

Indivisible Front Range Q&As - Cary Kennedy Answers

Yes/No Qs

I-70 Expansion?

I have been hearing a lot of concerns from the community about this project. I know that we need to work together to mitigate the impacts and improve the health and safety of the communities most impacted. These are communities that have been disenfranchised and ignored by the city for decades.

I am not taking a stance on specific infrastructure projects during the campaign as they are too detailed but I am committing to taking a look at all the options that are available when I become Governor.

Olympics?

Colorado should not submit a bid unless we can host the games without having an adverse effect on our environment, or continuing to stress our already crowded infrastructure. The Olympics could be an opportunity to leverage outside financing to build affordable housing, student housing and make long-term improvements to I-70.

Should Colorado as a whole be a Sanctuary State?

Local and State law enforcement should not be required to enforce federal immigration laws. 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.

Are there any specific plans to address the unique healthcare needs of women (including and beyond reproduction), the disabled, and those with mental health needs?

Women

Early in my career I helped start the Child Health Plan in Colorado, which helped tens of thousands of low income children across our state get health insurance. I worked for the Colorado Children's Campaign developing legislation that improved the quality of low-income child care. I also expanded access to nurse home visits for low income, first-time mothers.

As governor, I will continue to expand access to and protect the rights of women across Colorado. I will protect and expand access to sexual and reproductive health care. We cannot allow ideological extremists in DC to deny evidence and undermine public health successes by

infringing upon a women's right to choose in Colorado. As governor, I will protect the right of all Coloradans to access the medical care they need — regardless of income — to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. I will oppose any legislation that attempts to restrict women's access to reproductive health care or abortion services.

As part of my #WhenWomenLead platform, I have expressed my support for paid family leave. Research has shown the health benefits to women and children by allowing women time to care for a new child without losing income. Read more on my #WhenWomenLead platform [here](#).

I have laid out a healthcare platform that emphasizes increasing access, especially in rural communities. Coloradans with different abilities should be able to access the services they need regardless of where in the state they live. Read more on my healthcare platform [here](#).

Mental Health

Simply put, we need to put more resources towards treating mental health. Too many people who experience mental illness end up in the criminal justice system because they cannot access the services they need.

This idea that providing people preventative services is better than locking people up who suffer from mental health issues was at the core of the Denver Housing to Health Initiative. I launched a program as Deputy Mayor and CFO of Denver and it will house nearly 200 hundred formerly, chronically homeless people in Denver many of whom suffer from mental illness and addiction. In the Housing to Health Initiative, wraparound services are funded through the savings the city realizes from the participants not needing as many emergency services like detox and emergency room visits and from participants spending fewer nights in jail.

Disabled

As Governor, I will work to help Coloradans of all abilities. People who have a disability must have the strongest voice at the table for any and all policy decisions that affect their health, wellbeing, and ability to thrive. This includes using my position as Governor to advocate against any attempts in DC to cut Medicaid, Medicare or Social Security.

As State Treasurer, I created the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program which has helped repair and replace aging, and dilapidated school buildings across the state. BEST has allowed schools across the state to upgrade their facilities and make them ADA compliant. As Governor I will work to ensure our communities are accessible to people of different abilities.

Do you believe that private companies who have accidents that affect the land or wildlife (i.e. toxic spills) have an obligation to cover all the costs of clean up? Should they also be fined?

Yes. Companies that damage our land or wildlife are obligated to cover the costs of cleanup and should face fines commensurate with the negligence that caused the accident. Our state learned this is the hard way with old mine sites that were abandoned decades ago and never cleaned up.

I am concerned with the Trump administration's proposed budget cuts to the EPA. Colorado is home to a number of Superfund sites and we need federal resources to help clean our communities. As Governor, I will do everything in my power to ensure Colorado has the resources to protect our natural environment and not let President Trump take us backwards.

The next redistricting will happen under the next Governor's administration. The Governor gets to appoint 3 people to the 11-member reapportionment commission. What criteria will you use to make your appointment decisions?

I will make my appointments based on the following criteria:

- A commitment to fairness and the ideal that voter access is at the core of a successful and functional democracy.
- Knowledge and experience with elections.
- A diversity of perspectives and backgrounds.

Do you believe charter schools could be part of a healthy and functioning public school system?

Charter schools can provide options for students who may benefit from alternative curriculum or schooling models. But we cannot build an education system where the success of some schools comes at the expense of others. We need to ensure every Colorado kid has access to a high-quality, neighborhood public school. Our top priority must be to adequately invest in our public schools, students and teachers. Charter schools must be held to the same standards as all other public schools. Without the same accountability and transparency required of traditional public schools, the rights of teachers and students are not well protected.

