

## Petition Comments and Stories: April 16, 2015

**P.B., Agate:** I have worked for this district for 31 years. We have a great school with great students and staff. Our small district has had to make several cuts over the years, but the work still has to get done. With every cut, the work load has to be shared by the remaining staff. Our staff is very hard working and dedicated, but we are getting stretched to the limit. Thank you for your consideration.

**L.B., Aguilar:** All of southern Colorado (south of Pueblo) has had less than mediocre funding in our public schools. Our children have had fewer opportunities and resources. Our teachers are paid less and have had their steps frozen for years. Quality teachers come, then leave to find a better living for their families. Thus, our children face an unending, disruptive, and poorly resourced public school system. It's time to reinvigorate our public schools. Make all the children in Colorado a priority. Return what is owed.

**K.D., Akron:** Our school district has had to reduce staff and require fewer staff to handle more tasks. We are short at least two administrative staff due to additional reporting, testing, and evaluation requirements. We are also short two teachers due to growing student numbers in younger grades. We have been fixing vehicles instead of replacing them. As a rural school district, the mileage getting kids to and from school and out of town activities takes a large toll on our aging transportation fleet.

**B.B., Alamosa:** I teach English and Spanish at a small, rural school in Moffat, CO. Each staff member here has to take on the work of two or three employees because we simply can't afford to hire the employees necessary to run the school effectively. Our school nurse is only in on Wednesdays. Authentic experiences, field trips, and even classroom supplies are often left out of the equation due to insufficient funding. And none of the teachers or staff are paid according to their workload.

**J.C., Alamosa:** I'm tired of my salary being frozen. Not only does it hurt me now, but it impacts my retirement. I spend extra money in my classroom to get basic supplies for my students. We need chairs that aren't broken, computers that work with up to date programs (not windows xp), roofs that don't leak, and money to pay the ever increasing bills (electricity and heating keep going up). Get rid of the negative factor!

**M.C., Alamosa:** Quality teachers have had their pay schedule frozen at least two times in the last 6 years. School supply budgets have also been cut drastically.

**L.M., Alamosa:** I have been a teacher for 31 years and have never seen such a reduction in funds. I've had my salary frozen three times and would hate to see another freeze. We need new books, supplies, necessities for children; paper, scissors, construction paper, glue, etc. These are only a few things we need amongst the building needs, playground needs, professional development needs. We would like to see more money come into our schools, not taken away!

**K.W., Alamosa:** Please support education. It is the foundation for a free, democratic society.

**D.C., Anton:** We may have to cut staff and combine grades. Too much testing has created an enormous financial burden and going back to the federally mandated testing would appeal to our school and community.

**K.D., Antonito:** I live in a small rural area where resources for students are already limited and small school districts are barely making it. Education is important and should be funded with the most importance!

**K.B., Arvada:** I'm a parent of a Jeffco student and I'm on the district's accountability committee. I've seen both at my local school and at the district level what we've had to "give up" because of negative factor cuts: raises to pay top teachers to stay, increasing fees to parents for their kids' "free" education, reducing support staff that are vital at the schools (librarians, aides, secretaries, academic coaches, etc.) and putting off technology that our students need NOW! Please give our students, our future, a chance now that times are good again :-)

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**V.B., Arvada:** Show your support for public education and keep the surplus for the kids!

**P.B., Arvada:** Class sizes are getting too big in Jeffco. We need to build new schools in NW Arvada to reduce class sizes. Well educated kids are important for Colorado to thrive!

**K.D., Arvada:** TABOR has hurt schools by ratcheting down the amount of money they can receive. Our schools are in dire need of an increase in finances after so many years of cutbacks and the increasing cost of meeting state and federal mandates for testing (including mandatory, unfunded technology). Please put money back into education!

