

SUPREME COURT, STATE OF COLORADO 2 East 14th Avenue Denver, Colorado 80203	DATE FILED: May 10, 2022 4:30 PM
Original Proceeding Pursuant to Colo. Rev. Stat. §1-40-107(2) Appeal from the Ballot Title Board	
In the Matter of the Title, Ballot Title, and Submission Clause for Proposed Initiative 2021- 2022 #97 Petitioners: STEVEN WARD and LEVI MENDYK v. Respondents/Proponents: ROBERT SCHRAEDER and JOEL ALLEN CATHEY and Title Board: THERESA CONLEY; DAVID POWELL; and JULIE PELEGRIN	▲ COURT USE ONLY ▲
<i>Attorneys for Respondents</i> Martha M. Tierney, No. 27521 Tierney Lawrence LLC 225 E.16 th Ave, Suite 350 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: (303) 356-4870 E-mail: mtierney@tierneylawrence.com	Case No.: 2022SA134
RESPONDENTS' OPENING BRIEF	

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I hereby certify that this brief complies with all requirements of C.A.R. 28 and C.A.R. 32, including all formatting requirements set forth in these rules. Specifically, the undersigned certifies that the brief complies with C.A.R. 28(g). It contains 2,185 words.

Further, the undersigned certifies that the brief complies with C.A.R. 28(k).

For the party raising the issue:

It contains under a separate heading (1) a concise statement of the applicable standard of appellate review with citation to authority; and (2) a citation to the precise location in the record (R. __, p. __), not to an entire document, where the issue was raised and ruled on.

For the party responding to the issue:

It contains, under a separate heading, a statement of whether such party agrees with the opponent's statements concerning the standard of review and preservation for appeal, and if not, why not.

I acknowledge that my brief may be stricken if it fails to comply with any of the requirements of C.A.R. 28 and C.A.R. 32.

By: s/Martha M. Tierney

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STATUTES

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CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

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Robert Schraeder and Joel Allen Cathey (jointly “Proponents” or “Respondents”), registered electors of the State of Colorado, through their undersigned counsel, respectfully submit this Opening Brief in support of the title, ballot title and submission clause that the Title Board set for Proposed Initiative 2021-2022 #97 (“Initiative”).

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

1. Whether the Title Board erred in ruling that the measure contains a single subject as required by Article V, §1(5.5) of the Colorado Constitution and C.R.S. §1-40-106.5?
2. Whether the Title set by the Title Board for the measure is misleading?

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This is an appeal from the Title Board’s setting of the Title for Initiative #97. On March 22, 2022, Proponents filed the Initiative with the directors of the Legislative Council and the Office of Legislative Legal Services. Pursuant to C.R.S. §1-40-105(1), the Offices of Legislative Council and Legislative Legal Services conducted a review and comment hearing on the Initiative on April 5, 2022.

Proponents filed the Initiative with the Secretary of State’s office on April 8, 2022. At the Title Board hearing on April 20, 2022, the Title Board found that the

Initiative contained a single subject, as required pursuant to article V, section 1(5.5) of the Colorado Constitution, and C.R.S. §1-40-106.5. The Title Board set the Title for the Initiative.

On April 27, 2022, Petitioners Steven Ward and Levi Mendyk filed a Motion for Rehearing. On April 28, 2022, the Title Board granted the Motion for Rehearing only to the extent that it made some changes to the title. Petitioners filed a Petition for Review, pursuant to C.R.S. §1-40-107(2) on May 5, 2022.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Initiative #97 amends the Colorado Revised Statutes to change the number of retail liquor store licenses and liquor-licensed drugstore licenses a person may hold, and caps both types of licenses at a maximum of twelve. The language of the measure is short and the changes to existing statute are few.

The Title set for the Initiative by the Title Board correctly and fairly expresses the true intent and meaning of the Initiative and will not mislead the public.

The Title set for Initiative #97 at the hearing on April 20, 2022, reads:

Shall there be a change to the Colorado Revised Statutes concerning the number of retail liquor licenses in which a person may hold an interest, and, in connection therewith, increasing the number of retail liquor store licenses and decreasing the number of liquor-licensed drugstore licenses, including licenses for sale of liquor in grocery stores, a person may own or hold an interest in, on and after January

1, 2027, to a maximum of 12 licenses for each type of retail establishment?¹

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The Title Board properly exercised its broad discretion drafting the title for Initiative #97. The Initiative contains a single subject by changing the number of retail liquor licenses in which a person may hold an interest. The Initiative increases the number of retail liquor store licenses and decreases the number of liquor-licensed drugstore licenses, including licenses for sale of liquor in grocery stores, that a person may own or hold an interest in, on and after January 1, 2027, to a maximum of 12 licenses for each type of retail establishment.

