



ADVANCE COLORADO

IMPACT REPORT

2020

Dear Friends,

This year was one of victories for citizen engagement and grassroots influence. As we close out 2024, I'm grateful for the hundreds of thousands of Coloradans from across the political spectrum who demanded reform when elected leaders would not act. From solving the state's property tax crisis to addressing soaring crime rates to insisting on transparent accountable government, Advance Colorado helped harness that power to create common-sense change in a state often considered a progressive stronghold.

Our work – together – this year has made a tangible difference for Coloradans.

This year's Impact Report chronicles the victories and the impact that Advance Colorado has had across our state.



CAPPING AND CUTTING PROPERTY TAXES:

Our two-year grassroots campaign culminated in a bipartisan solution that saves Colorado property owners \$1.6 billion annually by rolling back double-digit tax increases and capping future hikes.



BOOSTING PUBLIC SAFETY:

With your help, Colorado voters approved Truth in Sentencing, ensuring violent offenders serve at least 85 percent of their sentences (a major increase from the current 46 percent statewide average), and Back the Blue, a \$350 million investment of existing state funds in law enforcement recruitment, training, and resources and creates a \$1 million death benefit for families of fallen first responders.



EDUCATION REFORM:

Advance Colorado worked with other Colorado education reform groups to defeat a teacher-union-backed bill that threatened Colorado's popular charter school movement. This legislation was evidence that school choice should be protected in the state constitution – and nearly half of voters agreed this year. While the proposed amendment fell just short of passage, this outcome reaffirms strong public support for empowering families to choose the best educational options for their children. We will build on this momentum as we continue to fight for education reform and parental rights.



EMPOWERING CITIZENS:

Advance Colorado Academy is preparing the next generation of leaders, with hundreds of Coloradans completing our training. This year we celebrated 14 alumni victories, including Congressman-elect Gabe Evans and State Board of Education members Yazmin Navarro and Kristi Burton Brown.

As we head into 2025, we are energized to continue advancing the issues that matter most to you—through research, advocacy, and grassroots action. Together, we are proving that Coloradans want and deserve bold, innovative, and sustainable solutions.

Sincerely,

Michael Fields

Michael Fields
President, Advance Colorado

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ADVANCE COLORADO PLAN CUTS AND CAPS PROPERTY TAXES – SAVES TAXPAYERS \$1.6 BILLION ANNUALLY

Unrelenting advocacy, including consistent grassroots pressure, for the right solution to Colorado's property tax crisis resulted in a major win for taxpayers during a special session of the Colorado Legislature earlier this year.

The new law, spearheaded by Advance Colorado and Colorado Concern:

- Cuts the effective residential property tax rate to 6.3 or 6.4 percent depending on assessment growth;
- Cuts the commercial property tax rate to 2.5 percent;
- Implements a property tax cap of 5.25 percent for local governments and 6 percent or inflation growth (whichever is greater) for school districts.
- Ensure a clear and non-biased ballot language in the required vote of the people to opt out of the local cap.