**K.F., Arvada:** Please consider revising TABOR. I know that when we over pay our taxes we receive a refund, but local governments who faced extraordinary cuts due to the economic recession have depleted their "rainy day funds." It makes sense to give education a means to rebuild reserves. School after school has been given the task to do more with less money in their budget. Jeffco is going to a Site Based Budget model and allowing principals to determine their schools' needs. Our principals have demonstrated fiscal responsibility in the past and will continue this in the future. Let's give them the budget to address the needs of their building, staff, students, and community.

**K.F., Arvada:** Please restore funding for education. The past five years has included a significant amount of "belt-tightening" and concessions by educators across the state. As our economy rebounds, apply the new revenue to children. Help teachers meet the needs of students. Thank you.

**K.F., Arvada:** Facilities need work. Other schools need updated technology. Class sizes are too large, and more paraprofessionals would be very helpful to meet the needs of students who need additional support. Please help offset the negative factor for our district and fully fund education.

**C.G., Arvada:** Full day Kindergarten is a must.

**M.H., Arvada:** Please invest in our children!

**K.J., Arvada:** I have four grandchildren who will probably be going to Jeffco schools. Put the surplus where it will help the future of Colorado. Educate the children.

**J.A.K., Arvada:** Since my kids have been in school, their wonderful, hardworking teachers have gotten a (measly) raise one time. When I go to school-based budgeting meetings, I feel like a parent holding two children over a cliff and I can only pull up one. Let's put our money into our most precious resource.

**T.M., Arvada:** I was the Head of School for a public charter school for two years (2011-2013). Part of my responsibilities included annual budgeting. Yearly I had to keep hundreds of thousands of dollars on TABOR reserve rather than utilizing it where and when it was needed and most beneficial. During that I time I was forced to make heartbreaking cuts to staff and programs in order to keep the doors open to our students. Our community engaged in dramatic fundraising efforts in order to minimize the number of unpaid staff furlough days and additional cuts to literacy and Special Education staff. These were some very dark times that continue to affect our students today due to the reduction in educational time and support they received then. As a parent, educator and attentive Colorado citizen, I sincerely request our state legislation to overturn the short-sighted TABOR requirements. Although school funding has improved recently due to the economy, schools are still playing catch-up financially. Allowing our schools to catch their breath during stronger financial times is an investment in our children, our state and our collective future. Thank you.

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**M.P., Arvada:** It really makes sense to me to send any surplus monies into schools and more importantly K through 12 education. Programs like music, art, and physical education are very important in providing students a well-rounded education.

**S.R., Arvada:** Larger classes, fewer classroom supplies, teachers cut; this is our school's story.

**S.R., Arvada:** My son goes to a Title I school, which means that over 40% of the parents can't afford to feed their families. If they can't afford to feed their families then how can they afford to pay for an education that is required to continue in the school system? The children are our future and we need to keep them and their future in our minds.

**C.S., Arvada:** My kid's school just lost their principal, in part because the budget situation was unworkable. It's not acceptable to take money from schools in bad economic times, and not replenish the funds when finances improve.

**L.W., Arvada:** My youngest's elementary school class is overcrowded. Huge neighborhood land development projects north of our neighborhood were allowed to be constructed without building schools in Jefferson county for these hundreds of new children who have moved to our state.

**C.W., Arvada:** Having been both a teacher-librarian and a classroom teacher on all levels in Jefferson County since 1973 I believe that it is essential for all of our students to have all that is best in this dynamic, challenging 21st century world. Jeffco's teachers excel in every program area in spite of current obstacles to success, not because of those obstacles. Without access to this surplus, however, positions, programs, opportunities for instruction and learning continue to diminish. Failure - in terms of our students' skills and knowledge will be the result. This dire forecast can be ameliorated and positive outcomes will result from supporting our Colorado students, teachers, programs and goals by keeping the TABOR surplus for education.

**K.B., Aurora:** My daughter turned 5 in the spring and will begin her education this fall. My daughter's education should NOT be compromised. I am a single working mother and I pay for additional educational supplements. It is disappointing that the government seems to care so little about the future. You're only as strong as your weakest link.

