



ARVADA
United Methodist Church

AUMC’S JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A “NO” VOTE ON AMENDMENT 81

Approved by committee vote on August 31, 2026

AMENDMENT 81 – Requiring Colorado Law Enforcement to Cooperate with Federal Immigration Authorities

WHAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD DO

This initiative would amend the Colorado constitution to mandate that local and state law enforcement notify the Department of Homeland Security within 72 hours after charging a person with either a violent crime, or any crime if the person has a prior felony conviction, and the officers cannot determine or verify after a reasonable effort is made that the person is lawfully present in the U.S. This mandate applies to police officers, corrections officers, and members of the local and state district attorney’s office. The Department of Homeland Security must also be notified if a person with a felony record whose legal immigration status or citizenship is not established is charged with any new crime, regardless of the nature or severity of that crime.

Because this initiative would amend the Colorado constitution, it requires 55% of the votes to pass.

[Text of the initiative](#) (formerly Initiative #95)

ARGUMENTS FOR THE INITIATIVE

Proponents argue the measure would improve community safety by identifying and removing individuals that have been charged with violent crimes or have prior felony convictions. Only individuals who have already committed a felony crime, or are accused of doing so, would be reported to the Department of Homeland Security. It would bring consistency to local policies and policing by overriding state limits on federal immigration cooperation and mandating closer alignment with federal immigration enforcement policies.

Supporters: [Advance Colorado](#), Eagle County Republican Women Club

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE INITIATIVE

Opponents argue that Amendment 81 interferes with due process rights under the 5th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution because notification to the Department of Homeland Security (and subsequent deportation) is based upon charges, not convictions. This undermines the presumption of innocence and exposes people to federal immigration action before any finding of guilt for the alleged crime. In addition, the language presumes a person is unlawfully in the United States unless they can definitively prove they are present lawfully, which would

unfairly penalize people who are lawfully present but are unable to immediately demonstrate it. This proposal could decrease trust of local law enforcement within immigrant communities and inhibit cooperation, because crime victims and witnesses may be reluctant to report crimes if the outcome will automatically end with deportation. The proposal also interferes with states' rights to establish law enforcement policies and imposes additional mandates on local authorities with no additional resources.

Opponents: No on 81 Coalition, [Bell Policy Center](#), [Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition](#), [Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network](#)

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

2026 Colorado Election Blue Book – Amendment 81 (mailed to voters)

[Ballotpedia](#)

JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE POSITION ON THIS INITIATIVE

As a committee and pursuant to a consensus vote, **we oppose this initiative and urge United Methodists to vote against it.**

OUR REASONS FOR THIS POSITION

Our Social Principles clearly state that all people have equal rights regardless of factors such as national origin or immigration status. This proposal is contrary to our Social Principles because it would create a class of people who are deemed to not have the Constitutional rights available to others in this country by virtue of suspected national origin or immigration status.

In addition, given current efforts by this administration to swiftly deport people or coerce them into deportation without regard to circumstances, we have reason to believe that this proposal would increase the likelihood of unnecessary and unwarranted detention and deportation of people who are lawfully in the country and have not in fact committed any felonies. This will be more likely to happen to people of color, who are charged with crimes at higher rates than similar white individuals, and despite the fact that immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than native-born persons.

While public safety is important, the overwhelming risk of snaring innocent people is simply too high, and so there is no reason to bypass the usual criminal justice proceedings which ordinarily result in deportation upon conviction of violent (and other) crimes. Even proponent Advance Colorado, which scoured the state and the country for individual instances of crimes committed by immigrants, could not produce more than a handful of instances, and some of those would not even have been prevented by this initiative.

Our Social Principles also state that we are called to support initiatives that increase public trust between law enforcement and community members. Community members who know that law enforcement is required to report people to ICE will be less likely to cooperate with law enforcement and less trusting that the system will result in fair outcomes.

WHAT WE CONSIDERED IN TAKING THIS POSITION

UMC sources considered:

- Relevant provisions of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (attached)
- Committee discussions
- [What The UMC believes about immigrants and migrants | UMC.org](#)

External sources considered:

- [History](#) and [text](#) of the ballot initiative available from the Colorado Secretary of State
- [Ballotpedia resources and analysis](#)
- Liddle, A. [Fiscal Summary – Initiative 175](#). Colorado Legislative Council, 11/13/25.
- Reports and analyses:
 - Bell Policy Center. [Ballot Guide 2026 – Amendment 81](#).
 - Caven, Elizabeth, February 2026. [“Examining Violent and Repeat Criminal Offenses by Illegal Immigrants: Case Studies from Colorado and Nationwide.”](#) Advance Colorado.
 - Ruiz Soto, A. (October 2024). [Explainer: Immigrants and Crime in the United States](#). Migration Policy Institute.
- Media reports:
 - Paul, J. [“Colorado voters will decide whether to force Colorado police to alert ICE after charging people with questionable immigration status.”](#) Colorado Sun, 1/23/26.

UMC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2025-28 – EXCERPTS RELEVANT TO AMENDMENT 81

Para. 163 – The Political Community

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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E. Criminal Justice –

...

We condemn discriminatory enforcement or any abuse of power for reasons of tribe, ethnicity, native language, country of origin...or citizenship status. We further support access to competent legal representation for people who are accused...of criminal acts. We endorse initiatives designed to promote positive interactions between law enforcement and members of local communities.

...

BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

We declare that all individuals, no matter their circumstances or social standing, are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms. These rights are grounded in God’s gracious act in creation (Genesis 1:27), and they are revealed

fully in Jesus’ incarnation of divine love. As a church, we will work to protect those rights and freedoms within the church and to reform the structures of society to ensure that every human being can thrive.

As set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other important international treaties, basic rights and freedoms include the right to life, liberty, and security as well as to equal treatment before the law and freedom from unlawful detention. Additional liberties include the rights to fair trial ...

...

We condemn all attempts to deny individuals their basic rights or freedoms or to strip human beings of their inherent dignity and worth. We, therefore, reject within the church and wider society any act of discrimination, hatred, or violence directed against individuals or groups based on national origin ... or any other factors.

...

G. Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees –

...

We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based upon their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees.

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