



AUMC'S JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A "NO" VOTE ON AMENDMENT 83

Approved by committee vote on September 8, 2026

AMENDMENT 83 – Establishing a Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish

WHAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD DO

If passed, this measure would amend the Colorado constitution to provide that the people of Colorado have a right to hunt and fish and to harvest wildlife by hunting and fishing. The right includes traditional methods of hunting and fishing. All species of fish and wildlife are included, except for non-game species, endangered species, and species that are illegal to hunt under federal law.

The measure also establishes hunting and fishing as the state's preferred method of managing fish and wildlife populations, although the state may regulate hunting, fishing, and wildlife management as necessary for sound scientific wildlife management, public safety, or preserving hunting and fishing opportunities in the future.

[Text of the initiative](#) (formerly Initiative #302)

ARGUMENTS FOR THE INITIATIVE

The proponent of this measure, the International Order of T. Roosevelt, is seeking to establish a constitutional right to hunt and fish in all 50 states. The organization promotes the view of President Theodore Roosevelt that conservation efforts are critical to the hunting way of life and that hunters are critical to conservation efforts. It believes that hunting is under attack from a variety of forces, and that state constitutional amendments are needed to provide the best protection for this way of life.

Supporters: [International Order of T. Roosevelt](#)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE INITIATIVE

Opponents of this measure argue that the state constitution should be reserved for fundamental rights that benefit all citizens. This measure would put a right in the constitution that only benefits one group. In addition, Coloradans already have a statutory right to hunt and fish, so there is no problem that needs to be solved. Finally, it is best to leave decisions about fish and wildlife management strategies up to experts at the Colorado Department of Fish and Wildlife, whose ability to implement science-based conservation efforts may be limited by this measure.

Opponents: [Protect Colorado's Constitution](#)

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

2026 Colorado Election Blue Book – Amendment 83 (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 call for us to be committed to God’s creation, to protect our interdependent ecosystems, and to care for all God’s creatures, including wildlife. We are specifically called to be against mass extinctions and to adopt “sustainable practices and policies that allow both human and animal life to flourish.”

We believe this measure is written too vaguely to ensure that exemplary wildlife management practices can always be applied and does not do enough to protect wildlife. For example, the failure to define “traditional” practices of hunting and fishing means that a practice of harvesting wildlife that many would consider to be cruel and inhumane would have to be permitted. Prioritizing hunting and fishing as the primary means of conservation could mean that state wildlife managers would be prohibited from using the most up-to-date conservation methods, or at least could face expensive litigation.

These are not simply theoretical possibilities. Many other states have constitutional provisions favoring a right to hunt and fish, often thanks to the stated mission of this ballot issue’s sponsor, so there are examples of this type of conflict. For example, in Florida, the constitutional right to hunt and fish was used to overturn a local measure intended to protect sea turtles during nesting season.

Our state’s current approach, which protects the right to hunt and fish but also permits legislative debate and resolution as new circumstances arise, provides the best balance of interests and is most consistent with our Social Principles.

WHAT WE CONSIDERED IN TAKING THIS POSITION

UMC sources considered:

- Relevant provisions of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (attached)
- Committee discussions

External sources considered:

- [History](#) and [text](#) of the ballot initiative available from the Colorado Secretary of State
- [Ballotpedia resources and analysis](#)
- Reports and analyses:
 - Wildlife for All, June 2026. [“Right to Hunt: Understanding ‘Right to Hunt and Fish’ Constitutional Amendments.”](#)
- Media reports:

- Kascak, S. [“Constitutional right to hunt and fish proposed for Colorado ballot.”](#) Complete Colorado, May 14, 2026.
- Ventrelli, M. [“Group aims to add right to hunt and fish to Colorado constitution.”](#) Colorado Politics, June 13, 2026.

UMC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2025-28 – EXCERPTS RELEVANT TO AMENDMENT 83

Para. 160 I. THE COMMUNITY OF ALL CREATION

PREFACE

... Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation (Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 6:26-30; Romans 8:22-24). We are also called to honor the role of every part of creation in healing the whole; thus we praise God with the whole of creation (Psalm 148) and recognize that we are part of complex ecosystems, all valued by God.

CREATION IN PERIL

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A. *Destruction of Ecosystems* – Whether human beings are conscious of it or not, we are participants in and beneficiaries of complex natural ecosystems made up of myriads of symbiotic relationships between living organisms such as animals, plants, insects, and microorganisms, and the physical environs they inhabit, including air, water, and soil.

Overconsumption, shortsighted policies, poor management of natural resources, and other unsustainable practices have severely impacted the fragile, natural ecosystems on which all of life depends. Too often, humankind has treated the rest of the created world as if it were disposable and allowed the destruction of other living organisms and their natural habitats to go unchecked ...

...

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

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D. *Caring for All Creatures* – We support the respectful and humane treatment of animals, who are crucial participants in God’s ongoing creation and of inherent worth. We embrace biblical teachings that envision a time when humans and other creatures shall live in peace and harmony in a restored creation (Isaiah 11:6).

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With respect to creatures living in the wild, we urge cooperative efforts by international bodies, governments, civic institutions, churches, and concerned individuals and groups to end poaching and protect endangered and vulnerable species and to preserve dwindling habitats. We decry the mass extinctions currently underway and call for the adoption of sustainable practices and policies that allow both animal and human life to flourish.

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F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom – We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos ... We also affirm the traditional wisdom found within indigenous communities, particularly the emphasis that native and first peoples have placed on living in harmony and balance with the earth and other animals as well as the need to protect the air, land, and water.