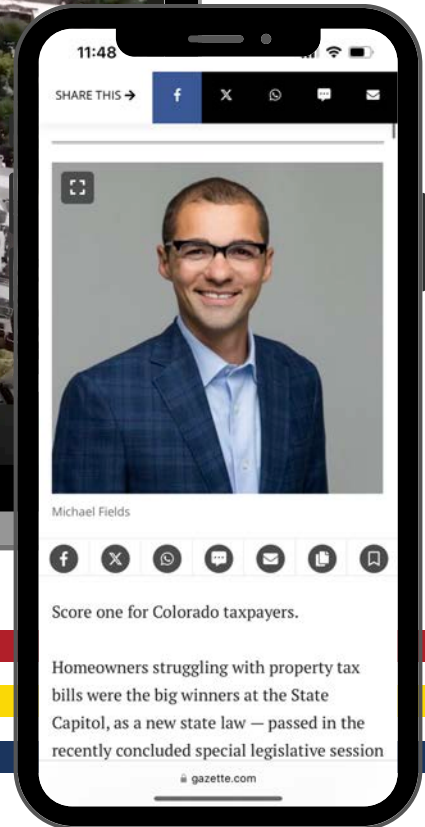
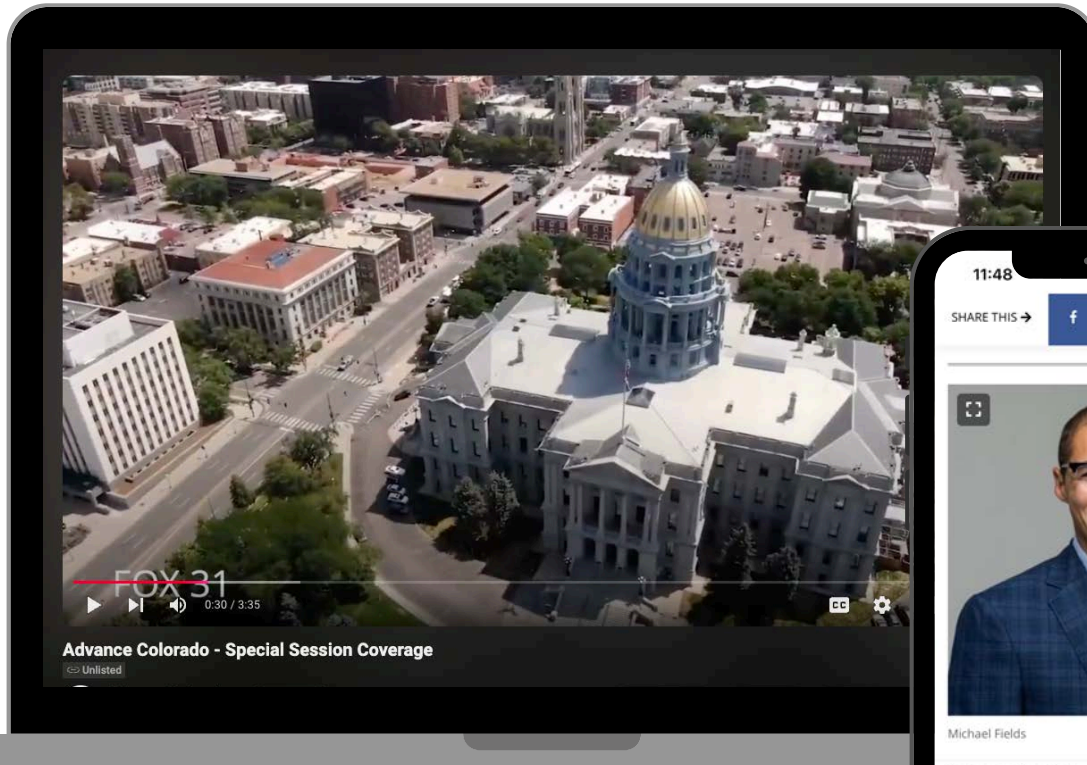
The passage of the bill brought annual tax savings to \$1.6 billion.

Advance Colorado had placed property tax cut and cap measures on the ballot, thanks to petition signatures by nearly 400,000 Colorado voters. This pressure helped spur lawmakers and the Governor to the bargaining table to enact the reform package.

Advance Colorado's successful efforts to secure major tax cut legislation in a state dominated by progressive politicians drew effort drew national media attention, including from The Wall Street Journal.



A CUT, A CAP - A BIG WIN



“It’s the biggest win for Colorado Republicans at the State Capitol in years.”

Kyle Clark, 9News, Denver



“Advance Colorado is finding a way to win in a deep blue state.”

Jeff Hunt, KNUS-AM, Denver

PUBLIC SAFETY SCORES TWO BIG WINS AT THE BALLOT BOX

Taking a bite out of Colorado's sky-high crime rate was the aim of two successful Advance Colorado backed ballot initiatives.

