Amendment 60
Property Taxes

Ballot Title: An amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning government charges on property, and, in connection therewith, allowing petitions in all districts for elections to lower property taxes; specifying requirements for property tax elections; requiring enterprises and authorities to pay property taxes but offsetting the revenues with lower tax rates; prohibiting enterprises and unelected boards from levying fees or taxes on property; setting expiration dates for certain tax rate and revenue increases; requiring school districts to reduce property tax rates and replacing the revenue with state aid; and eliminating property taxes that exceed the dollar amount included in an approved ballot question, that exceed state property tax laws, policies, and limits existing in 1992 that have been violated, changed, or weakened without state voter approval, or that were not approved by voters without certain ballot language.

Text of Proposal:

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:

Article X, section 20, The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, is amended to add:

(10) Property taxes.

Starting in 2011:

(a) The state yearly shall audit and enforce, and any person may file suit to enforce, strictest compliance with all property tax requirements of this section. Successful plaintiffs shall always be awarded costs and attorney fees; districts shall receive neither. This voter-approved revenue change supersedes conflicting laws, opinions, and constitutional provisions, and shall always be strictly interpreted to favor taxpayers.

(b) Electors may vote on property taxes where they own real property. Adapting state law, all districts shall allow petitions to lower property taxes as voter-approved revenue changes. Property tax issues shall have November election notices and be separate from debt issues. Property tax bills shall list only property taxes and late charges. Enterprises and authorities shall pay property taxes; lower rates shall offset that revenue. Enterprises and unelected boards shall levy no mandatory fee or tax on property. Future property tax rate increases shall expire within ten years. Extending expiring property taxes is a tax increase. Prior actions to keep excess property tax revenue are expired; future actions are tax increases expiring within four years. Non-college school districts shall phase out equally by 2020 half their 2011 rate not paying debt; state aid shall replace that revenue yearly. Nothing here shall limit payment of bonded debt issued before 2011.

(c) These property tax increase, extension, and abatement rates after 1992 shall expire:

(i) Taxes exceeding state laws, tax policies, or limits violated, changed, or weakened without state voter approval. Those laws, policies, and limits, including debt limits, are restored.

(ii) Taxes exceeding the one annual fixed, final, numerical dollar amount first listed in their tax increase ballot title as stated in (3)(c).

(iii) Those rates without voter approval after 1992 of a ballot title as stated in (3)(c).