



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Child Advocates Critical of Hasty Action on TABOR**

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) today expressed dismay at attempts by leaders in the State Senate to force action on the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) without allowing adequate time for debate or meaningful public input. WCCF strongly opposes both the content of the TABOR proposal and the temerity of the process being employed.

“Constitutional changes as dramatic as TABOR must be considered carefully and thoroughly,” said WCCF Executive Director Charity Eleson. “It is irresponsible to hastily push forward a policy that has such deep and lasting consequences for the citizens of our state. Wisconsinites deserve more thoughtful action from their elected officials.”

WCCF opposes TABOR on a number of grounds. By constitutionally limiting the ability of state and local policy makers to make budget and tax decisions, TABOR would hinder their efforts to cope with the fluctuating expense of crucial services—costs that are likely to increase at a much faster pace than TABOR would allow spending to grow. Moreover, once financial problems arise because of TABOR, it would require going through the lengthy constitutional amendment process once more in order to fix them.

“Local and state officials need the flexibility to respond to changes in the cost of the services they provide,” Eleson said. “TABOR strips them of this power.”

TABOR could have a devastating effect on many of the programs and services that affect the well-being of children and families in Wisconsin. A comparison between Wisconsin and Colorado—a state that enacted a similar TABOR package in 1992—reveals both that (1) Wisconsin ranks considerably higher than Colorado on nearly all indicators of child well-being; and (2) Colorado’s rankings have plummeted in the years since its TABOR law was enacted (see attached tables).

“TABOR is an empty promise for children, and the Colorado experience has amply demonstrated its negative effects on K-12 education, access to health care, and quality of life. This is not the future most Wisconsin residents want for their kids, and it’s not the future state policy makers should want either,” Eleson said.

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[TABLES ATTACHED--Selected TABOR impacts: Colorado vs. Wisconsin]

Selected *TABOR* Impacts: National Rankings**Table 1: Colorado vs. Wisconsin**

(This table uses the most current data we could locate. The year is indicated in parentheses.)

Measure	Colorado	Wisconsin
Health Insurance Coverage	37 <sup>th</sup> ('01-02)	3 <sup>rd</sup> ('01-02)
Childhood Immunization	50 <sup>th</sup> ('03)	10 <sup>th</sup> ('03)
Timely Prenatal Care	41 <sup>st</sup> ('02)	20 <sup>th</sup> ('02)
Low Birthweight Babies	40 <sup>th</sup> ('02)	12 <sup>th</sup> ('02)
Infant Mortality	11 <sup>th</sup> ('00-01)	23 <sup>rd</sup> ('00-01)
Child Death Rate	21 <sup>st</sup> ('01)	19 <sup>th</sup> ('01)
Teen Birth Rate	36 <sup>th</sup> ('02)	11 <sup>th</sup> ('02)
Class Size	41 <sup>st</sup> ('02)	19 <sup>th</sup> ('02)
ACT Scores (among states w. 40% taking exam)	19 <sup>th</sup> ('03)	1 <sup>st</sup> ('03)
K-12 spending per pupil	33 <sup>rd</sup> ('01)	11 <sup>th</sup> ('01)
K-12 spending relative to income	48 <sup>th</sup> ('01)	9 <sup>th</sup> ('01)
Per Capita St. Higher Ed Appropriations	47 <sup>th</sup> ('04)	29 <sup>th</sup> ('04)
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts	48 <sup>th</sup> ('01)	7 <sup>th</sup> ('01)
Idle teens (% neither working nor in school)	32 <sup>nd</sup> ('01)	3 <sup>rd</sup> ('01)
Higher Ed Enrollment (9th Graders who enroll 4 years later)	29 <sup>th</sup> ('02)	12 <sup>th</sup> ('02)
Morgan Quinto rankings:		
“Most Livable State”	23 <sup>rd</sup> ('04)	13 <sup>th</sup> ('04)
“Healthiest State”	27 <sup>th</sup> ('04)	21 <sup>st</sup> ('04)
“Smartest State”	35 <sup>th</sup> ('04)	8 <sup>th</sup> ('04)

**Table 2: Colorado’s Changing Rankings in the Decade Since TABOR’s Implementation**

(We excluded measures for which we could not find comparable data from the early 1990s.)

Measure	Colorado	
	Current	1993
Health Insurance Coverage	37 <sup>th</sup> ('01-02)	21 <sup>st</sup>
Childhood Immunization	50 <sup>th</sup> ('03)	27 <sup>th</sup> ('94)
Timely Prenatal Care	41 <sup>st</sup> ('02)	21 <sup>st</sup> ('90)
Low Birthweight Babies	40 <sup>th</sup> ('02)	42 <sup>nd</sup>
Infant Mortality	11 <sup>th</sup> ('00-01)	19 <sup>th</sup>
Child Death Rate	21 <sup>st</sup> ('01)	16 <sup>th</sup>
Teen Birth Rate	36 <sup>th</sup> ('02)	30 <sup>th</sup>
K-12 spending per pupil	33 <sup>rd</sup> ('01)	28 <sup>th</sup>
K-12 spending relative to income	48 <sup>th</sup> ('01)	35 <sup>th</sup>
Per Capita St. Higher Ed Appropriations	47 <sup>th</sup> ('04)	31 <sup>st</sup>
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts	48 <sup>th</sup> ('01)	31 <sup>st</sup>
Idle teens (% neither working nor in school)	32 <sup>nd</sup> ('01)	13 <sup>th</sup>
Morgan Quinto rankings:		
“Most Livable State”	23 <sup>rd</sup> ('04)	8 <sup>th</sup>
“Healthiest State”	27 <sup>th</sup> ('04)	9 <sup>th</sup>

Notes: For all of the measures, lower rankings are better. The data come from many sources, including the Kids Count Data Books, Census Bureau, CDC, Morgan Quinto, & Kaiser Family Foundation.