Truth In Sentencing, which requires violent criminals to serve at least 85 percent of their sentences before being eligible for parole, was the most popular citizen initiated measure on the 2024 ballot, earning 62 percent of the vote.

The measure addresses the soft-on-crime practice of allowing violent felons to serve just 46 percent of their sentences on average.

"Truth in Sentencing was overwhelmingly popular because it restores the proper balance by putting the protection of law-abiding citizens ahead of the needs of criminals," **said Advance Colorado Action President Michael Fields.**

Truth In Sentencing drew support from a wide range of leaders in public safety and law enforcement.

"Increasing the safety of communities and families throughout Colorado requires no-nonsense laws to keep violent criminals behind bars and Truth In Sentencing makes Colorado a safer place," **said John Suthers, former state Attorney General, U.S. Attorney and Mayor of Colorado Springs.**

"Colorado has one of the highest rates of repeat offenders in the nation, and a key reason is that violent criminals serve less than half their sentences on average," **said John Kellner, District Attorney for the 18th Judicial District.** "The Truth In Sentencing initiative clearly spoke to voters who wanted a clear, common-sense tool to fight back against the state's high crime rate."

Colorado voters also demanded more cops on our streets by passing **Back The Blue** which earmarks \$350 million in existing state funds for an increased investment in law enforcement across the state.



The measure was a direct reaction to decisions by the Legislature and Governor to steer public safety investments away from putting officers in communities who can make arrests.

Without raising taxes, Back The Blue invests in hiring, retaining training and equipping law enforcement across the state.

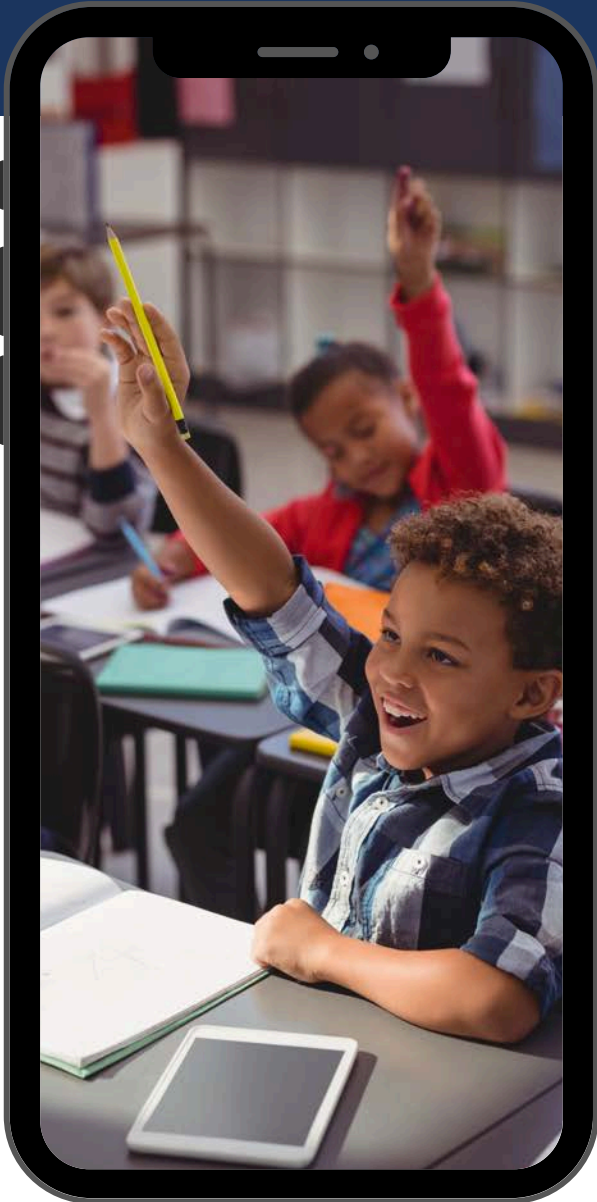
"The law enforcement community is grateful to the voters for making this critically important investment in hiring, retaining, training and equipping police officers throughout our state," **said Douglas County Sheriff Darren Weekly.** "The passage of Proposition 130 is a huge win in the fight for safer Colorado communities."

