

Boulder Indivisible Action Governor Candidate Questionnaire - Cary Kennedy

Environment

1. What is your plan to ensure that Colorado complies with or preferably exceeds the Paris Climate Accord goals?

How we power our homes, cars and businesses is critical to the quality of our air, the success of our state's economy and our collective efforts to fight climate change. Colorado has the opportunity to be a strong leader in the new energy economy and on climate change. We have an abundant supply of wind and sun and our labs and businesses are developing technologies that will transform how we produce energy, not just here in Colorado, but around the world.

While setting big goals for decades down the road sounds good, decisive action now will ensure that Colorado benefits from less pollution, cleaner air, green jobs and leaves a healthy legacy for our kids and grandkids. In order to reduce our state's pollution and combat climate change, we need to change how we generate power but also take steps to make cars, homes and businesses cleaner and more efficient.

My plan to ensure that Colorado meets and exceeds the Paris Climate Accord goals is summarized below. You can read my full plan [here](#).

- 1. Double the Renewable Energy Standard:** In 2004, Colorado became the first state in the country to approve a Renewable Energy Standard (RES) by popular vote. Since then, our state has seen some of the lowest prices ever for renewable energy sources like wind and solar. Now with continued cooperative effort between all stakeholders – utilities, renewable energy providers, energy tech companies, consumers and regulators – we can double the RES over the next decade while keeping energy affordable and continuing to grow our economy.
- 2. Guarantee 100% Consumer Choice so all Colorado homes and businesses can choose to get their power from renewable sources:** Offering 100% consumer choice to all Coloradans will allow Colorado's consumers and companies to secure clean power at a competitive price. And because these programs will be optional, costs will not be passed on to those not participating in the program. Paying extra for renewable sources for your own power should be a thing of the past.
- 3. Make Colorado the Best State in the Country to Buy and Drive an Electric Vehicle:** Colorado is a leader in incentivizing the purchase of electric vehicles, but we do not rank in the top ten for charging infrastructure. Colorado's charging network needs to be 18 times bigger to ensure adequate coverage statewide and we need to ensure rural Colorado is not left behind in this next generation of infrastructure. I will also ensure Colorado joins other states in adopting the zero emission and low emission vehicle standards.

- 4. Promote Energy Efficiency:** With strong leadership we can ensure energy demand stays flat even as our population grows. Sixty-five percent of clean energy jobs in the state are in the energy efficiency sector and investing in energy efficiency will save Colorado families and businesses money, drive job growth, and protect our clean air.
- 5. Support the Workforce in Transition:** Workers and communities whose livelihoods are threatened by shifting economic tides and advancements in technology need support. When a mines or power plant closes down it affects jobs not just at those facilities but in a number of associated sectors. We can do more to support these communities in this transition.

2. Do you agree that cities and counties, such as Boulder should have the right to stop fracking occurring in their locality? If so, what is your strategy to protect the will of the people in this regard?

I have called to give local governments authority to regulate industry within their communities, and that includes the oil and gas industry.

As Governor, I will ensure we have a legal structure that protects the health, safety and welfare of Coloradans and our natural environment. By working together, we can keep growing our economy and protecting all that is special about Colorado for future generations.

The first role of government is to protect its citizens. The COGCC has long labored under the dual mandates of promoting the industry and protecting Coloradans. For too long the preferences of the industry have come before the health and safety of Coloradans.

3. What is your plan to push back against the Trump administration's erosion of our public lands?

As Governor, I will stand up to any attempts to sell or privatize our public lands. I will lead a coalition of western governors who oppose the Trump administration's attempts to sell our public lands. It will take strong leadership from governors and all westerners to resist the actions of an administration that does not understand or value our western lands. If necessary, I will file suit against the federal government to protect public lands.

We also can do more at the state level. I have released a platform that pledges to conserve an additional 1,000,000 acres of land by 2050, and improve access to our public lands. Read more on my plan for open space and water [here](#).

Healthcare

4. Do you agree that healthcare is a human right? How will you ensure that the people of Colorado of all income levels are guaranteed that right?

Healthcare is a basic human right and as governor I will fight to ensure that everyone in Colorado gets the healthcare they need. Universal healthcare means that every Coloradan has access to high-quality healthcare that meets their needs. My plan achieves universal coverage in this state through the creation of a statewide public health insurance option.

I am the only candidate to propose a statewide public health insurance option to everyone in Colorado. Everyone in our state will be given the option to buy into Health First Colorado, which is the state's Medicaid program, or buy into the plans available to state employees. Adding these options through the Colorado's health insurance exchange will lower premiums, stabilize markets, and increase choice. Health First Colorado is cost-effective and efficient healthcare coverage and because it is publicly administered there is no profit margin, which lowers costs even more for consumers.

