



Written by [David Kelly](#) on August 8, 2023

Colorado's "Tax Relief" Proposition Is a Scam

Colorado voters have a decision to make this November on [Proposition HH](#), which was placed on the ballot by the Democrat-controlled state legislature to help temporarily reduce skyrocketing property taxes while allowing the state to retain and spend additional constitutionally restricted revenues.

What voters have not been told is that the measure doesn't require the government to lower taxes, as lawmakers would want them to believe. The proposition, however, does need voter approval to change Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) forever, which is the lawmaker's ultimate goal.



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According to the state's [website](#), a "yes" vote lowers property taxes owed, allows the state to keep additional revenue that would otherwise be refunded to taxpayers, temporarily changes how taxpayer TABOR refunds are distributed, and creates a new property tax limit for some local governments. A "no" vote maintains current property tax law and TABOR limits.

The Colorado Department of Revenue shared a brief [history](#) on the TABOR Amendment, stating it "was approved by voters in 1992, limits the amount of revenue the State of Colorado can retain and spend. Specifically, TABOR allows the state to retain and spend an amount based on the prior fiscal year's actual revenue or limit, whichever was lower, grown by Colorado inflation and population growth and adjusted for any 'voter-approved revenue changes.'"

Governor Jared Polis signed [Senate Bill 303](#) into law in May placing the proposition or supposed "tax relief plan" on the ballot with great fanfare among his supporters. The supposed tax relief is needed as property taxes in many areas of the state increased by anywhere from 30 to 60 percent from the previous tax assessment in 2021. The increase will go into effect next year.

The skyrocketing property taxes are a result of voters being duped into repealing the [Gallagher Amendment](#) in 2020 to adjust tax rates that, according to [CPR](#), would significantly cut residential property tax rates, keeping "hundreds of millions of dollars out of the government's pockets and in property owners' hands." Now the same lawmakers that sought to repeal Gallagher are using the same tactics to push the passage of Prop HH.

Within days of Polis placing Prop HH on the ballot, limited government, pro-free enterprise nonprofit Advance Colorado [announced](#) numerous counties joining its lawsuit against the state over Prop HH for violating the single-subject and "clear-title" ballot rules.

Here is a brief [sampling of quotes](#) from county commissioners who are supporting Advance Colorado's lawsuit:

"The governor and legislature have majorities to do almost anything in our state but instead make the choice to trample on the Constitution of Colorado. Our Charter is the protection



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we have against a tyrannical government and both sides should stand firm in its defense. It is amazing that out of one side of the politicians' mouths they want local control and out of the other side, they emphasize that they know best how to govern locally. Commissioners already have the ability to mitigate these increased property taxes. The magic shell game where the Democrats take our TABOR refunds to pay for higher property taxes is a classic Washington political trick," said Jerry Sonnenberg, Chairman of the Logan County Board of County Commissioners.

"Rather than transparent and honest policy, this is an attempt to lure Coloradans in with a false promise of property tax relief, but is really an exploitation of struggling families. This bill is a sloppy bait and switch — a tiny tax decrease is the bait, but Coloradans will be worse off if they are tricked into giving up the TABOR refunds they are owed," said Carrie Geitner, El Paso County Commissioner.

Adding to the growing opposition, CPR News reported [recently](#) that there is more to the passage of Prop HH than just cutting property taxes. "If the economy performs strongly, the measure could also take away billions of dollars in TABOR tax refunds and use that money to grow funding for public schools — a possibility that Gov. Jared Polis' administration has not advertised, despite the fact that it's a key goal of the Democratic Party," shared CPR.

A *Colorado Springs Gazette* [editorial](#) claimed that there's a "hidden agenda" with Prop HH, and "that agenda is to snooker Colorado voters into letting the state keep and spend billions of dollars in surplus tax revenue that otherwise would have to be returned to the public by law."

The editorial also shared that backers of Prop HH "have raised \$360,000, according to the Colorado Secretary of State's Office records — and almost all of it has come from wealthy Coloradans and organizations with ties to Democrats, including to Gov. Jared Polis." The state's largest teachers' union as well as a progressive Washington, D.C.-based [Sixteen Thirty Fund](#) also reportedly gave in support of the proposition.

Come November, Colorado voters need to do their homework and avoid being duped again into allowing the government to steal their wealth. They need to vote no on Prop HH and send Polis and democrat lawmakers a clear message that they need to do their jobs and change and pass property tax laws in their respective chambers, leaving TABOR alone.



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