

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Bell Policy Center
and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper
launch early voting effort**

Bell Policy Center, in cooperation with Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, is launching an effort this week to encourage Denver voters to vote early.

“Our motivation is to make voting as simple and easy as possible and make sure everyone who wants to vote gets a chance to vote,” said Wade Buchanan, president of Bell Policy Center, a nonpartisan think tank that works on public policy issues affecting Colorado.

“It’s a long ballot and we have a new voting system. We want to make sure Denver voters know they can vote absentee, at the polls on Election Day or vote early. We’re trying to make sure voting goes as smoothly as possible in Denver,” Buchanan said.

The Vote Early Denver campaign starts Thursday, Oct. 26, and runs through Friday, Nov. 3. Early voting in Denver runs from Oct. 23 through Nov. 3.

Vote Early Denver is a two-pronged campaign. One part is direct contact with thousands of Denver voters, and the other part is a public service message, starring Hickenlooper, to be aired on Denver television.

The direct voter contact is aimed at the nearly 70,000 Denver households with voters who voted in both 2002 and 2004, but are not registered to vote by absentee mail in the 2006 election. The Bell purchased City and County of Denver voter records from an independent list broker, which is standard practice for any organization doing voter outreach.

“This is a nonpartisan effort to educate Denver voters,” Buchanan said. “We are contacting every household with a regular voter, without consideration for whether they are Republican, Democratic, Independent, Green, Libertarian or any other party.”

The direct contact to the 70,000 households will include a pre-recorded telephone call, a brochure sent in the mail that provides dates, times and places for early voting in Denver, and follow-up contacts by phone and door-to-door canvassers.

In each contact, voters will be urged to visit any of six voting centers open through Nov. 3 and avoid long lines on Election Day. Contacts could begin as early as Thursday, and brochures are expected to land in mailboxes by Saturday.

The public service message features Mayor Hickenlooper urging voters to cast their ballots during the early voting period. It is slated to appear on cable television channels starting on Friday, and will be aired more than 200 times before the close of early voting.

The Vote Early Denver information directs voters to a politically neutral Web site, www.voteearlydenver.com, or suggests they call the Vote Early hotline at (720) 913-VOTE (8683) or Denver's 3-1-1 information line, where operators can help voters figure out the easiest time and place to vote early.

The total campaign is expected to cost about \$225,000 in money the Bell raised specifically for this purpose.

"This campaign is deliberately being kept separate from our regular advocacy work," Buchanan said. The Bell Policy Center has taken a position on seven of the 14 statewide ballot questions. The Bell does not endorse or oppose candidates for office, but does encourage all candidates to adopt and promote its opportunity agenda.

"Throughout this effort, the message is completely focused on making it as easy as possible for Denver residents to vote in this election. It's neutral in every other regard," Buchanan said.