The measure also creates a \$1 million death benefit for the families of first responders killed in the line of duty. Tragically, the day after the measure won voter approval, a Golden police officer was killed during a traffic stop. Advance Colorado urged the state to proactively provide the benefit to the slain officer's family.

"For too many families, the tragedy of suddenly losing a loved one can be made all the harder when financial challenges result," **said Colorado business leader Joe O'Dea.** "The strong lesson here is that when the Legislature and the Governor won't do the right thing for Colorado, Advance Colorado will."



COLORADANS DEMONSTRATE POPULARITY OF SCHOOL CHOICE



A proposal to protect Coloradans' school choice rights in the state constitution drew nearly half of voters this year. While falling just short of the required 55 percent vote to put a measure in the constitution, the broad statewide support for Amendment 80 demonstrated the popularity of school choice across the state.

The proposal would have safeguarded the right to choose other public schools, charter schools, private schools or homeschooling.

Advance Colorado Executive Vice President Kristi Burton Brown said that, despite teacher unions claiming in ads that they back the concept of school choice, it's a guarantee that they will be back at the Capitol attacking choice, accountability and transparency.

"We're committed to working, from the grassroots, to push back on and defeat efforts to diminish or eliminate Coloradans' fundamental right to choose the best school for their children," she said. "And Advance Colorado will continue to train and equip men and women to run for and win school board seats across our state."

Fields said the certainty of the coming assaults on school choice underscore the importance of bringing Amendment 80 back before voters in the future.

Click [here](#) to read Michael Fields' oped discussing how his experience as a classroom teacher is one reason why he supports school choice.

ADVANCE COLORADO ACADEMY

GRADS SCORE VICTORIES

Graduates of Advance Colorado Academy will be assuming office in January – including Congressman Gabe Evans and State Board of Education members Yazmin Navarro and Kristi Burton Brown. (The Board of Education wins helped preserve a pro-charter school majority.) This year 14 academy graduates won general election victories – including members of the state House and Senate, county commissions, and district attorneys. The Advance Colorado Academy provides practical, proven training for Coloradans who want to enter public service. To date 221 people have graduated from the academy.



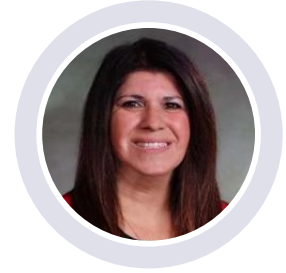
Kristi Burton Brown

Colorado State Board of Education,
Representing Colorado's 4th
Congressional District



Lisa Frizell

Colorado State Senate,
Representing District 2



Rose Pugliese

Minority Leader, Colorado
House of Representatives,
Representing District 14



Cody Davis

Mesa County
Commissioner,
Representing District 1



Dan Woog

Colorado House of
Representatives,
Representing District 19



Anthony Hartstook

Colorado House of
Representatives, Representing
District 44



Ryan Gonzales

Colorado House of
Representatives,
Representing District 50



Rick Taggart

Colorado House of
Representatives,
Representing District 55



Dusty Johnson

Colorado House of
Representatives,
Representing District 63



Ryan Armagost

Colorado House of
Representatives,
Representing District 64



George Brauchler

Colorado District
Attorney, Representing
Judicial District 23



Gabe Evans

U.S. House, Representing
Colorado's 8th
Congressional District

“Advance Colorado Academy provides practical and proven skills to help citizens run for office – and win. What I learned from the Academy was invaluable in my successful campaigns for the Colorado Legislature and for the U.S. Congress.”



Yazmin Navarro

Colorado State Board of
Education, Representing
Colorado's 8th
Congressional District

“Running as an education reformer isn't easy, and our opponents are well funded and well trained. That's why I am so glad I enrolled in the Advance Colorado Academy. I learned the real-world fundamentals that not only made me a better candidate – but will make me a more effective member of the State Board of Education.”

ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE AT THE STATE CAPITOL IN 2024

Advance Colorado's common-sense policy agenda scored several victories in enacting center-right measures, despite overwhelming liberal control of the Legislature. Through aggressive advocacy we were able to help good measures pass – while working to defeat several bad bills.

Among the successes in the 120-day legislative session were bills enhancing school choice for military families, providing higher education credits for practical work experience, preventing government from seizing taxpayers' home equity in a foreclosure and making the Senior Property Tax Exemption permanent.

Advance Colorado was also very active in defeating anti-taxpayer, anti-parent legislation through aggressive advocacy in the media and with the grassroots. Among the proposals that were killed included bills that aimed to eliminate charter schools and to massively and illegally increase taxes on short-term rental properties across the state. Also killed was a “pet tax” measure that required all pet owners to register their pets at a cost of up to \$25 per pet.

To read the 2024 Policy Agenda in full click [HERE](#).



ADVANCE COLORADO WINS LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST SECRET LEGISLATIVE VOTING SYSTEM

In a victory for open and transparent state government, Advance Colorado and the Public Trust Institute won a lawsuit asserting that the Colorado Legislature's secret voting system for pending legislation is a violation of Colorado's Open Meetings Law.

The lawsuit challenged the so-called "quadratic voting" system where legislators secretly ranked bills before they are considered publicly, allowing legislative leaders to learn in advance, and away from the glare of citizen scrutiny, which measures have adequate support to move forward – and which do not.

The Court's opinion made it clear the secret voting system "thwarts the entire purpose of [the state Open Meetings Law] because the public is shielded from knowledge that it would otherwise be entitled to know."

"This illegal system let legislators off the hook from having to take public positions on legislation which keeps their constituents from knowing where their elected officials stand," said Advance Colorado President Michael Fields



ADVANCE COLORADO **FIGHTS** **DISCRIMINATION** IN STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM



Advance Colorado successfully pushed back on Colorado's effort to retroactively ban religious preschool and early childhood programs from participating in the taxpayer-funded universal preschool program. Had the state not backed down, Advance Colorado was poised to take legal action.

Colorado specifically invited faith-based preschools to join the universal preschool program that was inaugurated this academic year. It would be explicitly discriminatory for the State to retroactively exclude religious schools after it included them, because the removal would be purely based on religion.

“



“This is a huge win for parents who want to choose a faith-based preschool for their young children,” said Advance Colorado Executive Vice President Kristi Burton Brown. “It’s crystal clear that the state can’t treat some Colorado families differently just because they are religious. Abandoning this poorly conceived, discriminatory proposal was a very wise move.”

