



Welcome to the Denver DSA Ballot guide for the June 30th primary election. This ballot guide was researched and written by members of Denver DSA's Electoral Committee and all positions were approved by a vote of our full chapter membership.

The Electoral Committee creates ballot guides for voters for the same reason we engage in any electoral work, to win material change for the working class. We believe that there are multiple candidates in primary races this year that will work for working people, make living more affordable, and protect the most vulnerable members of our society and the voters should know who we think those candidates are. They are the candidates we recommend. There are sadly other candidates that we believe if elected to office would not work for working people and those candidates we recommend you do not vote for. The candidate(s) marked Endorsed have been endorsed by the chapter. That means we not only recommend that you vote for them, but have also been organizing our members actively work to get them elected since they have met the highest standards for a candidate we have.

FEDERAL U.S. SENATE

Julie Gonzales **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Julie Gonzales has been in the Colorado State Senate for eight years, passing over 200 bills and building a strong record as an ally to workers and unions. Her platform includes a number of progressive policies including Medicare for All, universal childcare and eldercare, raising the federal minimum wage, and federal investment in housing to address the housing crisis. She has also taken a stance against Israel's genocide in Gaza by calling for an arms embargo on Israel. Her proven legislative track record, her work with unions and other community organizations, and her commitment to working families would make her one of the most progressive Senators in the country.

John Hickenlooper **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Throughout his time in office, Hickenlooper has prioritized corporate interests over people, maintaining cozy relationships with lobbyists and industry groups and accepting money from corporate PACs. He has repeatedly supported Israel's genocide in Gaza, refusing to take even basic steps to stop the ongoing atrocities. He has also shown willingness to go along with the Trump administration rather than fight back by voting to confirm a significant number of Trump's Cabinet picks. Hickenlooper is a strong example of the corporate-friendly politicians that have failed working people and led us to the situation we are in now.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

Melat Kiros **ENDORSED**

Melat Kiros will fight for Medicare for All, universal childcare, and abolishing ICE. She does not take money from corporate PACs and believes in fighting to get money out of politics.

As an immigrant, student, and barista she understands the struggles of ordinary Americans and will stand with working class people.

On housing, she supports federally subsidized housing development, creating social housing programs for publicly owned and managed housing available to anyone, expanding affordable housing incentives, increasing down payment assistance for first time home buyers, and ending tax breaks for private equity and hedge funds while restricting institutional investors from buying up housing stock. Put simply, she maintains strong values on housing.

On climate, Melat's plan to introduce a Green New Deal within her first six months in office to create a climate policy that addresses both immediate energy needs and invests in a long-term plan for our future helped her receive an endorsement by the climate advocacy group Sunrise Movement.

Melat believes the United States should invest in diplomacy rather than militarization and endless war. She believes in imposing an arms embargo against Israel to stop the ongoing genocide. She believes in repurposing the money currently spent on war into programs that will help the American working class.

Finally, Melat believes AI development must be transparent and serve as a public benefit, and must not promote discrimination, exploitation, or the displacement of working people from their jobs.

The Denver Democratic Socialists of America proudly endorse Melat Kiros for Congressional District 1 and strongly recommend a YES vote for Melat Kiros.

Diana DeGette **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Diana DeGette has been in the same Congressional seat for nearly thirty years but passed just two bills in that time. Rather than using her decades of seniority to fight for the people of Colorado, DeGette has spent her tenure cultivating cozy relationships with corporate interests and taking millions of dollars from corporate PACs.

The healthcare and pharmaceutical industries are among DeGette's top donors. Her support from these industries justifiably raises questions to just how committed she is to real healthcare reform, given reform would directly threaten the profits of the industries bankrolling her campaign.

On foreign policy, DeGette has refused to support the Block the Bombs Act, which would stop sending weapons to Israel as it carries out its genocide in Gaza. Meanwhile, she received donations from pro-Israel lobbying groups. Her silence regarding the ongoing atrocities committed by Israel while receiving money from groups supporting Israel shows a lack of moral clarity.

After nearly thirty years of taking corporate money, passing virtually nothing, and turning her back on constituents demanding an end to genocide, it is well past time for change. We strongly recommend a NO vote on Diana DeGette.

