THE ELEPHANT CIRCLE supports strong people during vulnerable times. Our current projects include work on the childbirth system in Colorado and the Incarcerated Survivors Initiating Social Change group at Denver Women’s Correctional Facility. The Elephant Circle is a member of Strong Families.

STRONG FAMILIES is a national initiative to change how we think, feel, and make policy about families. Strong Families is a project of Forward Together.

For more information, contact The Elephant Circle at elephantcircle.net. Like us on Facebook at ElephantCircle or StrongFamilies. Follow us on Twitter @ElephantCircle or @StrongFams.

Civic participation means getting everyday folks involved in the decisions that affect our families and communities. Election season is an especially important time for us to speak up, and there are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status or whether we can vote.

Elections matter because elected leaders can make decisions that either help or hurt our families. Politicians pay more attention to communities who participate in elections.

Who’s Who covers some general information about how Colorado government works across all three state branches, legislative, executive, and judicial. All of the positions featured in the Who’s Who—both elected and appointed—impact families in our state.

WHO’S WHO IN COLORADO POLITICS?

Voting is a public way of saying, “Our families count, and all of our lives matter!”

The General Assembly, the lawmaking (legislative) part of the Colorado state government, is divided into two houses, the Colorado State Senate and the Colorado State House of Representatives, and meets every year from January through May.

WHO IS ELECTED
CO State Senators:
The state is divided into 35 State Senate Districts and each district elects one senator. Senators are elected in two classes, so half of the senators are elected every general election.

CO State Representatives:
The state has 65 State House Districts. Each district elects one representative every two years.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
- Enact state laws in areas such as child care, drug policy, healthcare, state taxes, education, and conservation of natural resources.
- Share budget-making responsibilities with the Governor.
- Sit on committees that evaluate legislation based on certain areas of government like education, finance, health.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU
Decide how the state budget should be used (for healthcare, roads, education, prisons, etc.) and how federal programs (like Medicaid and Medicare) are financed.
Create laws that determine what is safe (from drugs and guns, to healthcare providers, oil companies, and more).
Make laws that affect the availability of public programs, like Colorado Child Care Assistance Program and Children’s Health Plan Plus (CHP+).
Make laws that create agencies, or oversee products, services, or providers.

Visit STRONGFAMILIES.TURBOVOTE.ORG to register to vote, sign up for an absentee ballot, and receive reminders about upcoming elections.
The Colorado executive branch is responsible for administration of state laws and administering the executive branch budget. The executive branch includes the Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, and Attorney General.

### WHO IS ELECTED

**Governor:** The Governor heads the state executive branch and is elected every four years in midterm election years (not during presidential election years).

**Head of Dept. of Public Safety (CDPS):** The CDPS oversees a 1,600-person department, including the Colorado State Patrol, Bureau of Investigation, Fire Prevention and Control, and Division of Criminal Justice and Homeland Security.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

**Governor:**
- Sends proposed budget to the CO Legislature for approval.
- Has the power to veto bills passed by the General Assembly.
- Grants pardons, reprieves, and clemency.

**CDPS:**
- Regulates medical marijuana providers and facilities. (Retail marijuana is regulated by the Department of Revenue.)
- Provides licensing for nearly 100 different professions from midwives to therapists to barbers and insurance agents and doctors.
- Collects licensing fees and investigates and disciplines professionals.
- Implements the rules that govern the practice of midwifery (nurse midwives and professional midwives).
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### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

**Governor’s budget proposes funding levels for programs such as child care, healthcare, and domestic violence services.**

**CDPS:**
- Allocates resources to programs from training for domestic violence perpetrators, to school safety officers, to citizen preparedness for emergencies.

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTS

**District Attorney (DA):** Elected by members of the district, the DA prosecutes all felonies, misdemeanors, and serious traffic offenses.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

**District Attorney:**
- Screens, files, and prosecutes all criminal cases.
- Has discretion about which cases to pursue and how to pursue them.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

**District Attorney:**
- Decides what to charge when prosecuting cases, from domestic violence to drugs.
- Decides if cases should be referred to drug court or an alternative sentencing program that includes supervision and treatment.
- Decides whether a crime should be charged as a hate crime.

### WHAT IF I CAN’T VOTE?

You must be at least 18 and a US citizen to vote. People with a criminal conviction who have served their sentence can vote in Colorado (see the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition for more info: http://www.ccjrc.org/voting.shtml). If you can’t vote, you can still make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Share this voter guide at your church or with your neighbors, friends, and family.
- Attend town hall meetings and other events hosted by your legislators to raise the issues that affect your family. Town hall meetings give you a chance to speak directly to your elected officials in a more informal setting.
- Testify on proposed bills that affect you and your family.
- Visit the Capitol with an advocacy organization that works on the issues that you care about.

### JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Colorado judicial branch interprets and administers the law and consists of various courts in Colorado, including 64 county and municipal courts, the state court of appeals, and the state supreme court. The judicial branch also includes 22 judicial districts, where all criminal cases are heard if a defendant is charged with a felony violation of state law.

### WHO IS ELECTED

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