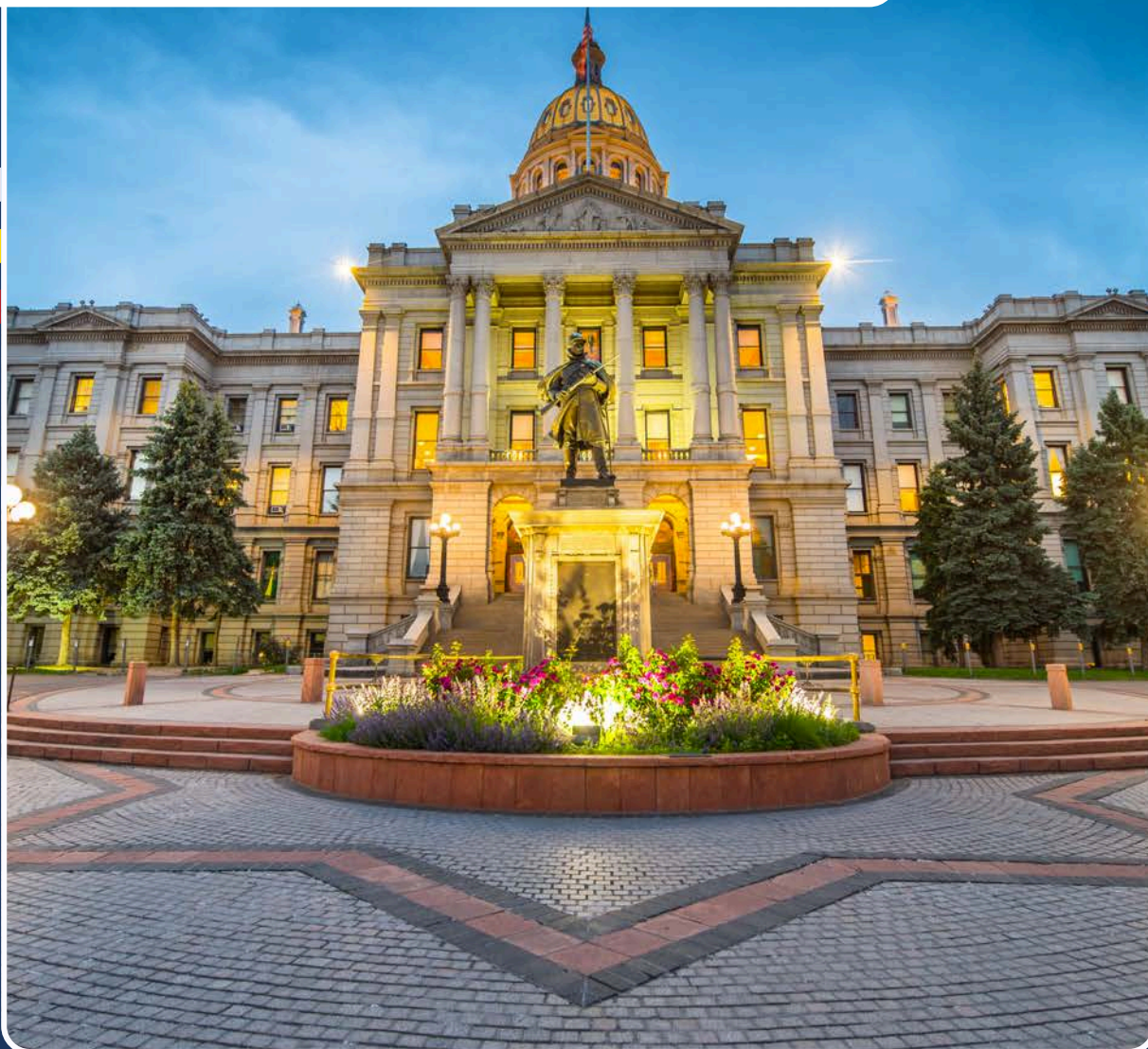
Kristi Burton Brown, Executive Vice President
Advance Colorado

ADVANCE COLORADO ON THE WINNING SIDE OF U.S. SUPREME COURT CASE OVERTURNING THE CHEVRON DOCTRINE

Advance Colorado filed a friend of the court brief in a landmark case examining the role of the bureaucratic “administrative state.”

The amicus brief in the case *Loper Bright Enterprises, et al, v. Raimondo* . argued that the nearly 40-year-old Chevron Doctrine gives undue deference and power to unelected experts in federal agencies. By overturning this doctrine, the Court restored the proper, Constitutional role of the elected Congress envisioned by the nation’s Founders.

The brief, filed by Advance Colorado Executive Vice President Kristi Burton Brown, stressed that the current imbalance results in businesses being needlessly hamstrung in bureaucratic red tape, thus improperly limiting their ability to succeed and grow.





ROBUST RESEARCH HAS STATEWIDE IMPACT

In 2024, Advance Colorado delivered a series of impactful reports tackling some of the most pressing issues facing our state. From homelessness to crime to education, this work highlighted the transformative potential of smart policy and community-driven solutions.

