



**2023**

ANNUAL

REPORT






## *About Common Sense Institute*

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Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Colorado's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise in Colorado and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Coloradans.

CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the Colorado economy and individual opportunity.

Common Sense Institute was founded in 2010 originally as Common Sense Policy Roundtable. CSI's founders were a concerned group of business and community leaders who observed that divisive partisanship was overwhelming policymaking and believed that sound economic analysis could help Coloradans make fact-based and common sense decisions.





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# *A Letter from Kristin Strohm*

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Dear CSI Supporter,

2023 was a momentous year for Common Sense Institute (CSI). The success of the expansion effort to new states is proof positive that facts do matter, data does drive the debate, and that citizens and policymakers who are informed make common sense decisions to benefit our economy and individual opportunity.

2023 can be summed up in one word: IMPACT. CSI is making an impact in Arizona, Colorado, and across the nation. On issue after issue, we are proving that facts matter and the future is brighter because of it.

At CSI we know free enterprise works. Competition makes us better. Free markets allocate resources better than central planners. Individuals make better decisions than the administrative state ever could.

A responsible tax policy that funds critical services is vital, but punitive taxes and regulations harm communities.

From education to taxes to housing and everything in between, CSI shined a light on the impact of policy on jobs and the economy with the aim of providing voters and the public with the facts they need to know to improve our communities.

Our gifted team of economists and bi-partisan policy fellows provide the facts on the most pressing issues of the day. The infrastructure of technical expertise CSI has built across multiple states gives us an ability to race past the soundbites and the sloganeering that dominate politics, and provide policymakers and voters a clear detailed view of what laws and legislation actually mean in the real world.

By every metric, the impact of CSI's work in 2023 was impressive: a 60% increase in research volume over 2022 – 124 different reports. The increased reach of CSI research with 1,600 media mentions in local, national, and international outlets. The growing hunger for information was seen with over 160 events, presentations, and briefings. And an 86% revenue growth year over year—nearly \$2M is a phenomenal achievement! New board members, additional staff, and a growing list of policy fellows is making us better.

Most important, CSI's impact can be measured in the halls of government and at the ballot box. In Arizona, CSI research on education and universal licensing have been cited in national publications and now serve the go-to sources for policymakers trying to cut waste, inefficiency and red tape in government. In Colorado, CSI's work on property taxes led to the defeat of one of the largest tax increases in the history of the state.

CSI Colorado is thriving. CSI Arizona is celebrating its first full year with a long list of successes. We are excited for what the future holds as CSI Iowa and CSI Oregon celebrate year one in 2024.

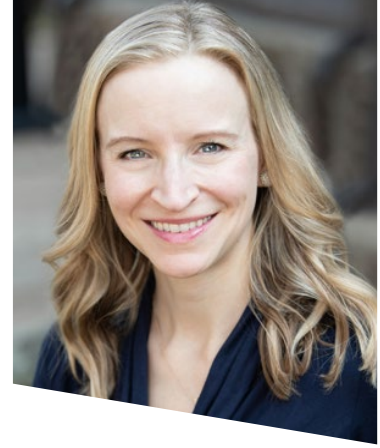
Free enterprise is flourishing and common sense policy is on the march. We've come a long way and I'm so thankful for your partnership.

Sincerely,

**Kristin Strohm**  
President & CEO

# *A Letter from Kelly Caufield*

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Dear CSI Supporter,

Throughout history, the driving force behind happier homes, larger paychecks, and economic prosperity has been individuals and businesses working freely, unburdened by excessive oversight and regulations. This is the foundation of the free enterprise system, the core principle of Common Sense Institute (CSI) and an essential thread woven into the fabric of Colorado's identity.

There's no denying that Colorado faces significant hurdles including education, housing affordability, crime, and homelessness. To overcome our challenges and reignite Colorado's potential, we must return to these principles that have always defined us.

From that viewpoint, we strive to fulfill CSI's mission: to provide objective, fact-based analysis of Colorado's most pressing issues. I'm pleased to report that we fulfilled that mission in 2023. We achieved multiple "firsts" for CSI while exceeding every goal we set.

We embarked upon a yearlong undertaking here at CSI to build our own economic performance index as well as a free enterprise competitiveness index across all 8 issue areas and we succeeded. We can now reliably calculate and understand where we have been as a state, where we are going, and how we are performing relative to the other 50 states and Washington, DC. We can equip policymakers, civic and business leaders, and voters with common sense data and information and demonstrate how free enterprise principles get us back on track.

We spent multiple months studying property taxes and created [mypropertytaxco.com](http://mypropertytaxco.com) – a calculator that allowed Coloradans to understand how Prop HH would impact their property tax bill. The project also included multiple analyses, reports, and other resources to help educate voters. CSI research paved the way for voters to understand one of the most complex tax measures ever proposed in Colorado.

In another CSI first, 2023 marked the year of local research. CSI engaged in city-by-city and even neighborhood-by-neighborhood analysis of housing, crime, and homelessness to provide voters with information about the issues facing their communities. The work ultimately informed local ballot guides and drove the policy debate across the state. It led to lasting partnerships in major municipalities across the state.

CSI work is having an impact, from the ballot box to the halls of government. In 2023 we ensured legislation at the state capitol had an accurate financial analysis. Even more impressive, with facts, data, and thoughtful analysis we drove the debate on positive change on issues like education transportation and economic mobility.

Finally, CSI opened the door to new issue areas where free enterprise principles will make a difference for our future including workforce, child welfare, and urban development. The future is bright and I hope you will continue to engage with us.

Sincerely,

**Kelly Caufield**  
Executive Director

# 2023 By the Numbers

## 85 Reports

CSI research grew volume by **58%**

Became the primary resource to frame key election issues: crime, housing, education and homelessness

By all counts and measures, CSI defined Prop HH and the property tax issue

Recurring reports positioned CSI as the go-to resource for jobs, inflation, and housing



## 1,200 Media Mentions

**38** international news stories

**6 different studies** earned national media mentions

**3 new** CO media markets



# Members



**110** Speaking Events

Provided testimony at State Legislature and Municipalities **17 times**

## Expanding Reach Online



Nearly **140,000** website visits

**18 Podcasts** and over **5,000 subscribers**

**5,800** podcast downloads

Launched “**60 Seconds of Common Sense**”

Growing social media audiences on all platforms


## Growing Our Team



Added **5 new fellows**

**Expanded** the research staff

Added **2 new board members**



*A commitment to data and belief in diversity is at the core of our success. We believe it is critical to work across the aisles on positive solutions to address Colorado's biggest challenges. The value proposition of our commitment to diversity shines in the quality, innovation, and creative nature of our research and analysis.*





# RESEARCH **HIGHLIGHTS**





# Housing & Our Community: Criminal Justice

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Concerns for safety, property loss, and societal impacts became evident and crime has ranked as a top issue for Coloradans. CSI responded with the facts and produced the first analysis of the Colorado crime wave in 2021. Since then, CSI has produced dozens of studies that have been at the center of criminal justice policy debates providing facts and data to policy makers, elected officials and stakeholders.

## Owens- Early Criminal Justice Fellows

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### George Brauchler

George Brauchler served as the elected District Attorney for the 18th Judicial District

(JD), Colorado's most populous district, which includes Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, and Lincoln counties, from 2013-2021.

Over his career, George has served as a Deputy District Attorney, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, military prosecutor, criminal defense attorney, military defense attorney, and just prior to his election, the Chief of Military Justice — the chief prosecutor— for Fort Carson, the 4th Infantry Division, and the U.S. Division North in Tikrit, Iraq.



### Mitch Morrissey

Mitch Morrissey was the elected District Attorney for the 2nd Judicial District (JD),

from 2005 to 2017. Prior to 2005, Mitch was a trial lawyer in the Denver District Attorney's office beginning in 1983. Mitch is internationally recognized for his expertise in DNA technology, applying that technology in criminal prosecutions, and working to ensure that DNA science is admissible in court. He has trained law enforcement officers and prosecutors throughout the United States, in the Middle East, in Central America, and Canada.



