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Battle lines drawn around Taxpayer's Bill of Rights as formal opposition to Proposition CC announced

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By Mike Krause

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DENVER—Battle lines are being drawn around Proposition CC, **a measure** appearing on this November's state-wide ballot asking Coloradans to permanently give up tax refunds under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, or TABOR. In a media release today, the issue committee "No on CC" announced its roster of business leaders, and past and present elected officials—including former Colorado Governor Bill Owens—organized against the measure.

TABOR is a constitutional amendment passed in 1992 that, among other things, limits the annual growth of a portion of the state budget to a formula of population growth plus inflation. The state is required to refund excess revenue back to taxpayers, or get voter consent to keep it temporarily.

If passed, Prop CC would eliminate what's left of the TABOR spending limit, allowing the state to keep all excess revenues that would otherwise be refunded back to taxpayers in perpetuity. Prop CC was referred to voters by the Democrat-controlled Colorado legislature earlier this year and is a statutory change, meaning it needs 50 percent plus one of the vote to pass, and that lawmakers can later amend the measure if enacted, as with any other state law.

"Make no mistake—Prop CC is not only a tax increase, but also a permanent blank check to the legislature," Michael Fields, executive director of Colorado Rising Action told *Complete Colorado*. "There's already a strong

grassroots effort with leaders from across Colorado with energy to defeat Prop CC and defend the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.”

Colorado Rising Action is a member of the coalition put together to support the “No on CC” effort, as is the Independence Institute*, a free market think tank in Denver, among other taxpayer advocacy groups.

According to the release, the co-chairs of the committee are former state treasurers Walker Stapleton and Mark Hillman, University of Colorado Regent Heidi Ganahl, and 18th Judicial District Attorney George Brauchler.

Hillman, a wheat farmer from Burlington on Colorado's eastern plains, also served in the Colorado Senate from 1998 to 2005.

“Colorado government belongs to the voters – not the other way around,” Hillman told *Complete Colorado*. “The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights ensures that government leaders remember who is in charge and ask permission if they want or need to spend more.”

“The spending lobby hates to ask permission. They'd rather just raise our taxes,” Hillman continued. “Prop CC would give them one more excuse to avoid asking voters for permission to spend more of our hard-earned dollars. There's no good reason for voters to give government a blank check!”

Former Colorado Governor Bill Owens signed on as a member of the committee's advisory board. The inclusion of Owens is significant. While as a widely popular governor he was supportive of a 2005 effort that resulted in a 5-year “time-out” from TABOR's revenue limits, he draws the line at the permanent nature of Prop CC.

“Having served as Governor when Referendum C passed, I understand the difference between short-term adjustments during funding crises and permanent blank checks that the state government too often wishes it could write itself,” the media release quotes Owens. “Proposition CC is the latter, and for the sake of future generations of Colorado taxpayers, I urge voters to reject it in November.”

Owens is joined on the advisory board by a slew of high-profile Coloradans including businessmen Doug Robinson and Grant Whiteside, Congressman Ken Buck, Colorado House Minority Leader Patrick Neville from Douglas County, State Senator John Cooke from Weld County, Colorado Springs radio host Jeff Crank and Mesa County Commissioner Rose Pugliese, among others.

Buck is also the newly-elected state chair of the Colorado Republican Party, while Pugliese is also one of the proponents of an ongoing state-wide effort to put a **repeal referendum** of the recently passed National Popular Vote Compact on the ballot.

**Complete Colorado* is a project of the Independence Institute.



Former Governor Bill Owens

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