

February 18th, 2021



TO: Interested Parties
FR: Strategies 360 Research
RE: Colorado Voters Support Action on Housing

A new Strategies 360 survey conducted on behalf of the State Innovation Exchange (SiX) uncovers widespread support for a handful of housing policies that would ease the burden on Colorado renters.¹ Specifically, this survey focused on reforming existing laws surrounding late fees, evictions, and court practices.

Late Fees

A clear majority believe it's time to update Colorado's laws on tenant late fees. Indeed, 80% of Colorado voters support capping how much landlords can charge in late fees and 69% support prohibiting landlords from charging interest on late fees. When provided specific policies to evaluate, 75% supported capping late fees at 2.5% of what tenants owe (70% supported a 5% cap).

Further, voters back a mandatory grace period before late fees can be charged: 81% support a 10-day grace period, while 75% support a 14-day grace period. Voters also believe that Colorado should prohibit evictions solely on the basis of unpaid late fees, so long as the tenant is still paying their base rent (77% support; 20% oppose).

Eviction Court Reform

Coloradans also favor stronger eviction protections. Three quarters of voters (75%) believe Colorado should prohibit evictions during the pandemic. They also believe we should shore up loopholes in the federal eviction moratorium, including the loophole that lets landlords evict renters during the pandemic if they're on a month-to-month lease (68% support; 28% oppose).

Support for updating eviction policies extends into the arena of court reform as well. Two-thirds of voters (66%) say that renters need more due process protections in evictions cases (just 20% disagree). To put a finer point on this, 76% say tenants should have more than just 10 days to catch up on back rent before landlords can file for eviction.

In addition, 82% support updating the law to allow courts to impose financial penalties on landlords who illegally lock out tenants without a court order. And nearly three-quarters (74%) feel that renters shouldn't have to pay excessive fees during an eviction hearing if they want to raise health and safety concerns about their rental home.

Bottom line

Coloradans faced steep housing challenges prior to the pandemic, though COVID-19 undoubtedly intensified them and brought many into sharper relief. The result: an unmistakable desire for reforms that ease the burden on Colorado's hard-hit renters, both as a salve to help ease their economic pain during the pandemic and as a restoration of basic safeguards for the renting process over the long term. And perhaps most important, this desire for immediate action is shared across renters and homeowners, as well as Coloradans of all political stripes. Indeed, nearly two thirds (64%) say Colorado's elected officials aren't doing enough when it comes to addressing the cost of housing.

¹ Strategies 360 conducted a survey of 501 registered voters in Colorado from February 4-10, 2021. Interviews were conducted on cell phones, landlines, and online via voter-file matched SMS recruitment. The margin of error for a survey of 501 interviews is $\pm 4.4\%$ at the 95% confidence level; error is higher among subgroups.