In 2021, CSI produced the first analysis of the Colorado crime wave in a study entitled, **The Colorado Crime Wave: An Economic Analysis of Crime and the Need for Data Drive Solutions.** The study captured headlines across the nation and set the narrative for policy discussions at both the state and local level.

## 2023 Research Studies

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**The Cost of Crime and its Economic Impact on Colorado: Crime's Impact on the Economy and Residents**

**The Fight Against Crime in Colorado: Policing, Legislation, and Incarceration**

**The Economic Consequences of Increased Motor Vehicle Theft Rates**

**An Examination of Crime in Mesa County**

**Spotlight on Crime in Colorado Springs**

**Spotlight on Crime in Grand Junction**

**Spotlight on Crime Rates in Denver**

**November Crime Rates in Colorado**

**Spotlight on Crime in Aurora**

**Spotlight on Crime in Fort Collins**



## Study shows crime rates down in Colorado Springs, up across state since 2010

JUNE 7, 2023



## EDITORIAL: Make fighting crime the highest priority

JULY 16, 2023



## Any car stolen in Colorado – even cheap ones – should be a felony, lawmakers say

JANUARY 16, 2023



### THE IMPACT

CSI has been on the front line of criminal justice policy debates providing facts and data to policy makers, elected officials and stakeholders. After CSI identified Colorado as the #1 state in the nation for auto thefts, lawmakers passed SB 23-097 making all auto theft a felony.

## Public Safety Fellow

### Chief Paul Pazen



Paul M. Pazen is the former Chief of Police in Denver, Colorado where he

rose through the ranks of the department up to his appointment in 2018 as the Chief. During his tenure as Police Chief, Paul Pazen (retired) led the creation and expansion of innovative solutions to address complex public safety issues. These programs include spearheading the creation of the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program, Outreach Case Coordinators (case managers) and the Domestic Violence Prevention Program. He directed a significant expansion of the mental health clinician Co-Responder Program, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), the implementation of a forward-thinking use-of-force policy and training curriculum. Paul also created new specialized units; the Firearms Assault Shoot Team (FAST), Bias Motivate Unit, and the Human Trafficking Unit to drive measurable results. Paul expanded annual department training from 24 hours to 80 hours, including implementing Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) and Integrating Communications Assessment and Tactics (iCAT).



# Education

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Education is a core policy issue for CSI. In 2023, research was led by CSI Education Fellow Jason Gaulden and included the annual Dollars & Data report that analyzes trends in Colorado's K-12 public education enrollment, spending, and student outcomes. Gaulden also led efforts to examine education transportation.

## Education Fellow

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### Jason Gaulden

Jason Gaulden has spent his professional career working at the intersection of the business and nonprofit sectors. He is a partner at Oak Rose Group, a strategy consulting firm specializing in education, workforce development, and economic mobility. He draws upon 25 years of professional experience in varying roles: executive leadership, philanthropy, communications, grassroots advocacy, research and writing, fund development, and nonprofit board development.

From 2015 to 2020, he worked with America Succeeds, a national network of business leaders focused on modernizing the nation's education system. He co-authored the report *The Age of Agility: Education Pathways for the Future of Work*. The initiative empowers business leaders, educators, and policymakers to better prepare students for the new workforce and economy.

As a teenager and young adult, Jason had an unusually diverse set of professional experiences, being elected to the NAACP national board of directors at the age of 18, becoming a grassroots advocate and executive director of Hillside Neighborhood Association at age 19.



## 2023 Research Studies

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**Untapped Potential: Economic Costs of Colorado's Foster Youth**

**Roadblocks in Getting Kids to School: Trends, Insights, and Recommendations for Improving Colorado's School Transportation System**

**Dollars and Data: Colorado Education Data and Trends**

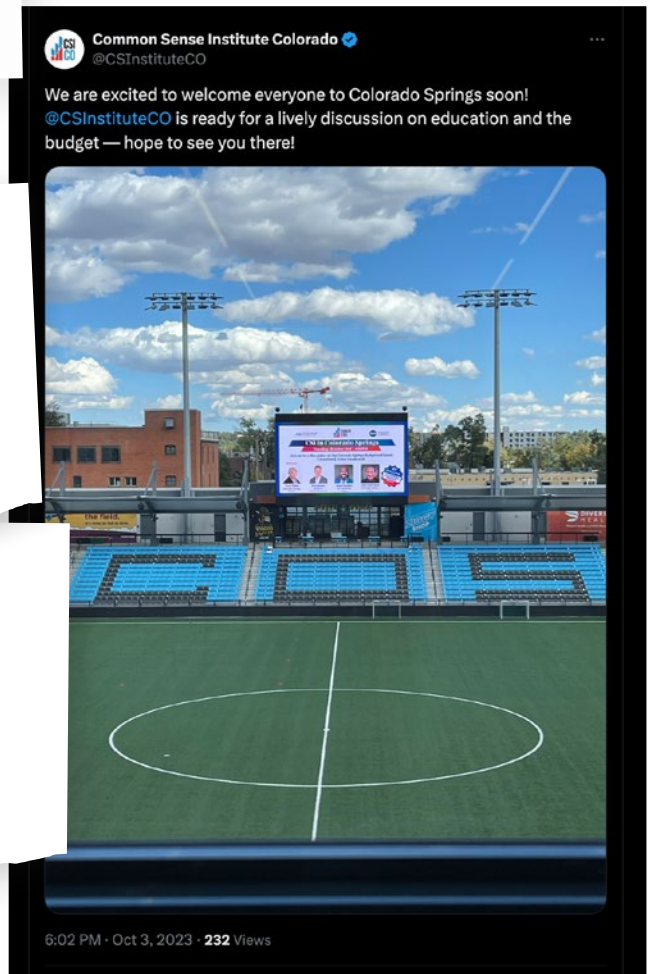
**Dollars and Data: Colorado Springs Education Funding and Achievement**



CSI Executive Director, Kelly Caufield, speaking at AEI event.



# Platinum Transparency 2023



**coloradopolitics**

Colorado's education reality is a return to mediocrity

NOVEMBER 10, 2023

**The Gazette**  
Pulitzer Prize Winner / Est. 1872

Throwing money at Colorado's K-12

OCTOBER 17, 2023



# Energy & Our Environment

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In 2023, CSI released **A Vision and Framework for Colorado's Energy Future**. As the topic for the annual Terry J. Stevinson Fellowship, the study was a year long project led by fellows Doug Benevento and Tisha Schuller. Benevento and Schuller worked closely with an engaged group of stakeholders that included industry experts, community leaders, and policy makers.

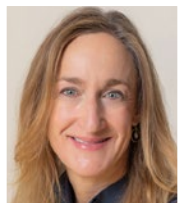
## Terry J. Stevinson Fellows



### Doug Benevento

Doug Benevento is a partner at Holland & Hart. Doug brings a sophisticated

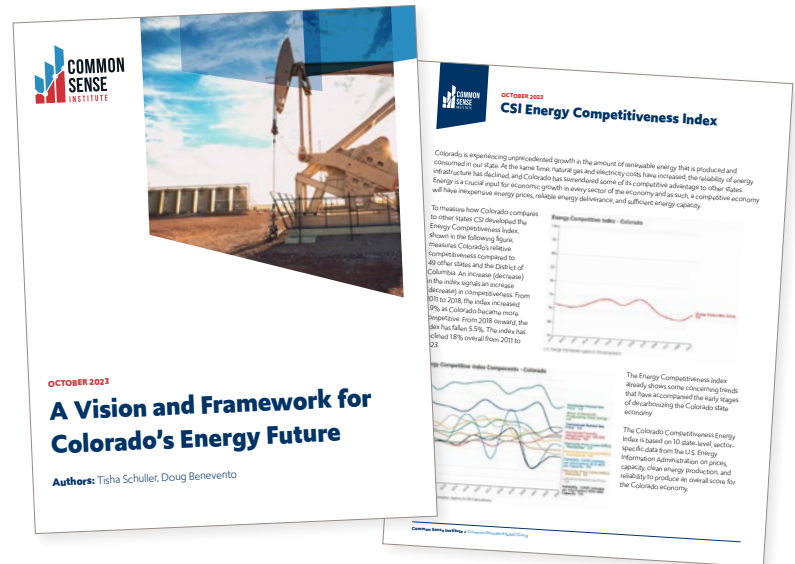
understanding of environmental policy and compliance from his high-level leadership roles at federal and state agencies, including serving as the EPA Acting Deputy Administrator and the EPA Region 8 Administrator. He draws on this expertise and strong working relationships with regulators across the Mountain West and in Washington, DC to advocate for clients through both legal and legislative avenues.



