

Dear Friends,

Colorado is a VERY important state in this year's presidential election. In this neck-and-neck race, Colorado is too close to call. Every vote in Colorado will count. Don't miss out on this opportunity to help choose our next president. Please vote!

I don't mean to presume that you want my advice on voting in this year's important election. But people have been asking me for help in deciphering the colossal 18-question Colorado ballot (the longest ballot in Colorado history since, I think, 1912.)

So, if you'd like to hear my recommendations and how I'm voting, here it is.

If you don't already know, Amendments 53, 55, 56 and 57 have been removed from the ballot, so you can cross those off your list.

For those of you who aren't in San Miguel County, there are a few candidates below who won't apply to you, as well as our local bond/mill levy questions. But the rest is state-wide.

First, the candidates. I'm of course putting my full support behind **Barack Obama and Joe Biden** for President and Vice President. For once we have a candidates to vote *for*, not just the lesser of the evils. Suffice it to say that the last eight years have been disastrous for America and for individual Americans and we desperately need a change, to a team with intelligence and vision. 'Nuff said.

I also feel very strongly about supporting **Mark Udall** for US Senate. He is an environmentalist who has been working on alternative energy issues and he's committed to ending the war in Iraq. Got to www.markudall.com for more info. Udall's opponent, Bob Schaffer is too conservative for Colorado. To paraphrase Udall, 'Bob's voted with Bush 83% of the time. The other 17% he was to the right of Bush.'

John Salazar, gets my vote for US Congress, running against Wayne Wolf. I haven't always agreed with John, but he's working on passing wilderness legislation right here in San Miguel and Ouray Counties and he often votes for the environment.

Noelle Hagan is a truly wonderful person running for Colorado House district 58. She's running against Republican Scott Tipton, whom John Salazar beat in the US Congress race a couple of years ago.

Noelle is relying on a big victory in San Miguel County to secure a victory in this conservative district. She would be a great asset to our Colorado State House. Noelle has been Mayor of Montrose and on Montrose City Council. She's worked on health care, library and transportation issues. I've met her several times and she is so bright and well-spoken and she really understands how to get things done in politics (no minor feat). Her local government experience has taught her what communities need to thrive.

Because she's in a conservative district, she might not be able to make the sweeping changes we'd like to see on alternative energy and environmental issues close to home, but I know she will push the discussion in that direction.

And locally, I'm supporting **Art Goodtimes** for District 3 San Miguel County Commissioner.

Yes, we need change at the national level, but locally I'm not in favor of change just for change's sake. San Miguel County did away with term limits years ago so that citizens could retain elected officials if they are doing a good job, and I believe Art is a great asset to San Miguel County government.

Art and I have disagreed about some major issues over the years (I can't imagine there's an elected official I'd always agree with), but I have to say that in the two years I've been in office he's voted for the community and the environment across the board.

Some of the things that the current board has achieved include: Resolution of the 10-year power-line issue, approval of a bike underpass at Society Turn, implementation of an impact fee on big house construction in the County to go toward affordable housing, introduction of National Wilderness legislation in our County, monetary contribution to the Valley Floor purchase, discussions with CDOT to reduce Mag Chloride use on our roads, adoption of an Off Highway Vehicle ordinance and more.

One thing I have gained an appreciation for, is Art's connections across the state of Colorado and across the country that benefit San Miguel County. Art is, as you well know, a character and a presence. People remember him. Did Barack Obama even look at me when I shook his hand at a rally? No. Did he notice Art and talk to him? Of course! Governor Ritter respects Art and knows him by name. Art is working on public lands and energy issues in Colorado and even at a National level. Without this, San Miguel County's needs wouldn't be heard as clearly outside our County.

Finally, on a personal level, he's made my job easier because he knows so much about so many issues, that no matter how much I "study up" he always brings new and helpful information to meetings that I would otherwise not get.

I don't have an opinion about the State Board of Appeals or most of the Judges. But **Judge Greenacre** made some very sound rulings in the Valley Floor case and he should be retained, in my opinion. Supreme Court Judges Hobbs and Eid have very good reputations. I don't know enough about them to say more, except that both were brilliant in the Valley Floor case, and I will vote YES for them to be retained

Jill Brake for State School Board. I didn't know much about the State School Board candidates, but I hear that this is an important race. So I asked local school board members who told me that Jill is a natural leader with a tremendous amount of energy dedicated to her passion for children. She has the experience needed for this position: She's the past president of Colorado Association of School Boards and she served on the National School Board Association. Plus she's made an effort to show her support for Telluride schools by visiting Telluride this campaign season.

On to the issues.

My information for amendments and referenda comes from reading the “blue book” and also directly from a group called Western Progress, a non-partisan public policy institute serving the Rocky Mountain West. (www.westernprogress.org)

They’ve compiled suggestions from a large number of groups that I respect, such as the ACLU, the Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Progressive Coalition, NARAL, Colorado Common Cause, Colorado Center for Law and Policy, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, etc.

I encourage you to read the ballot language for yourself.

Remember that amendments 53, 55, 56 and 57 have been dropped from the ballot.

46-49 & 52 are all NO recommendations

50, 51, 58, 59 and Ref L, M, N, and O are recommended YES.

Some details:

46 NO: Discrimination and Preferential Treatment by Governments. It’s vague and it attempts to eliminate public programs that try to improve opportunities for women and people of color.

47 NO: Prohibition on Mandatory Labor Union Membership and Dues. Prevents public workers such as firefighters and nurses from organizing for better pay and working conditions.