Initiative #97 does not present either of the dangers attending omnibus measures - the proponents did not combine an array of disconnected subjects into the measure for the purpose of garnering support from various factions; and voters will not be surprised by, or fraudulently led to vote for, any surreptitious provisions coiled up in the folds of a complex initiative. The text of the measure is short and

¹ Proponents filed a total of six measures that were challenged by the same Petitioners. Proposed Initiatives 2021-2022 #96 (Case No. 2022SA133), #97 (Case No. 2022SA134), #100 (Case No. 2022SA135), #101 (Case No. 2022SA136), #102 (Case No. 2022SA137), and #139 (Case No. 2022SA129). Some of the same legal issues overlap amongst the six cases, and, thus, there are similarities in the briefs.

less than two pages in length. The Title fairly and accurately sets forth the major features of the Initiative and is not misleading.

The Title Board is only obligated to fairly summarize the central points of a proposed measure and need not refer to every nuance and feature of the proposed measure. While a title must be fair, clear, accurate and complete, it is not required to set out every detail of an initiative.

There is no basis to set aside the Title, and the decision of the Title Board should be affirmed.

ARGUMENT

I. The Initiative Complies with the Single Subject Requirement.

A. Standard of Review.

Article V, section 1(5.5) of the Colorado Constitution, and section 1-40-106.5(1)(a), C.R.S. (2021), provide that a proposed initiative must be limited to “a single subject which shall be clearly expressed in its title.” “A proposed initiative violates this rule if its text relates to more than one subject and has at least two distinct and separate purposes not dependent upon or connected with each other.” *In re Initiative for 2011-2012 #3*, 274 P.3d 562, 565 (Colo. 2012). When reviewing a challenge to the Title Board’s decision, this Court “employ[s] all legitimate presumptions in favor of the propriety of the Title Board’s action.”

Cordero v. Leahy (In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #90), 328 P.3d 155, 158 (Colo. 2014). The Court will “only overturn the Title Board’s finding that an initiative contains a single subject in a clear case.” *Id.* Respondents agree that Petitioners preserved this issue for appeal.

B. Initiative 2021-2022 #97 Contains a Single Subject.

The Initiative contains a single subject by changing the number of retail liquor licenses in which a person may hold an interest. The Initiative increases the number of retail liquor store licenses and decreases the number of liquor-licensed drugstore licenses, including licenses for sale of liquor in grocery stores, that a person may own or hold an interest in, on and after January 1, 2027, to a maximum of 12 licenses for each type of retail establishment. The text of Initiative #97 is short, and its provisions are directly tied to the measure’s central focus.

The single-subject requirement functions to prevent two dangers: (1) "logrolling," or the practice of "combining subjects with no necessary or proper connection for the purpose of garnering support for the initiative from various factions—that may have different or even conflicting interests—[in order to] lead to the enactment of measures that would fail on their own merits"; and (2) voter surprise and fraud caused by the "passage of a surreptitious provision 'coiled up in the folds' of a complex initiative." *In re Initiative for 2011-2012 #3*, 274 P.3d at

566. Accordingly, the subject matter of a proposed initiative "must be necessarily and properly connected rather than disconnected or incongruous." *In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #90*, 328 P.3d at 159 (quoting *In re Initiative for 2011-2012 #3*, 274 P.3d at 565). But where a proposed initiative "tends to effect or to carry out one general objective or purpose," it presents only one subject. *In re Title, Ballot Title and Submission Clause, and Summary for 1999-00 #256*, 12 P.3d 246, 253 (Colo. 2000); accord *In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #90*, 328 P.3d at 159.

Here, Petitioners contend that Initiative #97 violates the single subject requirement because it increases retail liquor store licenses and decreases liquor-licensed drugstore licenses so that both types of licenses are capped at a maximum of twelve that a person may own or hold an interest in, on and after January 1, 2027.

Initiative #97 does not present either of the dangers the single-subject requirement seeks to prevent. There is no threat of logrolling here because the proponents did not combine an array of unconnected subjects into the measure for the purpose of garnering support from groups with different, or even conflicting interests. *In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #89*, 328 P.3d 172, 177 (Colo. 2014). Rather, each subsection of Initiative #97 is tied to the central purpose of the measure: changing the number of retail liquor licenses in which a person may hold

an interest. While the Initiative increases retail liquor store licenses slightly from a cap of three to a cap of twelve after January 1, 2027, it decreases liquor-licensed drugstore licenses from an unlimited number after 2037, to a maximum of twelve after January 1, 2027. These changes create parity in the number of retail liquor licenses a person may hold. Initiative #97 will pass or fail on its merits and does not run the risk of garnering support from factions with different or conflicting goals. *See id.* at 178.