### Tisha Schuller

Tisha Schuller founded Adamantine Energy to provide thought leadership to energy

companies to translate sustainability and decarbonization aspiration into action. Tisha advises private clients from Fortune 100 energy companies to non-profit environmental organizations in matters including ESG and decarbonization strategies, managing disruption, energy policy, environmental justice, and stakeholder engagement. She also serves as the Strategic Advisor for Stanford University's Natural Gas Initiative.



According to the study, to achieve the goal, energy would be appreciated as a central force that enables progress—rather than being viewed by policymakers as a necessary evil. Consumers would be empowered with choices that reflect their means, values, and circumstances.

Along with the study, CSI released the **Energy Competitiveness Index** to measure how Colorado compares to other states.

## About the Terry J. Stevinson Fellowship

Designed to spur thoughtful policy discussions, this fellowship is named in honor of Terry J. Stevinson, a founding board member of CSI. Topics for study are driven by the challenges posed by population growth in Colorado and have included housing, transportation, water resources, and energy. Each year, the fellowship is led by policy experts with diverse points of view. To date, research has sparked innovative solutions and spanned multiple years. These landmark studies are shaping and informing the debate around transportation, housing, water, and energy today.



## PODCASTS

### A Vision and Framework for Colorado's Energy Future

Featuring Tisha Schuller and Doug Benevento

The Denver Gazette

### Common Sense Institute: Take politics out of Colorado's energy policy

OCTOBER 19, 2023

colorado**biz**  
PEOPLE • BUSINESS • STATEWIDE

### Balancing Net Zero and Keeping the Heat On Colorado's push for renewable energy is leaving some out in the cold.

DECEMBER 18, 2023

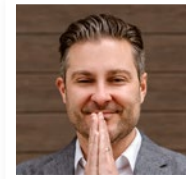
## Previous Fellows



**Ben Stein**  
Transportation 2020



**Henry Sobanet**  
Transportation 2020



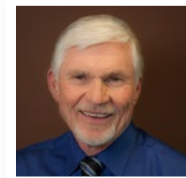
**Peter LiFari**  
Housing 2021



**Evelyn Lim**  
Housing 2021



**Jennifer Gimbel**  
Water 2022



**Eric Kuhn**  
Water 2022

“The Terry J. Stevinson fellowship is a wonderful gift that's paying off to Colorado, public policy, and civic discussion”

—Henry Sobanet 2020 Terry J. Stevinson Fellow



# Free Enterprise

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No greater defender of free enterprise and the American dream, Mike A. Leprino is someone who came from humble beginnings and built an enviable legacy in Colorado. Established by Laura Leprino and Matthew Leprino in his honor, the 2023 Mike A. Leprino Fellowship focused on issues reflected in the values and accomplishments of this former pillar of the community.

## Mike A. Leprino Fellow

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### Lang Sias

Lang Sias is a former Colorado State legislator, attorney and Navy and

Air National Guard fighter pilot.

As a Colorado State Representative from 2015-2019, Lang represented House District 27 in Jefferson County. The ranking member on the business committee, Lang also served on the education, public health and health exchange oversight committees, and was a member of the legislative tax simplification task force and the JeffCo school safety task force. Over 85% of the bills Lang sponsored were bipartisan. He focused on solving problems in the areas of education, health care and small business, and on government transparency and accountability. He played major roles in passing legislation expanding public school choice, increasing healthcare transparency and reforming the public pension system to benefit retirees and taxpayers. Lang currently serves on the legislative subcommittee that oversees Colorado's state pension fund. He was the Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor in 2018 and State Treasurer in 2022.



Topics for 2023 included the cost of litigation, property taxes, and Colorado's competitiveness. The fellowship was capped by CSI's annual, marquee publication, Colorado's Free Enterprise Report.

## 2023 Research Studies

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### Prop HH: The Taxpayer's Dilemma

### Assessing Colorado's Economic Competitiveness Growth of Legal Expenses: 43 and Counting

### Assessing Colorado's Economic Competitiveness: Mounting Cost of Labor and Environmental Policy

### Free Enterprise Report





## PODCASTS

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### **Is Colorado as Economically Competitive as It Used to Be?**

Featuring Loren Furman and Lang Sias

### **CSI Mid-Year Wrap-Up**

Featuring Lang Sias, George Brauchler and Kelly Caufield



### **Report: Denver housing deficit grows as affordability decreases, property taxes skyrocket**

MAY 5, 2023



### **Study finds Colorado property tax revenue could rise by \$3.5 billion this year**

JANUARY 21, 2024



### **Special session sold taxpayers short**

JANUARY 21, 2024



### **PERSPECTIVE: Colorado has fallen behind in economic growth**

JANUARY 28, 2024



# Free Enterprise Report

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In 2023, CSI released the annual Free Enterprise Report, a marquis report that provides an objective, non-partisan, fact-based analysis of the Colorado economic landscape and the state's most pressing issues.

The study is a year-long undertaking and includes the CSI Economic Performance Index as well as a Free Enterprise Competitiveness Index across eight different policy areas including: Education, Energy, Healthcare, Housing, Infrastructure, Public Safety, State Budget, and Taxes & Fees. Each policy area is evaluated through publicly available metrics, offering a holistic view of Colorado's policy-driven economic landscape.

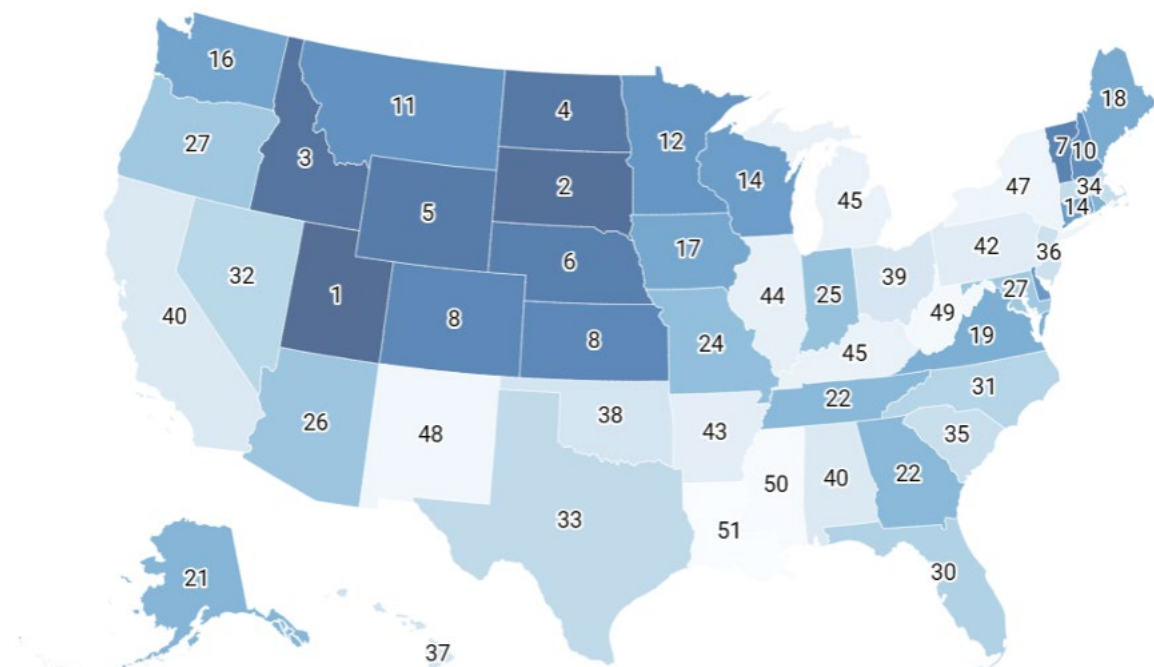
Both indices provide an opportunity to look backwards and better understand where Colorado has been and what direction we are moving relative to other states. The study provides an opportunity to better understand how Colorado is performing relative to other states with the goal of equipping policy makers, civic and business leaders with the best understanding of Colorado’s performance, where the state is winning and losing and how free enterprise principles can get us back on track.