Wanda James **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Wanda James has a full and varied background. She is a first generation college graduate, a former member of the US Navy, founder of the first Black-owned cannabis dispensary in Colorado, and a restaurant owner. Currently she is a Regent for the University of Colorado.

Her platform includes support for the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, bans on Congressional stock trading and limits on lobbying, as well as strengthening civil rights protections. She also supports expanding the National Housing Trust Fund, first generation home buyer credits, and investment in renewable energy and clean technology.

Despite her support for some positive policies, she falls short in other areas. She has described herself as being strongly supported by the business community, which raises the concern that she will take the side of big business over working people.

Her position on Israel is disappointing; she lays the blame for the atrocities in Gaza on Netanyahu while ignoring the broader context of Israel's decades-long occupation in Gaza and calls criticisms against Israel "amazingly wrong." This framing is meant to let Israel off the hook and signals a willingness to return to business-as-usual once Netanyahu is out of office. For these reasons we recommend a NO vote for Wanda James.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 8

Manny Rutinel **REMAIN NEUTRAL**

**In light of recent developments including a [Colorado Sun interview](#) that took place after the democratic process that produced this guide, many of our members are concerned that even a Neutral vote on Manny is too supportive. More details are included in the text below.*

Manny Rutinel is a member of the Colorado House of Representatives. In the Legislature, he sponsored and passed meaningful legislation including expanding the earned income tax credit for low-income families and creating a \$50 million affordable housing fund. He does not take corporate PAC money, and has a number of endorsements from labor and progressive organizations.

Since the time of Denver DSA's original vote on this ballot guide, Rutinel changed his position on several key issues of his campaign. For example, Rutinel backtracked on previous promises on environmental advocacy and stated he supports that "our energy system uses an all of the above approach" when asked if he would support a national ban on fracking, a hedged response to an environmentally harmful energy source that also mirrors the response by his opponent, Shannon Bird. Rutinel additionally initially positioned himself as strongly opposed to ICE; however, he has since changed his position by stating the necessity to focus immigration efforts on "violent criminals." Rutinel does NOT support Medicare for All, universal childcare, or student loan forgiveness outside of the public sector. Additionally, Rutinel recently stated that he supports continued military funding for Israel.

Shannon Bird **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Shannon Bird's record serving in the Colorado House of Representatives from 2019 to 2026 serious concerns. Bird repeatedly broke with the Democratic Party on key issues, including voting against rent control measures, overdose prevention centers, denser housing near transit stops, and a tax bill that redirected business tax breaks to low-income Coloradans. She is one of the founding members of the pro-corporate Opportunity Caucus. She does not support Medicare For All and instead says that she would "explore" a public option. Bird is also a strong supporter of Israel and is endorsed by the pro-Israel PAC DMFI.

STATEWIDE GOVERNOR

Phil Weiser **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Phil Weiser demonstrated a mixed track record in his time serving as Colorado's Attorney General. He took some steps to push back against the Trump administration and supported some expanded worker protections. He took a leading role in the area of anti-trust by opposing the Kroger-Albertsons merger and the use of algorithmic pricing by landlords. However, he failed to fully support the proposed reforms to the Labor Peace Act to make it easier to unionize in Colorado; his commitment to fully supporting workers and unions thus remains in question. Weiser also has remained a strong supporter of Israel despite the ongoing genocide.

Michael Bennet **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Michael Bennet built a reputation as one of the most centrist Democrats in the country through his time in the Senate. Along with fellow Colorado Senator John Hickenlooper, he is one of the most egregious Democratic outliers when it comes to crossing the aisle to support Trump's agenda, voting to confirm multiple Trump cabinet nominees.

On Israel, Bennet has repeatedly refused to take a stand against the ongoing genocide in Gaza. He voted again and again to continue providing weapons to Israel, even when Israel was intentionally preventing food from being delivered to civilians in Gaza. His complicity with Israel's genocide in Gaza make him utterly unfit for any elected office.