Do you believe standardized testing is beneficial?

I believe that we need high standards for all students and that we must measure their progress.

However, learning is more than just standardized test scores. We need to incentivize the growth of students as dynamic, creative thinkers. We are focused too much on high stakes testing, narrowing curriculums and blaming teachers.

About 1 in every 5 prisoners in Colorado are kept within a private prison. What is your perspective on private prisons in terms of the criminal justice system and the state budget?

Private prisons operate with a profit motive which fundamentally undermines their ability to act in a way that prioritizes the public good of the community and inmates in their facility. As Governor, I will work to end the use of private prisons in Colorado.

Do you believe that the concept of Community Policing needs to be reintroduced, and that officers should be held accountable for their actions?

Yes, I believe that the concept of Community Policing should be reintroduced and that officers should be held accountable for their actions. This country, and our state, have seen a tragic amount of police brutality disproportionately perpetrated against people of color. We must act to reduce these incidents in order to create a more just and equitable Colorado.

What can your administration do to prevent racial profiling?

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. That means investing in our public education system to ensure that every Colorado kid, by the age of 19, is ready for higher education, career or both. Specifically, we need to focus on equity and support our students who have not been well-served by our current public education system. 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.

Do you believe employees have the right to organize and collectively bargain?

Yes. I stand with working families and believe that unions play a critical role in building and protecting the middle class in America. Unions help hardworking people access good paying

jobs, health care benefits and have workplace protections. These values make our economy stronger. This is especially important as we witness the largest income gap in our country's history. When unions are strong, entire communities enjoy better wages and greater social and economic mobility. I believe in collective bargaining, and as governor, I will never let right-to-work laws take hold in our state. Employees, unions and employers all stand to benefit from working together, and workers deserve a seat at the negotiating table.

I am a champion of labor and am honored to have the endorsement of a growing number of labor unions across the state. So far, I've been endorsed by: Colorado Education Association, American Federation of Teachers (Colorado Chapter), Pipefitters Local 58, United Steelworkers District 12.

About 1 in 10 Coloradans struggle with having enough food to eat. The numbers are higher for children--1 in 6. What can your administration to do help?

I'm running for governor to ensure that our state's progress reaches everyone.

- I supported both initiatives that raised the minimum wage in CO and I support allowing towns and cities to raise their local minimum wage above the state level. Communities should be able to ensure that wages match cost of living.
- I will work to close the gender pay gap. I took steps as Denver's CFO to equalize pay for city employees. You can read more on my solutions for a fair economy [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.
- As Governor, I will defend the free breakfast and lunch program and explore extending the school lunch program through to higher education for students that qualified for the program as high school seniors. Currently, nearly 22% of all college students report very low levels of food security.

Finally, our state's growth has quickly made the cost of living more and more unaffordable. Many families face the choice of paying for rent or food. I've laid out a plan to make sure as our population grows we do everything we can to keep our state affordable. You can read my whole affordable housing platform [here](#).

Once soldiers come home, they are faced with many hard issues and not many resources. What can be expected of your administration to help veterans transition back to civilian life (jobs, housing, counseling services, etc.)?

Colorado is home to almost half a million American heroes who faithfully served our country in uniform. It is our responsibility to ensure that we support these brave men and women. Our country made a promise to them in return for these sacrifices and as governor I will fight to

make sure these sacrifices and commitments are not forgotten and that our veterans receive the honor and services they have earned.

There are several policies that can specifically help our veterans.

1. Expand the state income tax deduction on veterans' pensions.
2. Increase the number of Veterans Trauma Courts throughout the state. These courts help by enlisting troubled veterans into a program that includes counseling and mental health treatment instead of simply sending them to jail.
3. Install a dedicated officer in the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to oversee programs related to Women and LGBTQ Veterans.
4. Increased investments in affordable housing, job training and community mental health also support our veterans.

You can read more on my veterans platform [here](#).

Do you believe in upholding the will of the people of Colorado and protecting the legality of marijuana? Are there any reforms to the taxation that you would like to see? Additionally, would you consider retroactive clemency for non-violent convictions involving marijuana?

The passage of Amendment 64 has been a great benefit to the state and I will resist any attempts by the Trump Administration or anyone else who tries to infringe on our state's right to self governance.

I believe that the current taxation structure on marijuana sales is working. In fact, marijuana taxes helped to fund the Building Excellent Schools Today program which I started during my time as State Treasurer. That program has built and repaired over 380 aging schools across the state, primarily in rural areas.

I will consider retroactive clemency and expunging records for non-violent convictions involving marijuana. With the entrenched racial bias in our justice system, we know that low income communities and communities of color were most affected by low level marijuana convictions.