For instance, Colorado ranks dead last in housing competitiveness. The bottom line according to the 2023 report: Colorado is at an inflection point. “For decades, Colorado has been a highly attractive place to live and to do business. Today, we find ourselves at an inflection point because cracks are beginning to appear. Our state, particularly in the last several years, has become a highly expensive place to live and do business, and we also face quality of life issues that undermine our appeal,” said CSI Free Enterprise Fellow, Lang Sias. “Policy choices at the state and local level have contributed to these changes. We are also seeing a significant decline in net inward migration to Colorado, which if it develops into a trend not an anomaly, could have a deep impact on our economy and our competitiveness.”

**In 2023, Colorado ranked 8th out of 51 for economic performance as shown in the following map.**

2023 Economic Performance Index Ranking





## Colorado ranks dead last for housing competitiveness: report

DECEMBER 12, 2023

The Denver Gazette

## Editorial: A Less Competitive Colorado

DECEMBER 13, 2023



## Report: Colorado's economic competitiveness negatively influenced by housing market

DECEMBER 13, 2023

The DILLAGER

## Common Sense Institute Presents Its 2023 Colorado Free Enterprise Report

JANUARY 13, 2023





# Housing & Our Community

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Affordable housing is one of the biggest policy challenges facing Colorado. With the leadership of CSI Housing Fellow Peter LiFari, CSI research focused on quantifying the challenge, analyzing legislative initiatives, and supplying the facts to develop thoughtful, common sense solutions.

## Housing Fellow

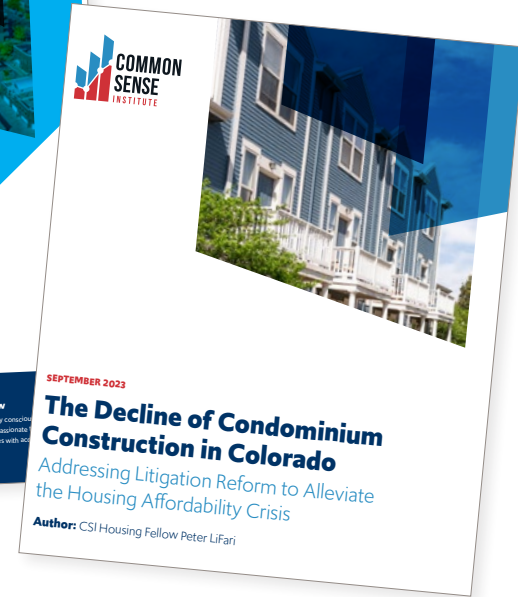


### Peter LiFari

Peter F. LiFari is the Chief Executive Officer of Maiker Housing Partners, a socially

conscious public housing authority, owner, operator and developer of multifamily affordable housing based in Adams County, Colorado. In his role as CEO, LiFari leads a passionate team committed to ending the cycle of generational poverty by providing individuals and families with access to affordable housing, support programs and by engaging in community development. LiFari is a compassionate visionary whose leadership style is grounded in treating individuals with empathy, warmth and grace.

Beyond his work with Maiker Housing Partners, LiFari is currently using his expertise to provide strategic guidance to Rocky Mountain Partnership, a collective impact model, as Co-Chair of their Steering Committee. Additionally, he was appointed by the Governor of Colorado to serve on the inaugural Colorado Statewide Middle Income Housing Authority Board and was recently appointed Vice Chair. LiFari is the recipient of the 2023 NAHRO Outstanding Professional of The Year Award, and past Chair of the National NAHRO Community Revitalization and Development Committee.





# Quarterly Housing Updates

In 2023, CSI developed the 'home buyer misery index' to rate buyers' struggle with the historically high prices, rapidly rising rates and availability.

CSI issues quarterly updates on the misery index and tracks supply and demand in the market. These reports have become a valuable resource for members of the media, policy makers, and voters.

## STUDIES

**Colorado's Housing Affordability Report: The Impact of Home Prices, Interest Rates, and Property Taxes**

**Home Affordability in Colorado: Update to Colorado's Homebuyer Misery Index**

**Aurora Housing Affordability Report**

## THE DENVER POST

**Denver suburb ranks high among large U.S. cities where it's easier for Gen Zers to own homes, study says**

# Homelessness

In 2021, CSI issued a landmark study examining homelessness in the Denver metro region. For the first time, spending on homelessness was quantified. In 2023, for the third year in a row. CSI again issued the research and provided a comprehensive look and the dollars being spent to combat homelessness. CSI also released homelessness snapshots examining the issue in other municipalities including Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Aurora, and Fort Collins. The research injected facts into policy debates across the state and provided the facts for voters considering their local ballots.

## STUDIES

**A Snapshot of the Metro Denver Homeless Ecosystem in 2023**

**Homelessness in Aurora**

**Homelessness in Fort Collins**

**Homelessness in Colorado Springs**

**Homelessness in Grand Junction**



# Jobs & Economy

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Throughout the year, CSI issued regular Jobs Reports providing detailed information and analysis on the Colorado job market. Quarterly Inflation Reports took center stage in news stories and conversations among policy makers.

THE DENVER POST

Metro Denver inflation rate moves lower – but not by much – last month

FEBRUARY 27, 2023

FOX

Colorado inflation up 1.3 percent in recent months, federal data shows

APRIL 13, 2023

AXIOS Denver

Inflation pains persist in Denver – with restaurant price inflation the highest in the nation

AUGUST 14, 2023

## Economic Impact Studies

CSI engaged in extensive analysis of some of the largest events and industries in Colorado. These studies quantified the economic impact of each industry, identified policy challenges, and examined the workforce.

A Denver tradition since 1906, the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) kicks off every January and has an enormous economic impact. In 2023, the 16-day event totaled \$171 million in economic activity according to the CSI study, **The Economic Impact of the National Western Stock Show**.



The Gazette  
Pulitzer Prize Winner / Est. 1872

'It's our Grand Slam': The National Western Stock Show finally arrives in Denver

JANUARY 6, 2024

# Sports & Tourism

**The Economic Impact of Colorado's Sports, Recreation, & Tourism Sector** examined the impact of sports, recreation, and tourism on the overall Colorado economy and found that it is a \$60 billion industry and drives more than 600,000 jobs.



# More Than Music - Swiftonomics

Superstar Taylor Swift delighted more than just her fans. CSI's report, **Swiftonomics: Eras Tour Impact on Colorado** found that Swift's two Denver Eras concerts contributed an estimated \$140 million to Colorado's GDP. The study showcased the importance of major events and concerts in the Mile High City and raised awareness about economic impact with new audiences.

The study generated hundreds of news stories with state, national, and international media outlets including CNN, New York Post, Fox Business, Good Morning America, China Daily, Business Insider Germany and more.



**Taylor Swift Economic Benefits**  
JULY 28, 2023



# 2023 Legislative Session

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CSI research on the State Budget is a critical component of nearly every public policy discussion. In 2023, CSI released **Colorado Budget Then & Now**, a budget snapshot released annually that illustrates spending priorities over the last 16 years.

The influx of migrants in 2023 significantly impacted local budgets. CSI quantified the cost and provided the first comprehensive snapshots of economic impact. The study, entitled **Fiscal Impacts of Recent Increase in Migrant Sheltering and Support in Denver**, served as a starting point for the broader discussion of the issue.

The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
**MONITOR**®

## Amid migrant increase, newcomers and Coloradans adapt

OCTOBER 30, 2023

**COST OF MIGRANT SHELTERING SERVICES**  
COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

- 25,252 MIGRANTS SERVED
- CITY SPENT \$28 MILLION SO FAR
- EXPECTED TO SPEND \$36-\$39 MILLION BY END OF YEAR

**FOX 31 DENVER** 11:00 53°

LAKWOOD 59° CLEAR SAM THEJ 49° FORECASTS



## Municipal Budgets

In addition to the State Budget, CSI also released **Citizens' Guide to the Colorado Springs Budget** as part of an effort to provide research and facts to local communities.

COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

September 2023

Citizen's Guide to the Colorado Springs Budget



Colorado Springs CHAMBER & EDC COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE HBA

### CSI in Colorado Springs

Tuesday, October 3rd | 4:00PM

Join us for a discussion on the Colorado Springs Budget and latest Education & Crime trends with

**Moderator**

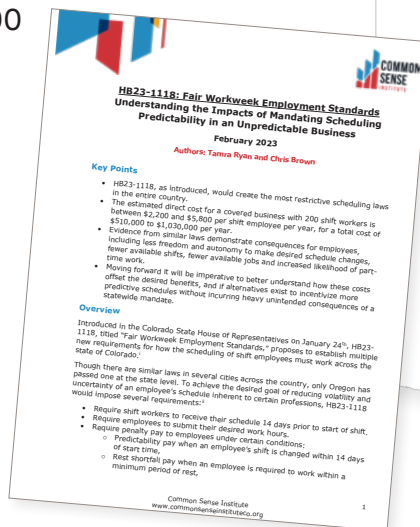
 Vince Bzdek Colorado Springs Gazette	 Chris Brown CSI VP of Policy & Research	 Jason Gaulden CSI Education Fellow	 Chief Paul Pazen CSI Public Safety Fellow
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## Legislative Initiatives

# Fair Scheduling Bill

CSI released an analysis of Colorado HB 23-1118, known as the “fair scheduling” bill. According to the study, **Understanding the Impacts of Mandating Scheduling Predictability in an Unpredictable Business**, the bill would be the most restrictive in the country and increase the cost for a covered business with 200 shift workers between \$510,000 and \$1,030,000 per year. CSI released the study and it was widely referenced among lawmakers and stakeholders who provided testimony before the House Business Affairs & Labor Committee and ultimately defeated it.



*“CSI analyzed the impact of similar scheduling laws in Oregon, Seattle and Philadelphia to come up with its analysis. Evidence from similar laws demonstrate consequences for employees, including less freedom and autonomy to make desired schedule changes, fewer available shifts, fewer available jobs and increased likelihood of part-time work.”*

## Westword

### Takeaways From Seven-Hour Hearing on Fair Workweek Bill

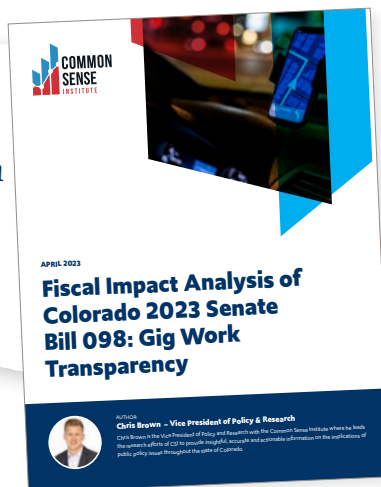
The hearing was as long as most restaurant shifts!

FEBRUARY 17, 2023



Research finds Colorado bill on gig payments underestimates cost to state

APRIL 3, 2023



# Gig Economy

Citing CSI research and the 2023 study, **Fiscal Impact Analysis of Colorado 2023 Senate Bill 098: Gig Work Transparency**, the CSI report led to an updated fiscal note with better cost estimates and ultimately led to the defeat of the measure.

# 1040

Department of the Treasury  
U.S. Internal Revenue Service

For the year Jan. 1-Dec. 31  
Your first

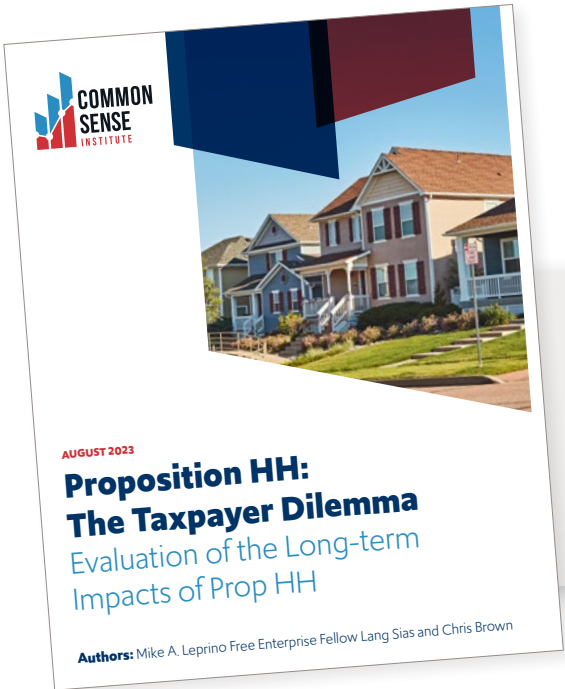
If a joint



# Taxes & Fees

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Proposition HH, a statewide ballot measure referred to voters by the state legislature, failed in the November election. While Proposition HH offered limited property tax relief, it also came with other significant impacts. To inform policy makers, elected officials, and voters, CSI developed the most robust resource of information available in the state and the most extensive package of resources in the history of the organization. All of the Prop HH resources were housed on **CSI's Property Tax resource page** and promoted throughout the Summer and Fall.



CSI issued **Proposition HH: The Taxpayer Dilemma**, an in-depth analysis of the measure and a series of mini briefs that explained the complex elements of Prop HH.

“**Proposition HH gives Coloradans a choice; trade some property tax relief for long-term increase in state taxes.**”

## Mini Briefs

**HH Brief: Economic Impact of Taxes Increasing Above Historic Trend**

**HH Puts TABOR Refunds at Risk**

**What is TABOR**

**County-by-County Data**

**How Does Prop HH Impact Renters?**

**Prop HH & Education**

**What is TABOR?**

Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) was approved by Colorado voters in 1992 as a constitutional amendment with the goal of restraining government spending and providing taxpayers with greater control over proposed tax increases.

**Total Spending Limit = Previous Year's Spending + Previous Year's Spending x Inflation Factor + Previous Year's Spending x Population Growth Factor**

**How Does Prop HH Impact Renters?**

**Renters are the Biggest Losers.** These joint filers will lose an estimated \$5,119 in TABOR refunds over the next decade.

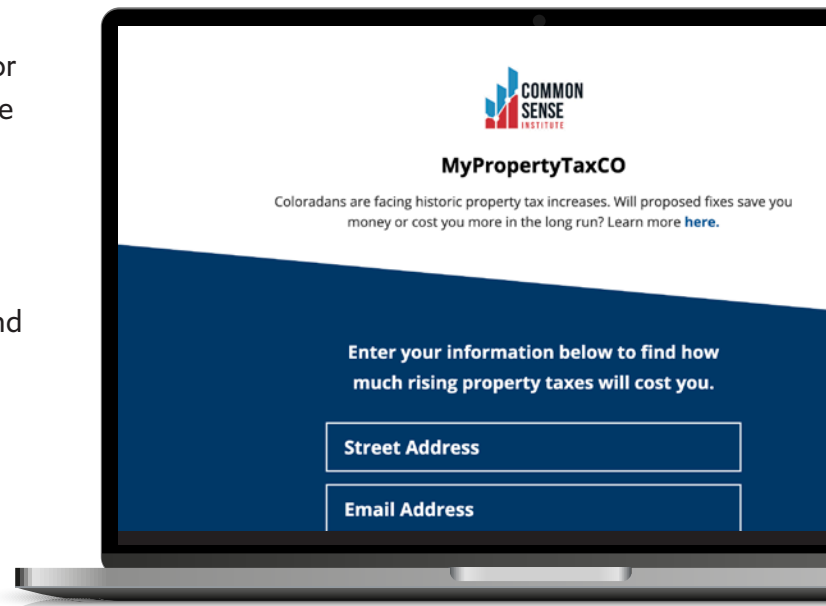
**Measuring Property Taxes County-by-County: The Impact of Proposition HH**

For most Coloradans, property taxes will continue to increase at a very high-rate next year, even if Proposition HH passes. Under current law, the average household will see their property tax increase by nearly \$850 dollars, or more than 36% from 2022 levels. If Proposition HH passes, property taxes could increase by nearly \$620, or more than 26% from 2022 levels.

