



# NEWS

## AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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# Gov. Owens and Legislative Leaders Set to Betray Taxpayers

*Deal would amount to a \$3.1 billion tax increase to fund new spending programs.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Reports are circulating across the Rocky Mountain State that Gov. Bill Owens (R) and legislative leaders have reached an agreement to place a \$3.1 billion tax measure on the ballot this fall. The new tax money would be used to boost spending on a variety of state programs.

The request for voter approval at the ballot comes because the Colorado state constitution limits the annual growth in state spending to the rate of inflation plus population growth. Any revenues over that limit must be refunded to taxpayers as an overpayment of taxes. The governor and legislature want to keep that overpayment in order to boost spending beyond the constitutional limit.

**“Bill Owens and the big spenders in the legislature have decided to raid the wallets of taxpayers in order to fund their spending binge,”** said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“Coloradans have come to expect that their overpayments of taxes will be refunded to them. The big spenders are now telling the people to forget about getting their refunds – their tax overpayments will be kept so the politicians can spend them as they please. And the new taxing and spending will be well above the supposed ‘structural deficit’ that is supposedly causing this ‘crisis.’ There is no action on the spending side of the equation. This is a money grab, pure and simple.”**

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) was passed by the people of Colorado in 1992. It limits the growth of state spending, and mandates that tax payments over that spending limit be refunded to taxpayers. By limiting spending growth, Colorado avoided the extreme budget crises faced by other states during the last recession – Texas faced a \$10 billion budget hole, Minnesota a \$4.3 billion budget hole, and California a \$36 billion budget hole, while Colorado’s budget was only a couple hundred million in the red. At the same time, Colorado experienced highest in the nation Gross State Product growth, second highest in the nation personal income growth, and \$3.2 billion of tax rebates.

**“I urge all legislators to vote against this plan, and to send it back to the drawing board,”** Norquist continued. **“Education, healthcare, and other programs in Colorado need reform, not new taxpayer money thrown at them.”**

Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal, state and local tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Chris Butler at (202) 785-0266 or at [cbutler@atr.org](mailto:cbutler@atr.org).