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Contact: John Keckhaver 608-284-0580 ext 305
Julie Landrie 608-284-0580 ext 303

The Trouble with TABOR Community Forum Held in Milwaukee

West Allis - What do a domestic violence advocate, a Milwaukee parks advocate, a retired iron worker, an interfaith community leader, a firefighter, a kindergarten teacher and a public worker who helps families find food and medical have in common? They are all community members who will speak out against the so-called Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR) at a public forum Wednesday night. These aren't people with an agenda, political aspirations, or public speaking expertise; they are Milwaukee area residents who know the value of their community and want to take a stand to protect what makes this area a great place to live, work and raise a family.

"Sometimes we take public services for granted, our streets get plowed, our school doors are open; these are things we value and are what we think of when people say 'government'. For someone who has lost everything as a victim of domestic violence, especially children, 'government services' also means treatment, safety, a home without fear. As TABOR is debated, I cannot help worrying about the quieter part of government. Who will make sure these services are protected?," said Nou Vang, advocate for victims of domestic violence.

Joining Nou Vang in speaking up about the local effects of TABOR are Marcus White, leader of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee who is concerned about TABOR and how it will affect our neighbors struggling with the effects poverty on families. Dinah Parker helps people find "basic needs" services like food, medical care or child care assistance; she feels that we cannot have a city with a strong economy if we cannot help lift people in their time of need.

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families organized the public forum in opposition to TABOR to raise public awareness of what TABOR will mean for what we value in our communities. Public forums will be held in six cities across Wisconsin over the next two months prior to the vote Legislative leaders have promised to take on TABOR.

"As a firefighter, I see people at the toughest moments of their life, being able to be there, to help solve a crisis and save lives is why I became a firefighter in the first place. How will our public protective services fare under TABOR? How will the changing needs of our community be met? These are questions that need to be asked and answered by those that support Wisconsin TABOR," said Rick Gale, a West Allis firefighter and president of the Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin.

Kelly McMahon, a kindergarten teacher at Lancaster Elementary in Milwaukee, knows first hand what budget cuts can do to schools. Wisconsin school spending has been limited through revenue caps since 1995. "We have a constitutional obligation to provide an equal education for all of Wisconsin's children, we should fulfill that responsibility before we add a conflicting amendment to our constitution," McMahon said.

Also speaking at the community forum will be Jim Price, volunteer president of The Park People of Milwaukee County, Bob Haase a retired structural iron worker, and John Keckhaver of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. **The Trouble with TABOR community forum begins at 6:30pm Wednesday, January 11th at the Tommy G Thompson Center, 640 S 84th Street in West Allis.**

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of Wisconsin's children and families. WCCF: Raising voices to make every kid count.