County	2022 Median Home Price	2022 Property Tax	2023 Property Tax		Cumulative Loss to TABOR Joint Filers Under Current Law	Cumulative Loss to TABOR Joint Filers Under Prop HH			
			Under Current Law	Under Prop HH					
Adams	\$54,175	\$1,229	\$4,374	35%	\$3,992	21%	\$6,332	-\$519	-\$1,559
Alamosa	\$78,271	\$822	\$1,039	26%	\$743	2%	-\$2,421	-\$519	-\$2,559
Angus	\$605,769	\$2,031	\$3,961	35%	\$2,481	24%	-\$2,271	-\$519	-\$2,559
Archuleta	\$762,200	\$382	\$392	40%	\$378	0%	-\$1,131	-\$519	-\$2,559
Baca	\$168,232	\$197	\$193	70%	\$1,797	25%	\$1,131	-\$519	-\$2,559
Bent	\$176,312	\$341	\$478	40%	\$591	-24%	-\$2,800	-\$519	-\$2,559
Boulder	\$421,181	\$4,140	\$6,341	29%	\$5,061	0%	-\$2,392	-\$519	-\$2,559
Broomfield	\$244,898	\$4,259	\$5,724	34%	\$5,390	22%	-\$1,418	-\$519	-\$2,559
Chaffee	\$164,443	\$1,288	\$1,300	27%	\$1,779	27%	-\$2,421	-\$519	-\$2,559
Cherokee	\$211,179	\$628	\$744	34%	\$744	17%	-\$1,418	-\$519	-\$2,559
Clear Creek	\$285,023	\$1,459	\$2,091	25%	\$2,785	-8%	-\$2,086	-\$519	-\$2,559
Clear Fork	\$179,235	\$617	\$84	12%	\$619	2%	-\$4,765	-\$519	-\$2,559
Comanche	\$762,077	\$448	\$708	48%	\$818	10%	-\$1,418	-\$519	-\$2,559
Crowley	\$95,057	\$287	\$278	31%	\$711	-26%	-\$2,723	-\$519	-\$2,559
Custer	\$282,666	\$1,062	\$1,527	40%	\$1,256	24%	-\$2,333	-\$519	-\$2,559

CSI developed and promoted an online calculator too. Coloradans can use the new tool to calculate their property taxes and compare the results to proposed ballot questions. This calculator allows users to fully understand the increase to their property tax bill and the effect that Prop HH and other measures would have on property taxes and TABOR refunds.

All of the Prop HH resources were housed CSI's Property Tax resource page and promoted throughout the Summer and Fall.



  
THE COLORADO SUN

**Opinion: The bill for Proposition HH will be prodigious**

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

POSTINDEPENDENT

**Monday Letters: Prop HH, gun reform, health curriculum, RFSD elections**

OCTOBER 29, 2023

  
colorado politics

**Proposition HH to cost each taxpayer \$5K in TABOR refunds over a decade, study says**

AUGUST 17, 2023



## THE IMPACT

Prop HH was rejected by 60% of the voters, opening the door to new policy solutions that will not adversely affect the Colorado economy.



# Economic Mobility

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Named in honor of the Coors family, the fellowship focuses on issues that stifle greater economic independence of the individual and embrace tried-and-true economic principles of free enterprise centered around choice, access, and competition. The fellowship is designed to spur thoughtful policy discussion and potential solutions around the economic and fiscal ramifications of increasing workforce opportunities, with a focus on increasing economic prosperity of all workers.

## Coors Economic Mobility Fellow

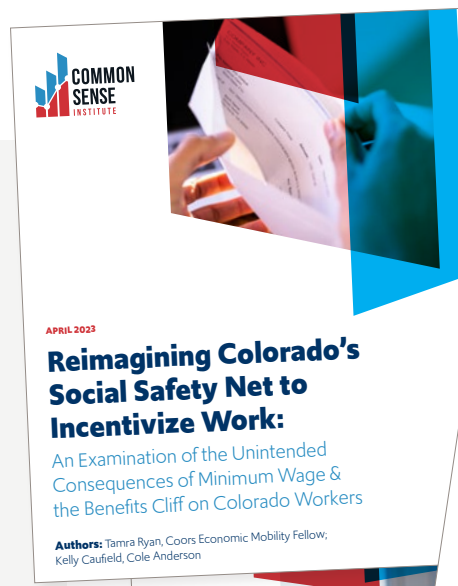


### Tamra Ryan

Tamra Ryan is the CEO of Women's Bean Project, a social enterprise

providing transitional employment in its food manufacturing business to women attempting to break the cycle of chronic unemployment and poverty. She serves as an Economic Mobility Fellow for Common Sense Institute Colorado.

Tamra is a former partner and board member for Social Venture Partners-Denver and Social Enterprise Alliance. Congressman Mike Coffman (R-CO) recognized Tamra's servant leadership and entered it into the Congressional Record of the 115th Congress, Second Session in May 2018. She was honored by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce as one of the Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Colorado, and in 2022 as a Titan100 CEO and Social Entrepreneur of the year by the Colorado Institute for Social Impact. She was a presenter at TEDxMilehigh and is a highly sought-after speaker for topics such as compassionate leadership and social enterprise.



Led by Tamra Ryan, CSI released three reports focused on economic mobility in 2023:

**Reimagining Colorado's Social Safety Net to Incentivize Work: An Examination of the Unintended Consequences of Minimum Wage & the Benefits Cliff on Colorado Workers**

**Colorado's Workforce Woes Should Spell Opportunity for Economic Mobility**

**The She-cession is Over, but What's Next for Women in the Workforce? Examining Women's Employment Trends in Colorado**



In addition to news coverage and Colorado presentations, the reports have earned national attention. Ryan has worked closely with think tanks and policy makers to develop research and share policy recommendations. In an April 2023 study on the unintended consequences of minimum wage and the benefits cliff, she recommended that Colorado adopt Utah's One Door Policy model for workforce development and human services access. In December at the Meant for More Summit in Washington DC, Congressman Burgess (R-UT) announced the introduction of HR 6274 – One Door to Work Act. This legislation follows Tamra's policy recommendations and allows states to adopt Utah's One Door Policy.



**Is the She-Cession Over? Not for Many Women in the Workplace**

**NOVEMBER 29, 2023**



**Report: Shortage of workers, skilled labor costing Colorado \$46B in GDP**

**JULY 21, 2023**



**Olivia Alperstein: A crossroads for workers with disabilities**

**SEPTEMBER 2, 2023**

**Engagements and Podcasts**

**COMMON SENSE** **Eggs & the Economy**

Join us for an in-depth conversation on the upcoming local election and the facts you need to know on issues that matter most—crime, housing, workforce, and homelessness

Moderated by Ed Sealover

**Ed Sealover**

**Kelly Caufield**  
CSI Executive Director

**Mitch Morrissey**  
CSI 2023 Owens-Early Criminal Justice Fellow

**Tamra Ryan**  
CSI Economic Mobility Fellow

**Chris Brown**  
CSI VP of Policy & Research

**Peter Lifari**  
CSI Housing Fellow

**Seating is Limited. Reserve Your Seat Today!**  
**Tuesday, March 7th at 7:30am**

Eggs & the Economy will take place at  
AMG National Trust  
6295 Greenwood Plaza Boulevard  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111

**PODCAST**

**Navigating the Benefits Cliff and Incentivizing Work in Colorado**

Featuring Tamra Ryan and Juan Pena

**COLORADO BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE PODCAST**

**Economic Mobility and the Women's Bean Project**

Featuring Tamra Ryan





# Child Welfare

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Led by Morgridge Family Foundation Child Welfare Fellow John Farnam, CSI's project on foster care included the release of **Untapped Potential: Economic Costs of Colorado's Foster Youth**. The study focused on those aging out of the system to illustrate the economic impact of a small sliver of the foster population.