**J.B., Aurora:** It is my opinion that the education of our children is the most valuable necessity of their lives! Where would we be if education of our children is not provided?? Yes...it costs \$\$\$, yet it delivers educated adults that build our economy and their children will be doing the same for the next generation!!

**S.C., Aurora:** Continuing increases in class size, cuts to programs, cuts to staff, and the list goes on. These are just a few of the ways our children and their education are being impacted by the lack of adequate funding to public K-12 education. Public education is everyone's opportunity for a bright future. Maybe we could run a statewide campaign to urge citizens to donate their small TABOR rebates to a fund for public education. \$70 million is certainly better than the \$25 million proposed by the state legislature.

**A.D., Aurora:** TABOR was fine when there wasn't much growth happening in the state, but with the tremendous demand for expanded services, e.g., infrastructure and education, we in Colorado can no longer afford the luxury of TABOR. Don't cave in to anti-government extremists. Do what's right for Colorado and override the TABOR constraints, or just repeal it.

**S.F., Aurora:** The education of our children should be our top priority. They are the future.

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**S.G., Aurora:** Our children are not funded appropriately anyway, and now cuts? How can this be good for our future? Colorado is recovering from the worst recession and we're putting education at the bottom of the list. After teaching for 25 years, I personally know how difficult it is to find the money to meet the needs of our children. Please support our schools and our state by not allowing such cuts.

**L.M., Aurora:** I have tutored m kids in 5th grade reading for the past 9 years. Colorado needs all the help it can get. The kids need the money much more than I do.

**R.P., Aurora:** Our schools are suffering, our students our suffering, and our society will suffer if we don't put more money into education.

**N.B., Avon:** I have more kids in my class and it has impacted my ability to teach and to reach all kids.

**K.B., Avon:** How can we not fund full day kindergarten? Seems like a no brainer to me!

**H.B., Avon:** As a teacher for the past 33 years in Colorado, I am pushing for financial support from our state to support a higher quality of education our children deserve. Full day Kindergarten should be fully funded by the state. How can we expect our students to be proficient by 3rd grade without this opportunity for full days in Kindergarten?

**G.C., Avon:** Please support the future of Colorado by replacing state education funds! Strong support of public education in Colorado not only prepares our youth for success, but it attracts excellent talent to our state and is vital for our economy now and in the future. Please think of our state's future and make this investment now.

**M.G., Avon:** Important specials have been shortened or eliminated such as technology and world languages.

**L.H., Avon:** Colorado needs to make funding for public education a top priority. Please do whatever it takes to restore the more than \$1 billion in cuts we have experienced in recent years. Colorado can do better. Our kids deserve better!

**B.K., Avon:** I am in high school and I see how hard my teachers are working to help us. I know we need more teachers and more counselors.

**J.L., Avon:** Colorado ranks at the bottom for funding education? Colorado is an amazing place to live with endless opportunities. Our children, who are the future of this state, deserve more. Fund our schools!

**W.M., Avon:** With five kids I can't afford to keep paying more directly to the school to pay for the needed staff. Avon is an expensive place to live - teachers and staff need adequate salaries to live here.

**M.O., Avon:** We do not have books for our students; class sizes have grown; teachers do not have adequate time for planning and grading.

**C.R., Avon:** Children's education needs to be strong for our future.

**M.S., Avon:** I am an educator and more than 70% of my first grade students come from families that are at or below poverty level. Unfortunately, they are not given the privilege that most students across our nation have - free full-day kindergarten. That alone is tragic, and it's only the tip of the iceberg considering the many issues resulting from insufficient funding. It is our duty to provide the best opportunities possible to our young children. Nothing is more important!

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**T.W., Avon:** Give the TABOR surplus to the kids...it will only help us ALL in the long run!

**T.W., Avon:** Throughout the period of falling real estate values, our schools were forced to make cuts to staffing and programs. The arbitrary link between property values and programming in schools results in our district having to cut programming despite increasing enrollment. Keeping some portion of the surplus to reinvest in schools is appropriate and important in restoring some of what we lost over the past several years.