He is also heavily funded by pro-Israel lobbying groups, out-of-state developers, Wall Street investors, and corporate executives. He has used his time in office to create close relationships with these groups and is now benefiting from their financial backing.

Bennet is so unpopular with Colorado's Democratic base that he bypassed the caucus and assembly process entirely, choosing instead to collect petition signatures to get on the ballot.

Michael Bennet is the embodiment of the corporate, do-nothing Democrat that has left working people behind for decades. We strongly recommend a NO vote on Michael Bennet.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

David Seligman **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

David Seligman built his career fighting for working people and against corporate power as the Executive Director of Towards Justice, an organization deeply aligned with progressive values. As an attorney and policy expert, he has litigated cases against corporations committing wage theft and exploiting workers, as well as corporate landlords harming tenants. His platform centers anti-corruption and antitrust enforcement, labor and economic justice, and environmental protections. As Attorney General he will fight on these issues, holding government and large corporations accountable. We recommend a YES vote for these reasons.

Hetal Doshi **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Hetal Doshi is a first generation American and accomplished attorney with an impressive background. She joined the Justice Department in 2014, prosecuted banks responsible for the 2008 financial crisis including Credit Suisse and HSBC, and went on to lead antitrust cases against Google, Apple, and Ticketmaster. She does not take corporate PAC money and her platform focuses on fighting corporate abuses. Doshi is a very capable candidate but we feel that David Seligman is a better fit for this race.

Michael Dougherty **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Michael Dougherty is a career prosecutor and current district attorney. There are some positive aspects to his campaign, including that he has fought for better wage theft prevention laws and supports the Worker Protection Act to strengthen unions. However, he does not have as strong of a record in the area of anti-trust and fighting against corporate abuses. He has also not placed a focus on the rising threat of big tech and instead spoken about how he has worked with tech leaders in the past and hopes to ensure Colorado's leadership in the digital age.

Jena Griswold **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Jena Griswold has served as Colorado's Secretary of State since 2018. Her record raises serious concerns about her fitness for the Attorney General's office. She has a near-total lack of courtroom experience, contrary to her false claim that she argued before the Supreme Court. Her time as Secretary of State has also been marred by allegations from former staffers of a toxic workplace culture involving bullying and retaliation.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Amanda Gonzalez **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Amanda Gonzalez has served as the Clerk and Recorder for Jefferson County since 2022. She has extensive experience running large-scale elections through this position. She was an attorney and former Executive Director of Colorado Common Cause, where she helped to write the laws that created automatic voter registration, expanded ballot drop boxes, and safeguarded fair redistricting. She also helped pass a law that made Colorado the first state in the country to require in-person voting in every county jail. Her efforts to expand ballot access and fairness in elections along with her direct experience running elections make her a strong candidate for Secretary of State.

Jessie Danielson **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Jessie Danielson has been a member of the State Senate since 2018. She has been involved in passing legislation related to elections but does not have experience running or managing elections. She has supported targeting businesses that choose to boycott Israel.

STATE HOUSE

HD-5

Justine Sandoval **REMAIN NEUTRAL**

Justine Sandoval has worked in politics in Denver for around 20 years, including for the Colorado Democratic Party, Cobalt, and as Political Director for Diana DeGette. She is supported by several local organizations and community leaders.

Sterling Simms **REMAIN NEUTRAL**

Sterling Simms works for the Mayor's Office of Community Outreach. He has described one of his key priorities as creating a Public Bank for Colorado. He has emphasized the crisis of inequality and talked about wanting to expand tenant protections and eviction defenses.

HD-6

Iris Halpern **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Iris Halpern spent her career working as a civil and workers rights attorney. She worked on a number of bills in the State Legislature to establish greater protections for workers and their families. She wants to end subsidies for oil and gas companies, expand protections for unions and tenant unions, and fight for universal healthcare.

Sean Camacho **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Camacho is a leader of the “Opportunity Caucus,” a pro-corporate caucus within the Colorado Legislature. The caucus is heavily supported by One Main Street, an anti-worker dark money group. Last fall, Camacho was caught meeting with lobbyists from the Colorado Association of Realtors, Xcel Energy, the private prison contractor GEO Group, and other corporate groups at a retreat in Vail funded by One Main Street. He is under an ethics investigation as a result.