In addition, my health care plan will help address rural disparities. Rural Colorado lacks the infrastructure that patients and healthcare providers need. I will work to make sure that the state helps local communities by expanding behavioral health facilities and broadband infrastructure. I will expand funding for programs that increase the number of healthcare professionals in rural parts of the state. Most critically, I will increase access to behavioral health to tackle the opioid crisis that is disproportionately affecting rural parts of our state.

Read my full healthcare plan [here](#).

5. What is your attitude towards Single Payer and the Medicare for all initiative?

I am supportive of Medicare for All at the federal level. However, in the absence of meaningful action at the federal level, my plan for a statewide public option is the best strategy to reach universal healthcare for all Coloradans.

6. How will you work to reduce prescription drug costs for the people of Colorado?

We need to bring costs down across our healthcare system. Too many people in our state are vulnerable to rapidly rising drug prices. As Governor, I will push our state and healthcare system to:

- Look to the importation of drugs from Canada. We need to push our leaders in DC to stand up to pharmaceutical companies and let Coloradans buy the affordable medication they need.
- Buy more generic drugs.

- Provide better purchasing options for consumers, including rebates for mail-order prescriptions and multiple-month prescription dispensing under a single co-payment, which can increase medication adherence and have positive effects on overall health.
- Purchase brand-name drugs at a discount. The state's Medicaid program already utilizes a preferred drug list, but we can expand this practice. We also need to push drug manufacturers for supplemental rebates.
- Do more bulk purchasing. This includes expanding our membership in multi-state purchasing arrangements.

Social and Economic Justice

7. Is income inequality a priority for you? What policies will you pursue to reduce income inequality in Colorado?

Income inequality is absolutely a priority for me. I am running for Governor to ensure that our state's progress benefits everyone.

One of the most important things that a Governor can do is unequivocally support the right of all workers to collectively bargain. Collective bargaining is one of the most effective ways for workers to increase wages and protect their rights in the workplace.

I've put out a number of positions that will help to reduce income inequality and improve affordability including: removing local preemption of minimum wage (i.e. - allow towns and cities to raise their minimum wage above the state's level), paid family leave, reducing the gender pay gap, increase affordable housing, and expand public transit options.

We also need to focus on equity in our public education system. Every study has shown that a person's level of education has a huge impact on their lifetime earnings. That is why I have put out a comprehensive education plan with the bold goal of ensuring that every Colorado kid, by the age of 19, is ready for a career, higher education, or both. The best way to make that happen is to ensure there is a great teacher in every classroom. To do that, we need to pay teachers as the professionals that they are. Read more on my plan for education [here](#).

8. Do you support the \$15 per hour minimum wage? Paid family leave?

Yes, I support a \$15 per hour minimum wage. In fact, I have gone farther and proposed that we eliminate the law that bans Colorado's towns and cities from raising their local minimum wage above what is mandated by the state. That will allow local communities to adjust their minimum wage to deal with high costs of living.

I am in favor of paid family leave. Eighty-eight percent of Coloradans do not have paid leave to care for a seriously ill relative, welcome a new baby to their family, or recover from a personal illness. We are the only developed country in the world that does not offer paid family leave. As governor, I will work to create a paid family leave program. During my time as CFO and Deputy Mayor of Denver I worked to develop a proposal to provide paid leave for city employees. As governor, I will support legislation that creates a family and medical leave insurance program to provide partial wage-replacement benefits for people who need to care for a new child, care for a sick family member, or recover from an illness themselves.

9. What other innovative policies do you have in mind to support working people? (E.g. worker buyout options for businesses that are closing or being sold, promoting worker coops etc.)

Ensuring that our state's progress reaches everyone starts with protecting the rights of workers and ensuring that wages rise.

- We need to close the gender pay gap. I've released a number of policies to ensure pay equity which you can read more about [here](#).
- I've called for instituting a paid family leave program in the state. Currently, 88% of Coloradans do not have paid leave to care for a seriously ill relative, welcome a new baby to their family or recover from a personal illness. Not only is paid leave important for the health and wellbeing of the child but it protects the economic wellbeing of working moms and families.
- As Governor, I will make it a priority in my economic development to attract and support companies that pay their employees a living wage and provide benefits that allow them to afford to live in the communities they work. We should demand that as we grow, businesses moving here are partners in our success.
- The state needs to step up to protect the rights of workers and consumers. The Trump administration is gutting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and is rolling back labor protections. The State of Colorado can be much more active in enforcing labor laws, preventing employer retaliation, and affirmatively investigating abuses against workers. We can also protect Coloradans from predatory lenders in higher education, payday loans, and subprime auto lending.

In speaking with worker advocacy groups, however, the most impactful thing for large number of workers, especially those employed by large corporations is to deal with the increasingly expensive cost of living in communities across the state. That is why I am the candidate talking most aggressively about preparing for our state's growth.