**K.H., Bayfield:** One key area that has been cut in our district is classroom supplies. Teachers are spending more now than ever out of their own pockets to provide necessary items for their classrooms. We have also had to cut some positions, making it harder to provide services to students and families. Our school has been asking for donations to provide a fresh fruit or veggies snack to each child every day - and have pretty well tapped out these local resources. Finally, overcoming the effects of poverty on language development and vocabulary development is intensive, focused work. We need all the resources available to help get our young students off to a better start in school. Thanks for your consideration and support!

**E.O., Bayfield:** \$20 can't buy you much, but it can sure make a impact for 66,000 kids! It's a NO brainer!

**R.A., Boulder:** TABOR must go.

**J.B., Boulder:** Supporting the education of our future work force/leaders should be a priority.

**D.B., Boulder:** I have 5 kids heavily impacted by the cuts. Please keep my refund to help fund schools.

**M.D., Boulder:** I'd like to see a voter initiative to revise TABOR.

**J.H., Boulder:** With two kids in public school, I have been concerned about the lack of support for teachers, and innovation. My twelve-yea- old says "well, we don't really LEARN anything at school, we just do what they tell us to." Teachers with resources and support can create opportunities for our kids to really learn how to solve interesting problems and how to lead. Right now the teachers can barely hold it together - the responsibility is too great, but the resources too few to do a good job.

**S.H., Boulder:** The local high school offers only six science classes for interested students. 12 years ago, the high school offered eight. Please reconsider supporting the next generation of wage earners/taxpayers.

**K.J., Boulder:** I live in Boulder where my three kids attend school, but I teach in Mapleton. At my school, the building is falling down and the library hardly has any books. We don't have a lot of resources for teaching and sub openings often go unfilled.

**P.K., Boulder:** America needs our children to be EDUCATED! Colorado is well below national levels in funding of education, both K-12 and higher education. We must change this for the good of Colorado, for the good of the Nation!

**N.K., Boulder:** I am a special education and literacy teacher at an elementary school. Over the past several years, we have seen significant cuts in special education para-educator support for students, and our literacy specialist/teacher FTE (full time equivalent) has been cut in half. It is very difficult to meet the needs of struggling students with such limited services available.

**J.L., Boulder:** I taught for 25 years in Boulder Valley Public Schools. During that time, even prior to TABOR and Gallagher, Colorado consistently ranked at the bottom in funding to education. The increased pressure on teachers and schools to 'perform' has never been matched by equity in funding. I am concerned not only for the

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viability of public school teaching, but for the growing inequalities between the urban and rural tax base. While Boulder voters approve bonds and referenda (an end run around TABOR), Adams County voters rejected both. The final outcome will disproportionately impact families afflicted with poverty and families of color. Jonathan Kozol had it right when he published 'Savage Inequalities'.

**L.L., Boulder:** Help the kids, repeal TABOR!

**J.M., Boulder:** I worked in Adams 12 Five Star Schools as a school social worker for over 20 years. Educators work incredibly hard, have large caseloads and classrooms. I currently substitute from time to time and I see how much harder and more difficult educator's jobs are, much of which is due to budget decreases. I can't think of a better way for our state's budget surplus to be used than to help schools and educators.

**C.M., Boulder:** I think the cuts are ridiculous and I find the whole TABOR Amendment shortsighted and destructive.

**J.M., Boulder:** Please don't make us move by cutting the priority for education. Boulder Valley School District is a small very capable group of people and culture. We promote the higher calling to read, learn, reflect, innovate, advance.

**M.P., Boulder:** I am a teacher in the state of Colorado. Every year I see more effort and money being put into mandates, testing, more new standards (I have taught 9 years and am on my 3rd set of standards). Class sizes get bigger, budgets are inconsistent, teacher requirements are inconsistent, higher ed gets more expensive as teachers constantly try to stay up to date and within requirements to teach and salaries do not reflect what should be a high priority value in the country for all children to have a shot in this country. The one constant in education is the diverse student needs teachers must meet while they are all but threatened to focus on so many things that will not help a student become a whole human being and thus thrive and learn. I would love to see priority for the whole child first, then the resources a school needs to help those children, and finally a budget that addresses those needs. In education we call this backward design. Start at the goal, the children, and work your way back!