## Morgridge Family Foundation Child Welfare Fellow

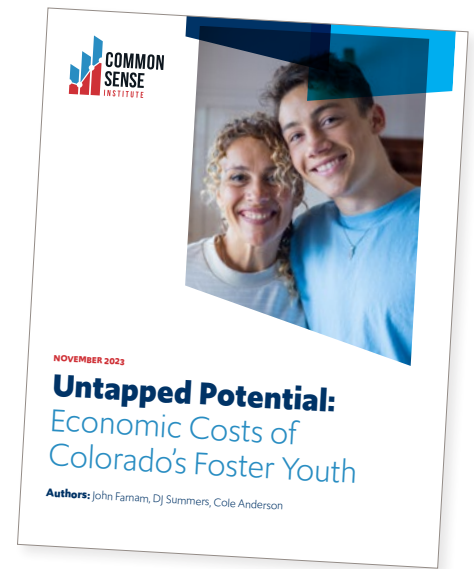


### John Farnam

John Farnam has served the Morgridge Family Foundation for 12 years, administering more

than \$150 million in grants, first as chief of staff and now as managing director. John builds relationships and catalyzes connections with partners at every level, resulting in transformational change across all social sectors in Denver and beyond. His expertise has been sought out as an Aspen Institute Fellow, a member of the American Enterprise Institute Leadership Network, and an advisor to the Governor's Leadership Committee on COVID Relief. In 2022 he earned an executive certificate through the prestigious Chief of Staff Fellowship at the University of Oxford, and in 2023, he was one of just 60 leaders from 20 countries to complete the inaugural Chief of Staff Association Program through Harvard Business School Executive Education. He now serves as the Morgridge Child Welfare Fellow for the Common Sense Institute.

In his earlier career, Farnam served as vice president of marketing for Goodwill Industries of Denver where he played an integral role in establishing the Goodwill Endowment Fund.



CSI hosted multiple presentations and policy briefings on the findings and earned numerous news stories. In addition, *Rebecoming Me*, a film featuring the stories of five individuals with lived experience in the foster care system premiered at an event created in partnership with Cobble Streets and CSI and presented by the Morgridge Family Foundation and PBS12.

## Key Finding

Coloradans who encounter the foster care system often face lifelong challenges, leading to adverse outcomes. Though there are an average of 5,127 youth who are in the foster care system throughout a year in Colorado, the available data points to more severe outcomes for those who age out of the foster system.

The recent average of 213 foster youth who age out of Colorado's foster system per year incur lifetime costs ranging from \$66 million to \$73 million, or between \$309,614 and \$343,453 per person.

  
THE COLORADO SUN

It costs Colorado \$343,453 per kid  
who ages out of foster care,  
according to new research

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

  
Pulitzer Prize Winner / Est. 1872

High School Graduation is Key

NOVEMBER 28, 2023



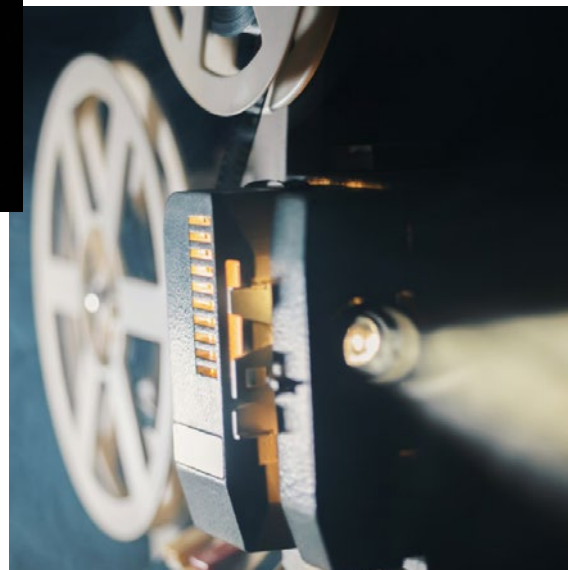
Study says high school graduation key to  
success for foster youth

NOVEMBER 19, 2023




The DILLAGER

You're Invited: Rebecoming Me



LONGMONTLEADER 

Film to show challenges  
of foster care



*CSI is having an impact. We see it every day in the halls of government and at the ballot box. From affordable housing to education, CSI has played a key role in shaping the public policy debate and driving common sense solutions in the halls of government and among voters.*



# CSI 2023 IMPACT





(Above) CSI Eggs & Economy panel featuring local mayors.

(Right) CSI Executive Director Kelly Caulfield at the Free Enterprise Summit.



(Right) CSI's Senior Economist Dr. Steven Byers presenting at Eggs & Economy.



(Left) CSI fellows Peter LiFari, George Brauchler, and Jason Gauden in Colorado Springs.



**CSI at Fort Collins Are Chamber of Commerce presenting on key issues impacting the ballot including housing, homelessness, and crime.**



# CSI Impact

2023



Denver mayoral candidates prioritizing homelessness emerge as winners in the primary

CSI study provides data to **defeat** HB 23-1118, the "fair scheduling" bill

CSI research cited as SB 23-098, gig work transparency bill, is **defeated**



CSI research on auto thefts results in **passage** of SB 23-097, making all auto theft a felony

Governor Polis **cites** CSI study in his push for more affordable housing

The Denver Gazette

Think tank on car thefts: Longer view paints dire picture for Colorado

Kiowa County Press  
Apr 27, 2023

Report: Colorado insurance premiums up \$277M from increased auto thefts

**Defeated** Rent Control HB23-1115

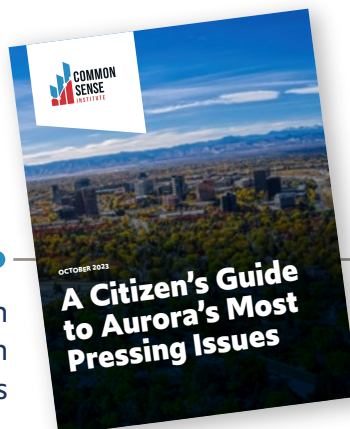
The Long-term Consequences of HB23-1115 and the Impact of Rent Control on Housing Supply: Estimates Indicate Denver Would Lose 17,000 Units by 2030  
March 2023

Key Findings

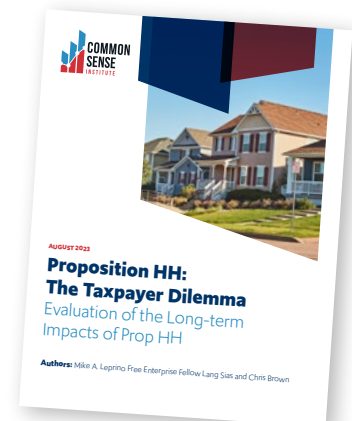
- Housing affordability in Colorado is near an all-time low, driven in part by a housing supply deficit of more than 100,000 units. HB23-1115 proposes to repeal the same prohibition on local governments enacting rent control. Rent control is a policy concept that has been studied for decades and now has mounting evidence backing it that shows large unintended consequences.
- Evaluations of cities that have enacted rent control prove it to be disruptive to markets and inadequate for resolving housing affordability broadly at local. At worst, it severely limits new housing supply, limits mobility and leads to increased rents, in the long run.
- If rent control were to pass in Denver, by 2030 the city would stand to lose 16,547 units new housing supply, limit mobility and lead to increased rents, in the long run.
- If rent control were to pass in Denver, by 2030 the city would stand to lose 16,547 housing units at a 3% rent cap or 3,348 units at a 7% rent cap. This would hamper the ability of the city to create the demand or encourage future residents.
- HB23-1115 has already been amended to include a rent cap floor, stating that landlords could not raise rents at least 3% that inflation annually, and a stipulation that no rent control regulations be applied to any building constructed in the last 15 years.

