

April 1, 2025

RE: HJR25-1023 – Oppose the Attack on TABOR

To Members of the Colorado General Assembly and the Colorado Press Corps,,

The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), representing Delta, Garfield, Grand, Mesa, Moffat, Montrose and Rio Blanco Counties, stands in fierce opposition to HJR25-1023. Let us be absolutely clear: this resolution is not a legal remedy—it's a legislative betrayal.

It seeks to use taxpayer dollars to fund a lawsuit against taxpayers themselves, to undo the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR)—the only remaining mechanism Coloradans have to hold government accountable. If TABOR falls, there will be no brakes left on the spending train barreling toward fiscal collapse.

Let's look at the facts:

- Since Governor Polis took office in 2019, total state appropriations have surged from \$30 billion to over \$43.9 billion in the FY26 proposed budget—a 46.3% increase in just six years.
- General Fund spending alone has jumped from \$11.6 billion to \$17.9 billion, a 54.3% increase during his tenure.
- The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) has grown by 429% since FY05 and now consumes 37% of the entire state budget, while education's share has fallen to 18%.
- Between just FY24 and FY25, HCPF alone accounted for 43% of all new state spending, and yet, the legislature continues to expand government while asking for fewer restrictions.

Colorado doesn't have a revenue problem. It has a spending addiction. And this resolution doesn't treat it—it enables it.

TABOR provides a lifeline to voters to rein in this kind of fiscal recklessness. The fact that lawmakers would rather sue to eliminate it than face voters at the ballot box tells us everything we need to know: they don't want oversight—they want a blank check.

It is nothing short of arrogant to argue that the people's right to vote on tax increases is "unconstitutional." This resolution claims that direct democracy is a threat to representative government—when in fact, representative government is strongest when it respects the will of the people.

Instead of working to earn voter trust, this resolution doubles down on a dangerous idea: that elected officials should be able to bypass their constituents and file a lawsuit against their own constitution. That's not leadership—that's litigation in search of a power grab.

Rural Colorado is already bearing the brunt of misguided state priorities. Our communities are fighting to keep hospitals open, fund law enforcement, and repair roads. Less than a month ago, AGNC fought successfully to keep the jails in Rifle and Delta open, preserving critical public safety infrastructure and protecting local jobs. Meanwhile, the state siphons severance tax dollars from our communities, forces us to transition away from coal, keeps oil and gas under constant attack, and unleashed wolves on our livestock producers. And when we raised concerns about a bill to strip oil and gas from the Enterprise Zone investment tax credit, we were told "everyone has to give a little" to balance the impacts of budget cuts—as if rural Colorado hasn't already given more than our share. It's been blow after blow on Northwest and rural Colorado—and now they want to dismantle TABOR too. State government has ballooned to over \$43.9 billion in appropriations this year, but somehow, there's never enough left for the communities footing the bill.

Let's call it what it is: The State of Colorado has all but declared war on rural Colorado—on our communities, our way of life, and the industries that built this state.

And let's be clear about priorities. At a time when rural communities are being squeezed from every direction, our state doesn't need to waste time or taxpayer money trying to kill TABOR. We need real solutions, not political theater disguised as legal action.

HJR25-1023 is not about good governance. It's about consolidating power and silencing the people. We won't stand for it.

We urge every legislator who believes in fiscal responsibility and democratic integrity to vote NO on HJR25-1023.

Respectfully,



Cody Davis
AGNC Chairman
Mesa County Commissioner



Chris Nichols
AGNC Vice-Chairman
Mayor of the City of Craig

Sources

- Common Sense Institute, “Colorado Budget Then & Now,”
<https://commonsenseinstitute.co.org/co-budget-then-and-now/>.
 - Cited for the increase in total state appropriations from \$30 billion in 2019 to \$43.9 billion in the FY26 proposed budget (46.3% increase) and for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing’s 429% growth since FY05, its 37% share of the state budget, and education’s 18% share.
 - Colorado Joint Budget Committee, “Appropriations Summaries,”
<https://leg.colorado.gov>.
 - Cited for General Fund spending growth from \$11.6 billion to \$17.9 billion under Governor Polis (54.3% increase).
 - National Association of State Budget Officers, “Colorado Budget Summary,”
<https://www.nasbo.org>.
 - Cited for HCPF accounting for 43% of new state spending between FY24 and FY25.
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