**N.T., Boulder:** All of our schools, not only those in poorer districts have felt the cuts. It's time to make things right for students, teachers and communities.

**M.W., Boulder:** Education and a good one should be the first and foremost priority!

**J.B., Boyero:** Rural schools need help badly.

**L.B.H., Brighton:** TABOR should be repealed. Here in Brighton, high school kids are being taught in halls and janitor's closets, in split sessions. It seems to me, this is unconstitutional.

**E.C., Brighton:** It's harder to get into college because of money. It's almost impossible to go to the college you want and scholarships aren't enough to cover the cost.

**V.E., Brighton:** Our school district is overflowing and overcrowded. Next year, our high school is going to have to implement an extended day because of the overcrowding, which will most likely affect our sports department and other after school activities.

**M.J., Brighton:** I am a Special Education para-professional, working with significant support-needs students. When the last set of cuts happened I was working with mild and moderate special ed students, but when educational funding was cut, so was my position, so students who needed the extra support were no longer

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receiving it. They were left in classes of 30-35 students to fend for themselves with the minimal support that an extremely overloaded classroom teacher could offer. We continue to cut the classes that a high school student can take, the sort of classes that will allow them to experience possible career paths. With all of the funding cuts we are on our way to only being able to teach our students basic Math, English, Science & History and nothing else. Our students will be nowhere near in the same league as young adults of the same age in other countries. As the next generation takes over, we will no longer be a competitive nation, if we continue to put our future at the bottom of the financial priority list.

**K.M.K., Brighton:** I am frustrated with living in the lowest funded school district. It is unfortunate that even though we need to supply tissues, copy paper and all sorts of other things to the schools that there are not enough books to use and our teachers' pay is barely enough to cover the cost of commuting.

**L.M., Brighton:** Cuts have created large class sizes and limited resources. These have affected my two children for the majority of their school experience.

**L.M., Brighton:** Our school district is growing fast and is unable to keep up with growth both in school buildings and teachers. Class sizes are enormous, and my son (age 9) struggles every year with all of the noise and commotion associated with such large class sizes. He is fortunate this year in that the school managed to find funds for a para-professional to teach art class. In third grade, this is the first time he has had any art class due to 27J's financial constraints. He struggles with fine motor tasks, such as handwriting, snaps, buttons, etc. It is unclear whether or not he will have art next school year. Two weeks ago, he came home with straight As for the first time, including handwriting. I can't help but think art helped with that. It would be a shame for it to be lost again. There are hundreds more reasons I could give as to why Colorado's schools need more money. Legislators, take a field trip. Get in there. Talk to kids. Talk to teachers, and for goodness sake, find a GOOD solution.

**R.P., Brighton:** Cutting programs like music and art destroys our culture and identity. Lessons learned in these programs are useful throughout our lives.

**K.R., Brighton:** In our district students will be starting a split schedule due to the overwhelming growth of our communities, yet we can't afford to build the schools necessary. We have no excuse to not have a top-notch education for children with the money pouring into our state and being used to persuade us to vote to legalize what is still considered illegal by our federal government.

**K.R., Brighton:** Brighton 27J has managed to function on very little funding per student over the past 10 yrs and it is getting worse. Kids on split schedules, not even able to sit in classrooms in their own school. Now there is talk about year-round schooling for our elementary and middle schools next year. We are going to lose what quality teachers we have left if we can't turn this around soon. We put up with enough. Time for you to give back. Any surplus needs to go into this district.

**C.S., Brighton:** As a teacher, I spend over \$500.00 per year to keep my classroom stocked with supplies students can't afford. Keep my \$20.00 to help kids in the classroom!

