

## **Wrecking TABOR: It's not just a Colorado problem**

Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights has been the envy of many other states with its ability to limit the growth government taxation and spending. Now, with the complicity of the Governor who was the original champion of the law, there will be a measure in the 2005 election essentially to eliminate the effect of TABOR for 5 years and allow the government to keep \$3 BILLION of taxpayers' money.

The basic function of the law is to require the state to refund tax payments which are in excess of the prior year's collections adjusted for growth in population and inflation. It also requires a vote of the citizens to increase (or decrease taxes.)

The legislature and the Governor are now proposing "Referendum C", which will allow the state to keep all the money that would otherwise have been refunded to the citizens over the next five years, confiscating over \$600 per Colorado taxpayer.

In their next elections, about sixteen states will have a TABOR-like bill on the ballot or candidates for governor who support these bills. Gutting TABOR in Colorado is exactly the wrong message to send the rest of the country.

By busting TABOR, we are telling the politicians "It's OK if you don't have any discipline because we'll just change the rules to let you take as much of our money as you want to." If we let government believe that no spending controls will ever be enforced, even in the presence of a constitutional amendment, there is no hope for restraining the growth of government.

Don't let anyone tell you that just because the tax rate not changing, that means this is not a tax hike. When the taxman keeps money which would have been in your pocket, it is a tax hike, period.

A couple relevant quotes come to mind:

Winston Churchill: "I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

Gerald Ford: "A government big enough to give you everything you want is strong enough to take everything you have."

I strongly urge anyone in a state where a TABOR bill is being considered to contact organizations which are expected to take public positions on TABOR, especially city and state Chambers of Commerce and urge them to support your state's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (and any candidate who is in favor of it.)

A major Chamber in Colorado is the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce. They are expected to take a position shortly. I encourage all of you, and especially residents of Colorado, to contact Mr. Will Temby at [will@csc.org](mailto:will@csc.org) or at (719) 575-4305 and urge him to oppose the biggest tax increase in Colorado history.

And finally, please visit the web site of the Colorado Club for Growth at [www.cocfg.org](http://www.cocfg.org). Please join and, if possible, make a contribution to help the Club fight to preserve TABOR. Please sign up for the Club even if you can't make a donation so we can keep you up to date on the latest TABOR news.

These web pages have interesting analysis of the economics and politics of TABOR:

<http://www.taxfoundation.org/ff/colorado-tabor.html>

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/fiscal/taborpts.htm>

<http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/6556>

<http://www.i2i.org>

State of Colorado budget study:

[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/govnr\\_dir/ospb/budget/factsheets/statewide/statewide-aug2004.pdf](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/govnr_dir/ospb/budget/factsheets/statewide/statewide-aug2004.pdf)

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