48 NO NO NO NO: Definition of a person. This is the one put forth by the anti-choice groups to define life as beginning at conception and grant rights to a fertilized egg. It will restrict a woman’s right to make personal choices about her own health and body. NO.

49 NO: Allowable Government Paycheck Deductions. Intrudes on public employees’ (firefighters, nurses, teachers, cops) ability to make individual choices about their payroll deductions.

50 YES: Limited Gaming in Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek. I’m not a big fan of gambling, but local citizens should be allowed to make their own decisions about their communities.

51 YES: State Sales Tax Increase for Services for People with Developmental Disabilities. It will raise the State sales tax from 2.9% to 3.1% over two years. Pretty minimal. I believe strongly that it’s government’s job to give assistance to families with with special needs.

52 NO: Use of Severance Tax Revenue for Highways. Severance tax is a tax paid to the state and local governments by companies that extract resources from the earth (coal, gas, oil, metals...) This amendment would spend a portion of the State’s severance tax collections on highway projects and transportation, which, I believe is good, but unfortunately it would divert money from the much needed State water supply system as well as decrease funding for low income energy assistance and other natural resource programs.

54 NO: Campaign Contributions from Certain Government Contractors. Prohibits elected officials from accepting even \$1 from a person or family member of a person benefiting from a government contract. This might not be so bad except that it has built in loopholes that exclude large multi-national companies and energy and drug companies. Bad idea.

58 YES. Severance Taxes on the Oil and Gas Industry. This would increase the amount of severance taxes paid by the oil and gas industry by ending a \$300 million corporate tax subsidy for that industry. The saved money would be used to expand college scholarships, preserve wildlife habitat, support clean energy projects and help local communities deal with the impacts of the O&G industry. The corporate subsidy to O&G created when the industry was fledgling has to end now that the industry is making huge profits at the expense of our natural resources. And the State needs the money in these other important funds.

59 YES. Education Funding and TABOR Rebates. Creates a permanent source of funding for public education, preserves the right of citizens to vote on taxes, and untangles the fiscal knot in the Colorado constitution. Without raising taxes, 59 provides a future source of money for educating Colorado's children. This amendment attempts to fix some of the big problems with the TABOR laws of Colorado.

Referendum L YES. Qualifications for Serving in the State Legislature. This would lower the age requirement for serving in the state legislature from 25 to 21. Why not?

Ref M&N YES. Obsolete Constitutional Provisions. I'm always for getting rid of obsolete stuff from the constitution.

Ref O YES. Citizens-Initiated State Laws. This would decrease the number of signatures required to place a statutory initiative on the state ballot and increase the number of signatures required to place a constitutional initiative on the ballot. In my opinion, it should be harder to change the state constitution that it is now. This referendum encourages citizens to propose statutory rather than constitutional initiatives, while allowing the legislature flexibility to react when laws require clarification or when unintended consequences arise from new laws.

On local issues:

School Bond question: YES. I appreciate that the school board has been very responsive to the concerns of district residents who didn't want to lose the soccer fields and wanted a smaller addition. The bond question will, in addition to adding classrooms, provide some affordable housing seed money for school employees, fund much-needed repairs to the historic elementary school and provide technology infrastructure improvements. While your school taxes will lower with or without this bond measure, as the school has retired past debt, this measure will generate \$18 million for the school and, if passed, will result in a tax implication of \$80 a year on a \$1 million house and \$290 on each \$1 million of commercial real estate.

Childcare Initiative: YES. We need to provide subsidy for childcare centers in our County so that parents can work while children are in a safe environment. The mil levy will raise \$670,000 a year for child care projects. The property tax implication is \$60 a year for every \$1 million of residential property and \$180 a year for \$1 million of commercial property.

Medical Center. This is very personal for me, as I spent a dozen years on the Telluride Hospital District Board of Directors and I rely on the local medical center for my family's health care needs. I strongly believe that the Medical Center should be in the

Town of Telluride, as the vast majority of patients walk in from Town or the Gondola. I think the RV lot of the Pearl Property is the best location. It would be ideal for the Medical Center to have a space that was owned by the district or some other entity; so that they could be no longer at the mercy of Idarado's lease agreements. I agree that healthy communities have good, public health care. Therefore, **YES on question 200 and 201**. These questions are for Town of Telluride voters, only and I encourage a yes vote on both.

Question 5A will be for all voters in the Hospital District, which has roughly the same boundaries as the school district. If passed, \$15 million will be generated for seed money to be used as a kick-off for fundraising for another \$15 million. It will result in a bit less than the tax implication of the school measure (of \$80 a year on a \$1 million residence and \$290 on each \$1 million of commercial real estate.) This seems like a reasonable investment for district tax payers into a secure facility into the future.

I have to admit that while I'm VERY supportive of the idea, I'm uncertain of the specifics of this bond measure, specifically how the service agreement currently allows for tax dollars from the Hospital District to be used for non-emergency care at a site other than the current location. So I'm still **undecided on 5A**

I'm not going to give recommendations on other local Town issues, as these should be decided by the voters and tax payers of those towns, which I'm not. But I do hope Norwood approves its Rec District so there is some seed money for ball fields and other recreational amenities.

I love the idea of instant run off ballots and it would be great to see how a pilot program of that works in Telluride. As far as voting requirements, I hope Telluride voters make sure that everyone voting in Town elections actually lives in Town, but woodsies and homeless people should not be excluded from their right to vote, if they live in Town limits.

Town of Telluride voters have road and charter amendment issues to decide on to. I'll leave those to you!

Good luck, and please be sure to vote in the November 4 election!