**Unintended Consequences of Rent Control**  
Rent control is often discussed as a policy solution to housing unaffordability because it is theorized to provide below-market rents to those who would otherwise be unable to afford them. However, research shows that rent control is often counterproductive, leading to a loss of housing units, reduced maintenance, and a decrease in the quality of the housing stock. For more information, visit [www.common-senseinstitute.org](http://www.common-senseinstitute.org)

CSI research informs voters in local elections



Voters **reject** Prop HH



# Members

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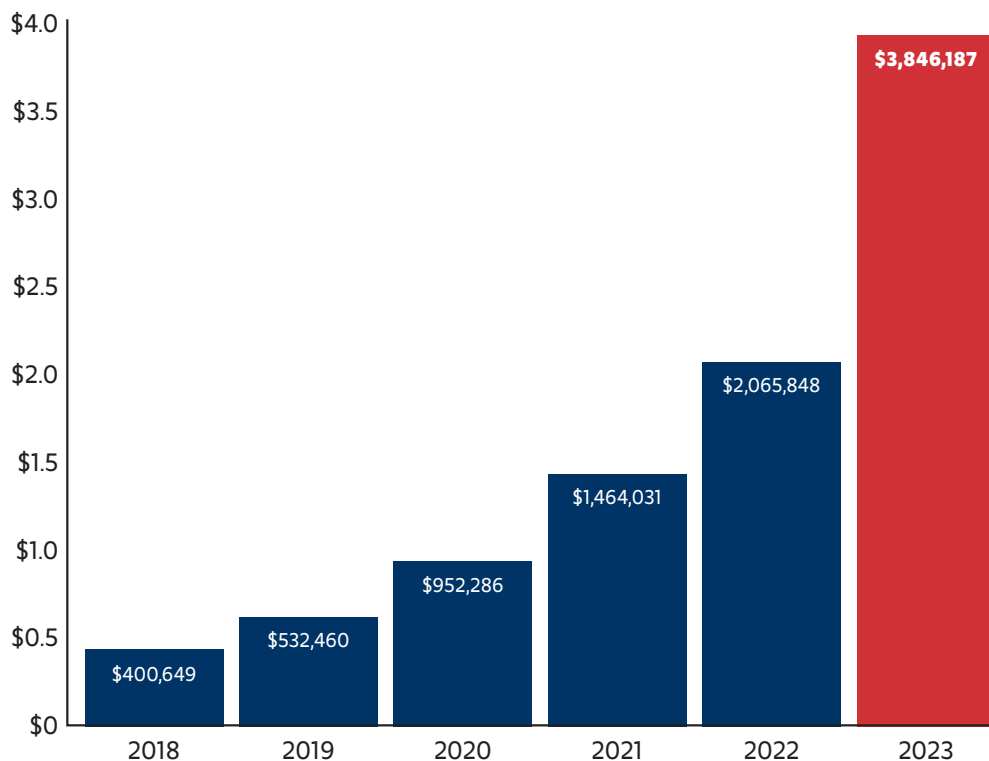
# Financials

Common Sense Institute (CSI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational organizations. We are supported by our Board of Directors and private donations from foundations, businesses, individuals, chambers and associations. CSI does not accept any government funding.

In 2023, CSI's total revenue increased over 300% since 2020 and nearly doubled over 2022 figures. The Colorado operating budget represents \$2,396,321 of the total \$3.8M CSI budget.

Key achievements include adding 100 new funders to the donor list, increasing support from foundations, and growing the impact of marquis events.

## CSI REVENUE GROWTH SINCE 2018



*Note: CSI operates on a traditional calendar year and these 2023 operating figures are unaudited.*



Once again, in 2023, CSI earned a Guidestar Platinum Transparency Seal. GuideStar uses a system of four Seals—**bronze, silver, gold, and platinum**—to indicate a level of transparency and completeness of an organization’s GuideStar profile. As they scale up, the Seals require increasing amounts of information about an organization and its goals and effectiveness.

# Board of Directors

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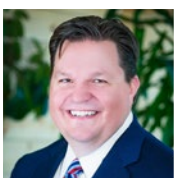
**Buz Koelbel**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
Koelbel & Co.



**Dave Davia**  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
Colorado Concern



**Tyrone Adams**  
Colorado Association of REALTORS®



**J. J. Ament**  
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce



**Jack Graham**  
Two Trees Partners



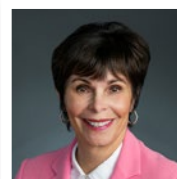
**Byron Haselden**  
Haselden Construction



**Jim Johnson**  
GE Johnson Holdings, Inc.



**Armen Khadiwala**  
Apogee Wealth Advisors



**Laura Leprino**  
Western Titan Fund



**Charlie McNeil**  
NexGen Resources Corporation



**Mark Osborn**  
Attorney



**Jenifer Waller**  
Colorado Bankers Association



**Robin Wise**  
Junior Achievement-Rocky  
Mountain, Inc. (JA)

## National Board of Directors

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AMG National Trust Bank



**Don Childears**  
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**Terry J. Stevinson**  
Stevinson Group, Inc.



**Carrie Tynan**  
Adolph Coors  
Foundation

“*At the heart of our mission has always been our Board of Directors. They are experts in their fields and bring a depth of knowledge about Colorado and our economy that is simply unmatched. They are engaged, strategic, and innovative leaders. They represent geographic diversity and diversity across industries, from banking to energy and everything in between.*”

— **Kristin Strohm**, President & CEO

## CSI Colorado Team

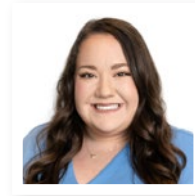
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**Kelly Caufield**  
Executive Director



**Chris Brown**  
VP of Policy & Research



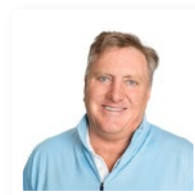
**Brielle Mueller**  
Director of External Affairs & Membership



**DJ Summers**  
Director of Policy & Research



**Jake Zambrano**  
Director of Legislative Services



**Dr. Steven Byers**  
Senior Economist



**Cole Anderson**  
Research Analyst



**Erik Gamm**  
Senior Research Analyst

## CSI National Team

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**Kristin Strohm**  
President and CEO of  
Common Sense Institute



**Cinamon Watson**  
Chief Operating  
Officer



**Lauren Nash**  
Director of  
Communications



**Mary Goodley**  
Director of Major  
Gifts & Grants

# Research Fellows

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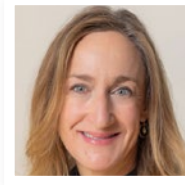
**Kelly Jean Brough**  
Urban Development Fellow



**John Farnam**  
Morgridge Child Welfare  
Fellow



**Dr. Reggie Washington**  
2023 Health & Wellness  
Fellow



**Tisha Schuller**  
2023 Terry J. Stevinson  
Fellow



**Doug Benevento**  
2023 Terry J. Stevinson  
Fellow



**Lang Sias**  
2023 Mike A. Leprino  
Fellow



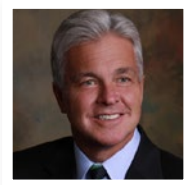
**Tamra Ryan**  
2023 Coors Economic  
Mobility Fellow



**Chief Paul Pazen**  
Public Safety  
Fellow



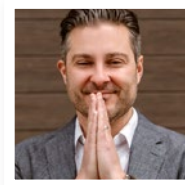
**George Brauchler**  
CSI 2023 Owens-Early  
Criminal Justice Fellow



**Mitch Morrissey**  
CSI 2023 Owens-Early  
Criminal Justice Fellow



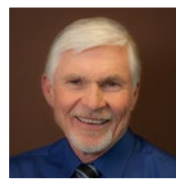
**Jason Gauden**  
2023 Education  
Fellow



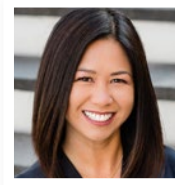
**Peter LiFari**  
2023 Housing  
Fellow



**Jennifer Gimbel**  
2022 Terry J. Stevinson  
Fellow



**Eric Kuhn**  
2022 Terry J. Stevinson  
Fellow



**Evelyn Lim**  
2022 Mike A. Leprino Fellow &  
2021 Terry J. Stevinson Fellow



**Henry Sobanet**  
2020 Terry J. Stevinson  
Fellow



**Ben Stein**  
2020 Terry J. Stevinson Fellow



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6295 Greenwood Plaza Blvd., Suite 100  
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