Advance Colorado's research is a commitment to practical, data-driven approaches that empower families, strengthen local governance, and ensure a safer, brighter future for all Coloradans. Advance Colorado Research Fellows are producing important research projects, stay connected for more in 2025.



Dr. Debora Scheffel, Fellow in Education Policy, authored a how-to guide on curriculum reform for school board members.



Rep. Rose Pugliese, Fellow in Local Government, is authoring a study about state unfunded mandates on local government.

ADVANCE COLORADO PUBLISHED FIVE IN-DEPTH RESEARCH STUDIES IN 2024:



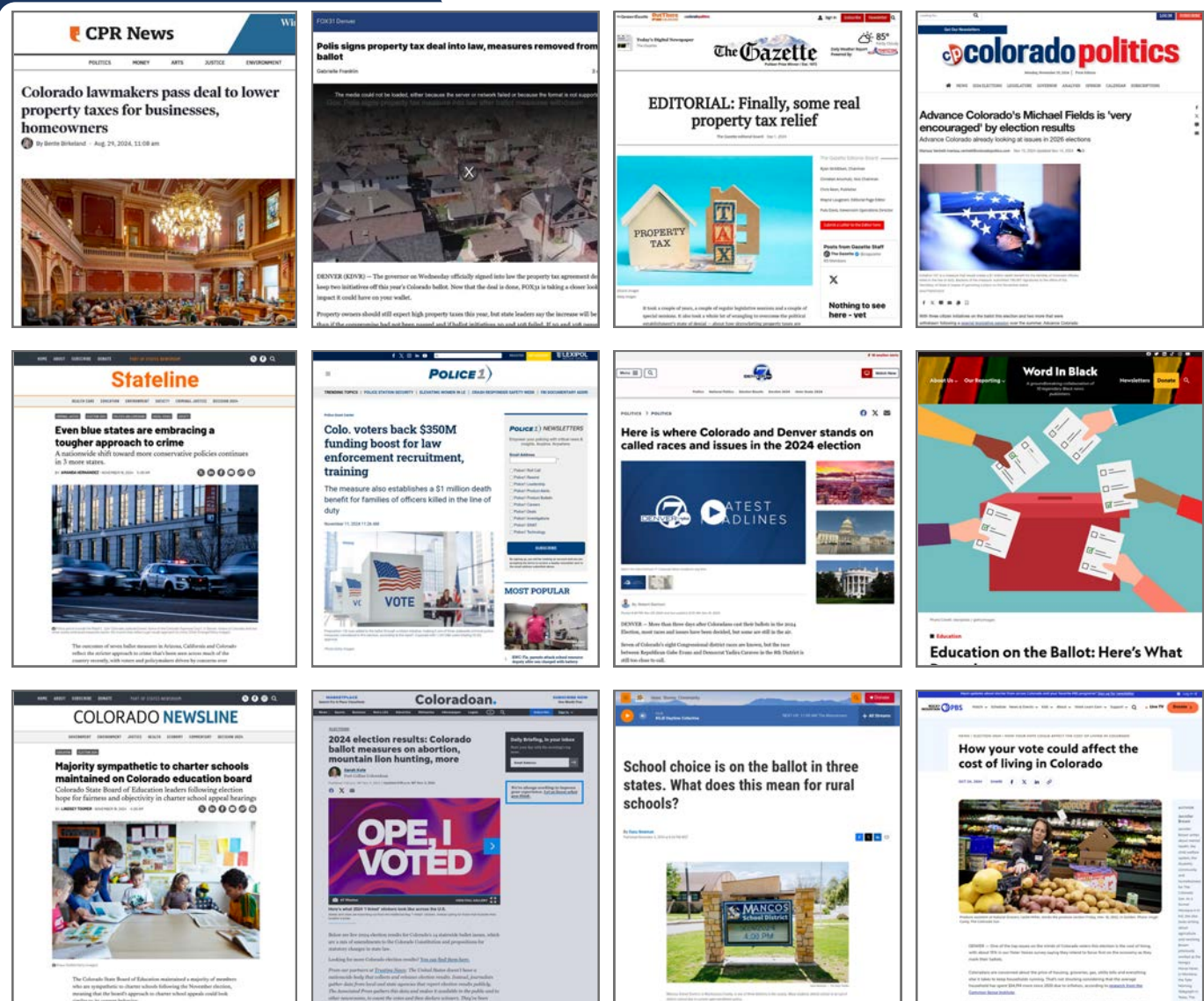
- **“Closer to Home”**: An examination of effective local government policies that can be replicated by other municipal and county governments throughout the state.
- **“Protecting Educational Freedom”**: A data-rich look at the benefits of school choice and why these basic rights deserve state constitutional protection.
- **“Unique Needs, Unique Solutions”**: Voices of parents, educators and elected leaders speaking about why they support school choice.
- **“Colorado’s Crime Crisis”**: A look at failed policies that have helped spike crime rates across the state, and solutions that can help make communities safer.
- **“What to Teach?”**: A practical guide for school board members, parents and teachers to help evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of local school district curricula.

