



January 8, 2026

Dear Governor Polis, Senate President Coleman, Speaker McCluskie, and members of the Colorado General Assembly:

As mayors with varying political affiliations representing the three largest cities in our state, we are writing to share several key priorities aimed at protecting and improving the quality of life for Coloradans. With the 2026 legislative session beginning, issues around competency and mental health, economic vitality, and protecting voter-allocated funding remain the most important concerns facing our cities.

Competency Reform and Mental Health

We support Governor Polis in his strong commitment to make Colorado one of the safest states in the nation. At the same time, cities across Colorado continue to face challenges involving justice-involved individuals who have not received the sustained care and treatment they need.

Under current law, individuals who are clearly in need of treatment may be released back into the community without appropriate placement, supervision, or ongoing care. Changes enacted under HB24-1034 require courts to dismiss charges when a defendant is found incompetent and unlikely to be restored, while limiting prosecutors' ability to seek additional evaluations. In practice, this can result in individuals who pose ongoing public-safety risks cycling back onto the streets. Earlier this year, two innocent people were stabbed to death on 16th Street in Denver by an individual who had previously been deemed incompetent and released—one tragic example highlighting gaps in the current system.

We believe mental health care and rehabilitation are essential to addressing crime, but they must be paired with appropriate placement and accountability to protect public safety. We support the Governor's efforts to reform competency laws to expand alternative placement options, provide judges and district attorneys' greater flexibility, and to increase investment in the Colorado Department of Human Services to build a continuum of secure, therapeutic treatment options. These reforms are critical to ensuring individuals receive appropriate care while preventing future tragedies.

Address AI Legislation Complications

In 2024, the legislature passed SB24-205, creating significant uncertainty for Colorado's economy and local governments. During the 2025 Special Session, implementation was delayed to June 30th, 2026, with support from business and community organizations and leaders across the state; however, a durable solution is still needed. Without reform, the law risks slowing innovation and investment, driving jobs out of Colorado, and imposing millions of dollars in implementation costs at a time of serious budget constraints. We support a collaborative legislative solution in the 2026 session that protects consumers while promoting innovation, clearly defines state and local responsibilities, reduces uncertainty for employers

and investors, avoids unfunded mandates, establishes clear and reasonable liability standards, and aligns Colorado with emerging national trends.

Support Local Businesses with Reasonable Crime Reform

In a troubling trend, recently intensified by the Supreme Court's decisions in *People v. Camp (Westminster)* and *People v. Simons*, state law has increasingly constrained the ability of local law enforcement to meaningfully hold to account criminals who harm business owners and their ability to support themselves. As municipalities face further restrictions on their authority to detain, hold, or sentence shoplifters and repeat offenders, the burden of these policies falls squarely on small and locally owned businesses. We therefore urge state legislators to lower the felony shoplifting threshold to a reasonable dollar amount that reflects the real and cumulative harm of retail theft. Small businesses cannot continue to absorb losses under a weak statutory framework that allows individuals to steal repeatedly while facing few consequences.

Protect Voter Allocated Funding

We look forward to collaborating with the Governor and General Assembly to ensure our communities continue to receive voter-allocated funding for affordable housing programs and address public safety issues – specifically Proposition 123 and Proposition 130. Proposition 123 dedicates state tax revenue surplus to permanently fund affordable housing initiatives, while Proposition 130 requires the state to provide \$350 million in additional funding to local law enforcement agencies. Cities must retain the ability to implement solutions that are responsive to individual community concerns with the allocations approved by the voters for their intended use. We ask that legislature refrain from redistributing funding that has been approved through the ballot for specific community purposes. It is only through continued cooperation between the community, local governments, and the state that we will sustain and build upon the progress already achieved in these areas.

We thank you on behalf of our more than 1.5 million residents for listening to the needs of our cities and constituencies.



Mayor Mike Johnston, Denver



Mayor Yemi Mobolade, Colorado Springs



Mayor Mike Coffman, Aurora