- Affordable Housing - I will create the first ever statewide affordable housing investment fund in Colorado and I will enact a series of protections for renters. For instance, I will increase the fee for a landlord to file an eviction. That additional revenue will go towards a legal defense fund to provide representation to people being threatened with evictions. Evictions are a leading cause of family homelessness, can often trigger job loss and declines in physical and mental health, drive up local poverty and crime rates, and are more frequent in communities of color and rapidly gentrifying areas. Read more on my housing plan [here](#).
- Transportation - My plan focuses on increasing options and creating a transportation system focused on moving people, not cars. Increasing public transit options, and fortifying our system of walk and bike paths will save workers money and decrease our environmental impact. Read more on my transportation plan [here](#).

10: How will you help ensure that all women, including women of colour and Native American women receive equal pay for equal work?

It is unacceptable that in Colorado, women are paid 81 cents for every dollar men earn. The wage gap is even larger for women of color. Black women are paid 64 cents, Native American women are paid 58 cents, Latinas are paid 54 cents, and Asian women are paid 70 cents for every dollar paid to white men. This inequity is found all across the state and has been growing wider for women of color. As the CFO of Denver, I conducted a review of the staff who reported to me to ensure that we were paying people fairly for their work. When I found inequalities, I adjusted salaries.

I will support legislation addressing the pay equity gap. Colorado should:

- Reinststitute something similar to the Colorado Pay Equity Commission to study the problem and support employers and employees in understanding the pay equity gap.
- Ensure that all state contractors are in compliance with equal pay standards.
- Ensure that women are not discriminated against in the job application process by preventing employers from seeking salary history information unless the employer had provided a salary range for the open position. This prevents discriminatory payments from following a women throughout her career.

11. What is your policy on police killings of unarmed black and mentally ill people?

The disturbing trend of police killings of people of color are a symptom of a larger racial bias in our criminal justice system. The racial biases entrenched in the United States sadly continue and diminish opportunities for people of color in our state.

Decades of business discrimination, voting restrictions, predatory lending, racial profiling, mandatory sentencing, inequitable schools, unfair housing practices and other biased policies have chronically burdened communities of color in our state. From our criminal justice system, to our economy and public schools, Coloradans of color do not have a fair shot. Black Coloradans are nearly three times as likely to be unemployed as white Coloradans. Latino students are more than three times less likely to receive a college degree than white students. And American Indians in Colorado are nearly three times more likely to live in poverty than white Coloradans.

We must address the root cause of these impacts by empowering the most affected as decision makers. We also need to focus on community policing and holding our police officers accountable. We need to increase training for law enforcement officers that stresses nonviolence and deescalation. For incidents involving mentally ill Coloradans, I will expand the use of co-responder models that ensure a mental health worker helps respond to calls. This type of program is being piloted in the City of Denver to positive results.

In Colorado, we can resist the increasing levels of racism, hatred and discrimination that we are seeing across the country. I will lead Colorado to join me in the fight for a more just and equitable state.

Immigration

12. How will you protect undocumented Colorado residents from deportation?

Local and state law enforcement should not be used to enforce federal immigration practices. In order to keep Colorado communities safe, all people need to feel safe and able to report crimes like child abuse, drunk driving and domestic violence and must be able to visit police stations, courthouses, hospitals, and schools without the fear of them or their loved ones being turned over to ICE. As Governor, I would support legislation to ensure that is the case in Colorado.

Education

13. Please let us know your policy on college education. How will you ensure that all qualified young people in Colorado have a chance at a college education?

For nearly three decades, Colorado has been falling farther behind in funding higher education, which has resulted in higher and higher costs for students. Many students choose not to attend or don't complete their degrees because of cost or the heavy burden of student loan debt. And the cost of education is more than just tuition. In fact, students are struggling simply to buy food. Nationwide, 22% of college students report very low levels of food security. As Governor, I will explore

extending the school lunch program through to higher education for students that qualified as high school graduates.

We need to orient our entire education system around equity and ensuring that students who enter college actually leave with a degree. The postsecondary credential attainment rate for black students is 39% and it is just 29% for latino students. To address these challenges, I will:

1. Ensure student loans are appropriately regulated by the Attorney General. This will include pushing for legislation that creates a Student Loan Bill of Rights.
2. Extend the school lunch program to higher education.
3. Increase concurrent enrollment and decrease remediation so that our students are maximizing their time spent taking classes that give them credit towards college.
4. Permanently reform TABOR. I helped develop both of the successful measures that took on TABOR and avoided even deeper cuts in education funding (Amendment 23 and Referendum C). As Governor, I will lead the statewide bipartisan coalition to pass permanent TABOR reform so our state can better support its public colleges, universities, and students.