**J.S., Brighton:** My preschool classroom is full of high needs, at-risk students. Budget cuts mean we are chronically understaffed, and lack the resources to fully meet the needs of these kids. Early childhood education can improve a child's chances of success in the classroom and in life, but only if that education is high-quality. We cannot provide the needed quality without adequate resources. Please fund our schools at the level our kids deserve.

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**A.A., Broomfield:** A big part of why we moved our family to Colorado last summer is Colorado's dedication to education and our nation's future. We truly believe this is critical to keeping America strong by building the next generation. We must be leaders in this arena!

**P.G., Broomfield:** I moved my family from Arizona to Colorado, in part, looking for better educational opportunities for my children. I was surprised to find an education system that is underfunded and a politic that appears to not want to give priority to children's education. To replace that funding the school district is constantly trying to meet the educational needs of the students by turning them into sales people. The entire state benefits from an educated populace and the state government should not sell out its future by not ensuring quality education for all residents.

**J.G., Broomfield:** As a teacher I've seen these cuts firsthand. There is more and more pressure to use technology in the classroom, but no funds to provide the needed computers and laptops. I implore you to use the TABOR surplus to pay teachers fair wages, provide needed computers to ALL classrooms and schools in Colorado, and to get the inner city schools and rural schools needed resources to ensure the children of these schools can also succeed in a competitive job market.

**L.H., Broomfield:** The STEM Magnet Lab school is in a building that was built back in 1969. In the last eight months, we have experienced the same main water pipe break twice, flooding a common area of the school and causing the school to close early once and be canceled all together the second time. We have had coolant leak out of the old air conditioning unit into the cafeteria. An old boiler, which was identified as cracked, leaked and flooded another part of the school. This all happened in the last eight months! Our roof is over 20 yrs old and, needless to say, it needs to be replaced, but at \$2M our district just doesn't have the funding. A mill levy and bond were rejected by the voters by a 4% margin, 52% - 48%. Please, please, allocate the excess to schools and keep my \$20 refund!!!

**P.K., Broomfield:** We recently moved to a neighborhood in walking distance of Coyote Ridge Elementary, but because of funding issues our child may be bused to a school further away. This doesn't make sense!

**B.M., Broomfield:** As a former teacher, I have seen what the cuts in school budgets have done to the quality of public education. It does not seem right for teachers to take the blame for falling test scores etc, when every year teachers are working with miniscule budgets. Most of the kids in the district where I taught (Adams School District 50) didn't come to school with paper or pencils. Books were scarce. Supplies were very limited. Middle school sports were cut. Sports are a huge incentive for struggling middle school students to keep up their grades. Teachers had to figure out creative ways to fundraise on their own (bake sales, etc.) in order to do activities with students. Having to fundraise takes the teacher's time away from lesson preparation. As an art teacher, I saw my budget cut more every year for the past 10 years. It got to the point that I couldn't do some tried and true activities because they were too expensive. The school district cut ceramics at the high school level completely in 2008, even though it had been a popular class. Electives were cut to save money. Field trips became harder to do because of the price of running busses and other trip costs. It decreases the number of learning experiences for kids who in a poor district don't get many opportunities to go to museums, experience the outdoors, see plays, etc. Please return the excess revenues to schools. Schools are struggling as it is, please don't make it worse.

**D.M., Broomfield:** Schools need funds for better support services including counseling services

**B.M., Broomfield:** Kindergarten needs to be a full school day, and not a half-day!



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**L.M., Broomfield:** My children attend a culturally and financially diverse language immersion school in Northglenn. I am thrilled for them to have this opportunity. Our school is 40% free and reduced lunch and about the same ESL. I see the magic happen every day where these kids can learn in a language they understand half their day, while learning subjects in a second language the other half. This is 100% of the kids, not just the ESL kids!! These kids get to support and help their classmates at least 50% of their day, with the tables turned in the afternoon. Adams12 needs the finances to make this model available throughout our district!! English-only speakers will be at a disadvantage! What a shame and loss of opportunity by not emphasizing bilingual learning in elementary school for all our children.