HD-9

Neal Walia **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Neal Walia is running on a progressive agenda. He supports universal, single-payer healthcare, passing the Colorado Workers Protection Act, and expanding funding for education including by ending TABOR. He stated that he will use his office to directly confront TABOR and work toward its repeal. He also believes in pursuing a Green New Deal in Colorado and holding corporate polluters accountable.

Monica VanBuskirk **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Monica VanBuskirk is not a supporter of universal healthcare. She has an extensive background working in the for-profit healthcare industry including at Kaiser Permanente. We recommend NO due to her close ties with the industry and her pro-corporate stance on healthcare.

STATE SENATE

SD-34

Graciela “Chela” Garcia Irlando **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Chela is the Executive Director of Next 100 Coalition, a national environmental nonprofit. She has worked for over a decade in environmental advocacy, nonprofit leadership, and civic engagement organizations. She supports workers rights and stood with striking Alamo workers, JBS workers in Greeley, and with Sheridan teachers. She’s proven herself a strong advocate in the community through her years of advocacy and names fighting for universal healthcare and affordable housing in the Senate as her priorities.

Andrés Carrera **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Carrera is firmly rooted in the centrist/corporate wing of the Democratic party. He worked for Hickenlooper, Bennet, and Polis and is endorsed primarily by centrist figures including Hickenlooper, Michael Hancock, and Sean Camacho. He appears to be supported by One Main Street, a pro-corporate, anti-worker, anti-DSA dark money group.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

JEFFERSON COUNTY ASSESSOR

Andy Kerr **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Andy Kerr served 20 years as a state legislator and currently serves on the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. He is backed by labor unions and spent his legislative career fighting TABOR, the constitutional amendment that cripples Colorado’s ability to fund schools, transit, and public services. He has a strong record on affordable housing and support for unhoused neighbors. We recommend a YES vote for Andy Kerr.

Sue Flageolle **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Sue Flageolle has worked in the Jefferson County Assessor’s office for 28 years and currently serves as Deputy Assessor. She was a lifelong Republican who changed her party affiliation to Democrat in June 2025. She voted in Republican primaries in 2010, 2014, 2022, and 2024. Her endorsements come almost entirely from the real estate appraisal industry. We recommend a NO vote on Sue Flageolle.

ARAPAHOE COUNTY

STATE HOUSE

HD-41

Jaime Jackson (incumbent) **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Jaime is a technology education entrepreneur and the current representative for HD-41. She was appointed when Iman Jodeh was appointed to the State Senate due to another vacancy in January 2025. Her prior employment history includes serving as a Director for GEO Group, the notorious private prison corporation. Her platform is both vague on policy and lacks overlap with the socialist project. While she has co-authored bills increasing access to overdose prevention drugs and providing some minor criminal justice reforms, her employment history in the private prison industry demonstrates poor judgement and rightly raise immense ethical concerns around her ability to be impartial on the issue of criminal justice. Additionally, her campaign website advertises endorsements by members of the Opportunity Caucus, a group of State Legislators under investigation for financial and ethical violations in conjunction with the dark money group One Main Street. There are also accusations of underhanded tactics toward her challenger(s) in the caucus process. It is for these reasons, we recommend a NO vote for Jaime Jackson.

Anne Keke **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Anne is a long-time educator and current member and president of the Aurora Board of Education. While her platform includes TABOR reform and protecting our immigrant communities, she does not call for the abolition of ICE. Historically, she advocated for school vouchers and described herself as a “super moderate,” even going as far as to indicate to a DSA member that she does not advocate for housing solutions outside of stipends and voiced opposition to socialist housing solutions. It is for those reasons we recommend a NO vote on Dr. Anne Keke.

HD-42

Mandy Lindsay (incumbent) **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Mandy is a community organizer and is the current incumbent for HD-42. She is a strong voice for tenant rights at the Capitol. She co-authored bills to ban surveillance surge pricing and authored numerous bills to strengthen healthcare protections. In her time in the Legislature, she fought to protect consumers and expand environmental protections. However, she does not have a platform visible to indicate future priorities, so it is harder to gauge her future goals. Due to her demonstrated work and due to concerns about her challenger, we recommend a YES vote for Mandy Lindsay.