Initiative #97 also fails to trigger the second danger of omnibus measures because voters will not be surprised by, or fraudulently led to vote for, any provisions “coiled up in the folds” of Initiative 97. *In re Initiative 2001-2002 #43*, 46 P.3d 438, 442-43 (Colo. 2002). No such surprise would occur should voters approve Initiative #97, because the plain language of the measure unambiguously proposes to increase retail liquor store licenses over time and decreases liquor-licensed drugstore licenses over time, capping both types of licenses at a maximum of twelve after January 1, 2027. Initiative #97 is short and clear, and its plain language is not confusing. *See In re Initiative for 2011-2012 #3*, 274 P.3d at 567. Initiative #97 complies with the single subject rule.

II. The Title Board Set a Clear Title That Fairly Summarizes the Key Components of the Initiative.

A. Standard of Review.

When reviewing a challenge to the Title Board’s decision, this Court “employ[s] all legitimate presumptions in favor of the propriety of the Title Board’s action.” *Cordero v. Leahy (In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #90)*, 328 P.3d 155, 158 (Colo. 2014). The Court “will reverse the Title Board's decision only if a title is insufficient, unfair, or misleading.” *Earnest v. Gorman (In re Initiative for 2009-2010 #45)*, 234 P.3d 642, 648 (Colo. 2010); see also *In re Title, Ballot Title & Submission Clause, & Summary for 1999-2000 No. 29*, 972 P.2d 257, 266 (Colo. 1999) (observing that this court will reverse a title only if it contains a "material omission, misstatement, or misrepresentation"). Respondents agree that Petitioners preserved this issue for appeal.

B. The Title Is Not Misleading.

The Title is clear and does not mislead the voters. “While titles must be fair, clear, accurate and complete, the Title Board is not required to set out every detail of an initiative.” *In re Initiative for 2013-2014 #90*, 328 P.2d at 164. (citations omitted). Here, the Title thoroughly but succinctly captures the key features of the measure, is not likely to mislead voters as to the Initiative’s purpose or effect, nor does the Title conceal some hidden intent.

Petitioners claim that the title is misleading because it does not provide a description of a retail liquor store, a description of the increases and decreases, a description of a “person” that “may hold an interest,” descriptions of the “number of stores allowed” on or after January 1, 2022, and before January 1, 2027, and a description of language deleted from the statute that allowed unlimited liquor-licensed drugstores on or after January 1, 2037. These descriptions are not necessary, or they are already included in the title.

For example, the title does tell voters that the number of retail liquor store licenses in which a person may hold an interest will increase and the number of liquor-licensed drugstore licenses in which a person may hold an interest will decrease, and both will be capped after January 1, 2027, at a maximum of twelve. The title is clear and understandable as the Title Board set it.

The Court is not to “consider whether the Title Board set the best possible title; rather, [its] duty is to ensure that the title “fairly reflect[s] the proposed initiative so that petition signers and voters will not be misled into support for or against a proposition by reason of the words employed by the Board.” *In re Initiative for 2007-2008 #62*, 184 P.3d 52, 58 (Colo. 2008). The Title Board is required to set a title that “consist[s] of a brief statement accurately reflecting the central features of the proposed measure.” *In re Initiative on “Trespass-Streams*

with Flowing Water," 910 P.2d 21, 24 (Colo. 1996). Titles and submission clauses should "enable the electorate, whether familiar or unfamiliar with the subject matter of a particular proposal, to determine intelligently whether to support or oppose such a proposal." *In re Initiative for 2009-2010 # 24*, 218 P.3d 350, 356 (Colo. 2009) (quoting *In re Initiative on Parental Notification of Abortions for Minors*, 794 P.2d 238, 242 (Colo. 1990)).

Only in a clear case should a title prepared by the Title Board be held invalid. *In re Title, Ballot Title & Submission Clause Pertaining to the Casino Gaming Initiative Adopted on April 21, 1982*, 649 P.2d 303, 306 (Colo. 1982). This is not such a case.

CONCLUSION

The Proponents respectfully request the Court to affirm the actions of the Title Board for Proposed Initiative 2021-2022 #97.

Respectfully submitted this 10th day of May 2022.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 10th day of May 2022 a true and correct copy of the foregoing **RESPONDENTS' OPENING BRIEF** was filed and served via the Colorado Courts E-Filing System to the following:

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