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EXPLAINER: ELECTION 2024

## Amendment G: Should more disabled veterans qualify for Colorado's homestead property tax break?

Amendment G would amend the Colorado state constitution to offer the state's homestead property tax exemption to more veterans with disabilities



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From left, Elen Gaion and Quincy Deibert assist with construction, Friday, June 16, 2023, at VCP Village, a tiny home community for military veterans in Longmont. (Jeremy Sparig, Special to The Colorado Sun)

**C**olorado voters in November will be asked whether to amend the state constitution to extend a popular property tax break to thousands more veterans with disabilities.

Lawmakers referred the measure, Amendment G, to the ballot in the 2023 legislative session, when they voted unanimously to approve **House Concurrent Resolution 1002**.

If approved by voters, military veterans considered unemployable due to their disabilities would qualify for the state homestead exemption, a property tax break for primary residences.

Constitutional amendments require 55% approval to pass.

Here's what you need to know about Amendment G.

### **What is the homestead tax exemption and who receives it today?**

Today, nearly 300,000 Colorado households claim the primary residence homestead exemption, which voters added to the constitution in 2000.

It exempts 50% of up to \$200,000 in a home's value from taxes, cutting an average of \$590 off the annual tax bill for the median home.

Three kinds of people can qualify:

- Seniors who are 65 years or older and have lived in their home for at least 10 years
- Veterans with certain service-related disabilities
- The surviving spouse of a U.S. military member who died in the line of duty

### **Who would benefit if Amendment G passes?**

Today, the disabled veterans' exemption is limited to those whose disability is classified as "**100% permanent and total**" by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

About 12,000 disabled veterans or gold star spouses claimed the exception in 2023, according to **state legislative analysts**.

The "permanent and total" disability designation is a medical determination, unrelated to whether a person is employable.

If Amendment G passes, it would expand the tax break to those who meet the VA's criteria for the "total disability individual unemployability" rating, or TDIU, which means they're unable to work a steady job that supports them financially.

Today, TDIU-rated veterans qualifies for the same federal disability benefits as someone who is considered "100% disabled" — but only the latter group qualifies for the Colorado property tax break.

Legislative analysts expect around 3,700 more veterans would qualify for the tax break if Amendment G is approved. The changes would take effect in the 2025 tax year, for property taxes paid in 2026.

One downside mentioned in the state's nonpartisan voter's guide: It could make it more difficult for local governments to administer property taxes. Unlike the current definition the state uses for disabilities, the unemployability rating is not necessarily permanent.

### **How would Amendment G affect public services and other Colorado taxpayers?**

The amendment would cut property taxes by an estimated \$1.8 million a year.

However, it wouldn't directly impact state or local government budgets.

The state is required to reimburse local governments for any revenue lost through the homestead exemption. But the state pays for those reimbursements through taxpayer refunds owed under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

A \$1.8 million increase in the homestead exemption means there would be \$1.8 million less left to distribute to other taxpayers through the annual sales tax refund process.

### **Who is spending money to support and oppose Amendment G?**

As of Sept. 30, no campaign committees had been formed to support or oppose the amendment, according to the [Colorado Secretary of State's Office](#).

No lawmaker — Democrat or Republican — voted against the proposal in the state legislature.

**Other resources:**

Nonpartisan legislative staff creates a guide for each initiative on the statewide ballot. You can find their analysis of Amendment G [here](#). You can read the full text of the ballot measure [here](#).