Sarah Woodson **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Sarah is a cannabis and social equity organizer and advocate and has been active in Colorado politics for some time. While she is an advocate for Social Emotional Learning, she has several concerning platform pieces. This includes expanding the dystopian SAVE program, which targets youth via aggregate data for additional Aurora Police Department attention in the name of “crime prevention.” Her housing stability platform does not have social housing as a key feature, nor does her platform on mental health indicate an expansion of existing programs, only their continuation. Economically, she is an advocate for public-private partnerships. For these reasons, we recommend a NO vote on Sarah Woodson.

STATE SENATE

SD-21

Alex Ryckman **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Alex is a teacher and union leader with solid progressive chops and a significant number of overlapping values with DDSA. He stood in solidarity in multiple strikes, including the recent Sheridan teachers strike. Alex is a strong supporter of SNAP benefits and disclosed he used SNAP benefits in the past. His platform includes increasing school funding and moving away from standardized testing, defense of the LGBTQ+ population by enshrining rights via legislative action, abolishment of ICE and significant expansion of tech/AI/data center regulations. It is for these reasons, we recommend a YES vote on Alex Ryckman.

Adrienne Benavidez (incumbent) **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Adrienne is the incumbent who was appointed to this Senate vacancy after the retirement of Dafna Michaelson Janet in February 2026. She is running for re-election, but does not have a campaign website or a visible platform stating what she is running on. She previously served as a State Representative from 2016 to 2022; however, after being re-elected to that office in 2022, she retired weeks later after not winning the House speakership. While she has a number of accomplishments she can point to from her previous time in office, including some solid criminal justice reforms, she is silent on big tech regulation and on other important issues, such as stopping short of calling for the abolishment of ICE. Given her past resignation, there is also concern that she will not serve through the entirety of a term in the State Senate For these reasons, we recommend a NO vote on Adrienne Benavidez.

OTHER

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2

Jessica Campbell (incumbent) **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Jessica is the incumbent and set aside funding for an affordable housing program, an oil and gas inspections program, and a fly quiet program, all while navigating a budget shortfall. She serves on at least 20 government Boards, including the Housing Authority and the Arapahoe County Board of Social Services. She does not appear to take dark money funding. For these reasons, we recommend a YES vote for Jessica Campbell.

Angela Garland **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Angela is a Cherry Creek School Board Director and operates a non-profit. Her platform includes an emphasis on housing and healthcare access, but it is very light on specifics. She also advocates for public-private partnerships in her economic plan. Her campaign appears to have backing from One Main Street, a dark money group that looks to influence local politics in favor of large corporations and has links with the much-maligned Opportunity Caucus. Both are under an ethics investigation for their role in a pay-for-access scheme in Vail a few months ago. For this reason, we recommend a NO vote for Angela Garland.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4

Leslie Summey (incumbent) **RECOMMEND YES VOTE**

Leslie is the incumbent and has a background in the military. She was elected in the last election on the promise of removing the TABOR revenue cap for Arapahoe County and was also the Co-Chair of the 1A ballot initiative that helped make that come to pass. She was active in her first term, setting up the Arapahoe County Public Health office that replaced Tri-County Health among other activities. She serves on 15 different committees including the Housing Committee and the Community Services Block Grant Committee. She does not appear to take dark money funding. For this reason, we recommend a YES vote for Leslie Summey.

Maya Wheeler **RECOMMEND NO VOTE**

Maya Wheeler has a background in IT and runs a non-profit. She ran for several local and state level offices in the area previously without success. While her current platform includes some good policies, such as expanding restorative justice and mental health access, she historically ran to the right of other Democrats and her campaign appears to have backing from One Main Street, a dark money nonprofit that doesn't disclose its donors. For these reasons, we recommend a NO vote for Maya Wheeler.

Thank you for taking the time to find and read this ballot guide. A special thank you to all the comrades who participated in researching, writing, and designing this guide and the website that hosts it.