. Sources: [Final initiative text](#), [Official ballot analysis](#), [Enacted legislation](#).
- It does not prohibit tax information from appearing in a ballot title when that information meets the plain-language requirements. Sources: [Final initiative text](#), [Draft ballot analysis](#).

How it relates to HB26-1320

HB26-1320 is a law, and the next legislature can change it. Amendment 85 puts the standard in the Constitution.

- HB26-1320 requires accessible language and lists the factors the Title Board can consider, but it sets no explicit eighth-grade ceiling. Amendment 85 requires plain language at no higher than an eighth-grade reading level. Sources: [Enacted legislation](#), [Final initiative text](#).
- HB26-1320 is an ordinary statute, so a future legislature can amend or repeal it. Amendment 85 would place the plain-language and eighth-grade requirements in the Colorado Constitution. Sources: [Enacted legislation](#), [Final initiative text](#).
- HB26-1320 governs how the Title Board sets titles for statewide citizen initiatives. Amendment 85 would apply to every state and local ballot question, including the ones your city, county, and school district put on the ballot. Sources: [Enacted legislation](#), [Final initiative text](#), [Draft ballot analysis](#).

How the standard is applied

- The existing Title Board defines and applies the plain-language and eighth-grade standards. Colorado's official fiscal analysis confirms it. Sources: [Fiscal impact statement](#).
- The board includes representatives from the Secretary of State, Attorney General, and General Assembly's Office of Legislative Legal Services. Sources: [Official initiative process](#), [Fiscal impact statement](#).
- Proponents or registered electors can request a rehearing. A rehearing decision can be appealed directly to the Colorado Supreme Court. Sources: [Official initiative process](#).

Read the original.

CLICK ANY UNDERLINED LINK TO OPEN THE DOCUMENT

Official sources

Official ballot listing: Amendment 85: Initiative #234, Plain Language Ballot Questions · Colorado Secretary of State

<https://www.coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Initiatives/ballot/contacts/2026.html>

Final initiative text: Initiative #234 Final Text · Colorado Secretary of State

<https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Initiatives/titleBoard/filings/2025-2026/234Final.pdf>

Fiscal impact statement: Initiative #234 Fiscal Impact Statement · Colorado General Assembly

https://leg.colorado.gov/initiative_files/3632/download

Enacted legislation: HB26-1320: Accessible Language Statutory Ballot Title Requirements · Colorado General Assembly

<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/HB26-1320>

OTHER CITED OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Official ballot analysis

<https://leg.colorado.gov/ballots/add-tax-information-table-to-petitions-and-ballots/files/final-draft-packet>

Enacted legislation

https://content.leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_1321_signed.pdf

Draft ballot analysis

<https://leg.colorado.gov/ballots/plain-language-ballot-titles-2/files/final-draft-packet>

Official initiative process

<https://www.leg.colorado.gov/how-file-initiatives>

Learn more

<https://voteyeson85.org/>

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