**J.N., Broomfield:** My child has been through the K-12 system and is now at CSU. Any money saved by not paying taxes for schools has been made up for by increased costs, fees, and tuition. We need a generation to be educated to the best of their abilities, not the best of their parents' ability to pay

**B.S.G., Broomfield:** Oh please, \$20 per tax payer will do nothing to really help anyone, BUT if that amount was joined together and used by the Colorado school districts it could make an impact!

**D.C., Brush:** The cuts to our school budget the last two years have been devastating to our children and our school community. We have reduced staff, increased class sizes, and eliminated programs that focus on our highest need children. You must fund education in Colorado.

**J.Q., Brush:** Because of budget cuts our district is cutting teacher positions by at least 1-2 teachers per grade or school building. The district is discussing cutting paraprofessional positions. They are also discussing eliminating sports programs. They have discussed eliminating music, art and P.E. programs at our elementary schools. Why is it that our children are the ones that have to suffer first and always because of budget cuts? Colorado needs to invest in our future and that means we need to invest in our kids first and always.

**D.W., Brush:** Our district has been severely impacted by budget cuts and we are losing our programs. Things are in dire shape in rural Colorado. Please keep the money for these kids.

**B.S., Calhan:** Calhan School District RJ-1 has been hit by the double whammy - cuts in state funding (negative factor) and a drop in enrollment. The drop in enrollment has forced the district to go through difficult reductions in staff. The cut in state funding has caused the district to defer maintenance, slow down our pace of implementing technology improvements, cap salaries and benefits for deserving staff members, delay equipment purchases and reduce classroom materials and supplies.

**S.R., Canon City:** I teach lower income students and this year our school district ran out of money halfway through the year. We barely covered salaries. But it's not just teachers that are being hurt by the severe lack of funding state-wide; it's the students. Half my students don't know how to use Microsoft Word, email, or even save to a flash drive. We have one computer teacher for grades 6-8 and one lab. Students can't be required to take computers because numerically, it's not possible. Our history textbooks are as old as I am. I can't ask my students to type an essay because there is only one lab and between February and May, it's hijacked for testing and test preparation. Where is the money promised by Amendment 64? Where is the money from Colorado's suddenly booming economy? How does a strong education platform change the state's economy, health, and well-being? Home values go up. Crime goes down. Is that not what we want for Colorado? If not, please inform citizens so we may relocate to states who appreciate the value of teachers, administrators, and students.

**K.W., Carbondale:** Colorado is one of the very lowest in the nation in what we spend on children and education. It is embarrassing and hard to imagine we care so little about our future and theirs. When are children and teachers going to matter?

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**A.A., Castle Rock:** As a new teacher I did not experience the progress of funding cuts, but I do see the aftermath. In our small rural school, certain teachers use textbooks that are severely outdated. Our Spanish teacher attempts to teach multiple levels (from middle school to advanced Spanish) using the same textbook because she doesn't have the funding to buy the correct level books. We need to reinvest in our students and show them that an education is worth achieving.

**L.A., Castle Rock:** It is embarrassing to live in a state that doesn't value education and the children who live here.

**K.B., Castle Rock:** My son has not received the benefits for special Ed. Period. I have been told by countless professionals that he should get help. However, the District tells me they don't have the funding.

**M.A., Centennial:** My kids graduated from the Cherry Creek School District and I appreciate the education they received. Because of the cuts you've made, my neighbor's kids are unable to receive the same programs my kids received. Our teachers are stretched and stressed and I'm concerned about the future of the teaching profession. Please return the \$1 Billion that you cut from our schools. I don't need a refund back. Education is more important!

**K.B., Centennial:** As a teacher, the cuts impacted me in many ways. I was asked to do more in meeting student needs, individualize instruction, find more time in the day to conduct a small group instruction, with growing class sizes and less staff support.

**L.C., Centennial:** I would like the legislature rethink testing in Colorado. My children are not scores. Let teachers teach!

