



April 2, 2008

**An Open Letter to the  
Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission:  
Put a Taxpayer's Bill of Rights on the Ballot!**

Distinguished Commissioners:

On behalf of the more than 24,000 Florida members of the National Taxpayers Union, we write in strong support of efforts to place a Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) initiative on the November ballot. If adopted, TABOR would provide important protections for taxpayers by requiring voter approval of tax increases and new taxes via a referendum. It would also limit the growth of state government to the rate of inflation plus one percent plus population growth.

Despite strong opposition from the usual supporters of big government – public sector labor unions, the education establishment, and some politicians – TABOR would not result in massive cuts to government programs. Instead, it would get spending under control and give voters the final say over how much money government takes from them. This is not just an economic necessity; it is a common courtesy to taxpayers.

In the last few years state and local taxes have captured roughly 10 percent of the hard-earned dollars of Floridian workers. Meanwhile, property tax collections have become increasingly burdensome, doubling from 1991-2004. Enactment of TABOR would establish a common-sense guide for the size of the state government, subjecting the legislature to the same kind of constraints that Florida's families deal with every day.

Some TABOR opponents point to Colorado, where a similar law was passed in 1992, as a failure because its automatic tax rebates were temporarily suspended. The confluence of economic recession and an education spending mandate that carved an additional 1 percent each year from the budget led voters to forgo their tax rebates under TABOR for a five-year period starting in 2005.

But before that vote, Colorado was one of the nation's fastest-growing states and was able to return billions of dollars to the taxpayers who earned them in the first place. In any case, the referendum itself proved to make the best argument for TABOR by giving citizens a direct voice in deciding how much government they can afford. These concepts are not foreign to Florida. The law forbids the imposition of new state taxes by Constitutional Amendment without a two-thirds vote of the people. TABOR would make voter input more uniform.

Taxpayers in Florida and throughout the nation will benefit from both the economic growth and the strong example your state provides in adopting solid taxpayer protections in the form of a TABOR. We encourage you to give Floridians the opportunity to vote on this initiative in November.

Sincerely,

Andrew Moylan  
Government Affairs Manager