



Media Advisory

Anneliese Steel
Corporate Affairs Director
anneliese@coloradoconcern.com
720.432.9495
www.ColoradoConcern.com

LAWSUIT FILED AS WEEKEND EXECUTIVE ORDER BY GOVERNOR CIRCUMVENTS COLORADO CONSTITUTION

DENVER – May 18, 2020 – A lawsuit was filed in Denver District Court today after Colorado Governor Jared Polis issued an [executive order](#) over the weekend to suspend certain requirements pertaining to signature collection for ballot issues.

“A governor does not have the power to unilaterally throw out Colorado’s signature gathering process,” said Chris Murray, shareholder at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck. “Colorado’s constitution guarantees that signatures will be gathered transparently in front of a third-party. Governor Polis’ executive order undermines the integrity of the in-person process that Coloradans have long demanded.”

The complaint, filed by Dan Ritchie and Colorado Concern outlines how the Governor lacks the power to alter Colorado’s statewide signature gathering process, even in a time of emergency and that no governor can change what’s required by the state constitution. Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck represents the plaintiffs. The full complaint can be [read here](#).

“The Governor has led our state admirably through these dark and difficult days, and so many of us have stood with him throughout,” said Dan Ritchie. “But Governor Polis’ Friday evening executive order, which would remove vital safeguards that go to the very heart of the integrity in the initiative process, reaches beyond the power given to the Governor by the people, and has to be challenged.”

“Leaders all across Colorado have expressed their view to the Governor that this action is out of line with our state’s constitutional protections around the signature gathering process, and that changes like these simply cannot be made unilaterally by the Governor. We believe it is vital to speak up in defense of our constitutional system of checks and balances,” said Mike Kopp, CEO of Colorado Concern. “The emergency powers granted to the Governor are extensive, but they do not give him the authority to wipe away critical elections safeguards in our state constitution and statute. If the court does not step in and address this, chaos in our election process is the likely result, which will weaken public trust in the midst of this already fraught time. In a recent case, the Colorado Supreme Court said that a pandemic doesn’t change the rules of the game.”

Kopp concluded by saying, “A crisis is certainly the time for leadership, which the Governor has provided on many levels, but the Executive Order overreaches. Our political system is built on checks

and balances. Our state is hungry for collaboration and partnership. This executive order is in violation of both.”

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**Colorado Concern is a statewide CEO-based organization devoted to investing in, and promoting, a pro-business environment through the political process.*