BUILDING VISIBILITY IN 2024: TURNING HEADLINES INTO IMPACT

Advance Colorado far exceeded predicted media exposure with an unprecedented year of brand awareness and media coverage that elevated the Advance mission to new heights.

Garnering nearly 1,500 earned media hits, Advance's message resonated across the state and beyond, reaching an estimated audience of over 55 million people. This incredible coverage not only amplified the brand but also engaged communities on a massive scale, with over 28,000 direct interactions driven by these stories. Each headline, feature, OpEd, LTE, and social share reinforced Advance's position as a trusted leader in tackling Colorado's most pressing issues. From sparking meaningful conversations to rallying

support for critical policies, Advance's media presence served as a powerful engine for change. This milestone year demonstrated the exceptional reach and impact of Advance's work, underscoring the desire Coloradans have for common sense leadership.



MEDIA IMPACT: **BY THE NUMBERS**



1,560

Pieces of Coverage



57.3M

Estimated Views



28.7K

Engagements



6.66K

Twitter Shares



95

Max. Domain Authority



The Advance Colorado Rundown, Colorado's leading conservative podcast, delivered thought-provoking discussions on the state's most pressing policy issues, drawing over 13,000 listens this year—proof that Coloradans are tuning in and paying attention to what we have to say.



13,415 Total Downloads

Top 3 Episodes

- Advance Colorado Rundown – School Safety
- Advance Colorado Rundown – Home Equity Theft
- Advance Colorado Rundown - What's Up With Our Property Taxes

DRIVING DIGITAL GROWTH: EXPANDING REACH, AMPLIFYING IMPACT

In 2024, Advance Colorado achieved significant growth across its digital platforms, reflecting the organization's increasing influence and ability to connect with Coloradans statewide. Facebook followers maintained steady growth, while Instagram surged by 42.4%, and LinkedIn saw a 17.3% increase—highlighting expanding engagement with diverse audiences. Notably, X (formerly Twitter) experienced a remarkable 90.5% growth, reaching 1,711 followers, signaling strengthened real-time communication and outreach - with a follower count of 18,841 when combined with our CEO and VP. The Advance Colorado website also achieved unprecedented success, welcoming over 40,800 users—a staggering 80.1% increase in traffic. These numbers underscore the growing appetite for Advance Colorado's work, as more individuals turn to the organization as a trusted source for information, solutions, and advocacy. This digital momentum directly amplifies Advance Colorado's ability to influence policy, engage communities, and drive meaningful change across the state.



18,841 Followers



4.03M Impressions



147,105 Media Views



141,187 Engagements



46,638 Likes



+0.2%



+42.4%



+17.3%



+80.1%



Advance Colorado is a non-profit dedicated to educating Coloradans on the benefit of strong and sustainable state and local governing solutions in the areas of fiscal responsibility and transparency, limited government, free enterprise, lower taxes, strong public safety, and an accountable education system.

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