**P.C., Centennial:** My position in the library after 30 plus years has been eliminated along with numerous others. Class sizes are increasing which stretches time with students. We continue to see cuts even though other areas of the economy are booming.

**S.C., Centennial:** Cuts to K-12 education negatively impact kids in so many ways. Programs are cut, resources are limited, class sizes go up, and quality teachers are lost due to cuts. When is the legislature and the citizenry of Colorado going to show they value the best quality education for all children by returning the money that has been "stolen" from them over the past several years. Use the surplus to pay down the negative factor.

**S.E., Centennial:** Our elementary school PTO works very hard to raise funds to support programs at our school that would have to be cut because of the lack of state funding. Our school needs these programs - art, music, PE, science. All schools need to decrease classroom sizes so kids can have more individualized learning. Teachers have a very heavy burden to carry and try very hard to challenge each student at the best level. But they can only do so much outside of the classroom - time they don't even get paid for! It is a SHAME that Colorado teachers rank so low on the national pay scale. What message are we sending? We need to set ourselves up for success, not failure! Please help us educate our children!

**T.E., Centennial:** I am an educator. Every year we make cuts because we haven't received an increase in funding while the cost of employees (and benefits) rises. This has drastically impacted our schools, especially at the elementary level. We will have 27 first graders in each class next year which is a challenge. (It won't be surprising to see scores drop due to larger class sizes.) Currently, each 5th grade teacher in my building has 33 students. That is not fair to students; teachers are spread so thin and cannot possibly give each student the individual time and attention they deserve. Large class sizes also impacts student behavior; we have seen an increase in problem behavior which is directly attributed to large class sizes. Thank you for putting the education of our students -- tomorrow's leaders! -- first.

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**M.G., Centennial:** We love our school and my wife and I are members of our PTO board. We're disappointed by staffing cuts that might have to happen at our school because of funding cuts.

**N.L., Centennial:** Please.

**R.M., Centennial:** It costs so much to refund the small amount to each taxpayer, that it represents waste. Students in Colorado are worth investing in. Please support public education. Strong schools from K-12 through our taxpayer supported Universities, help draw quality employers who bring high wage jobs to Colorado. Failure to invest in public education at all levels from Kindergarten through the University level, will drive great employers out of Colorado and into competing states. Thank you for putting Colorado's future first by supporting public schools.

**L.M., Centennial:** I am a mother of three children, two in high school and one in elementary school. Over the years, I have seen class sizes continue to grow. Teachers and parents pay more out of pocket to cover costs the schools cannot. If the state has the funds available, it should be going to kids!

**F.P., Centennial:** Larger class size, lack of funding to help with mental health and behavioral issues, those are just a few things are impacting students in a very negative way. This is a debt owed to our children and their education.

**P.S., Centennial:** Colorado needs to invest in the future of our great state and that means increasing funding for public education so that we can compete with other states and countries. Our current level of educational funding is unacceptable.

**S.S., Centennial:** The children of Colorado are being short-changed when it comes to education funding. The fact that schools are forced to fundraise to pay for basic needs is unfair, especially to those schools that are unable to raise the hundreds of thousands of dollars raised by other schools in their district. All students are entitled to a uniform and equitable public education. Let's put our dollars where they matter -- in the classroom, and stop spending money on outrageous assessments and standards. Children should not be "standardized."

**L.S., Centennial:** Our schools need all the help they can get. Let's remember that school-aged children will one day be running our country -- education is NOT the place to cut costs.

**D.S., Centennial:** No more cuts to education!

**J.T., Centennial:** The budget cuts have been very detrimental to our schools. I currently teach 3rd grade, and in our school, our third, fourth and fifth grade classes range from 30-32 students. That is too many children in a class!

**D.W., Centennial:** Before I retired, I taught for over 40 years. At the end of that time, larger classes, fewer resources and state testing had created a situation where many kids really hated school and MANY were actually afraid to go to school. There is NO return on our money that can be of greater value than educating our kids. Give them the money!

**G.B., Cheyenne Wells:** Cheyenne County School District Re-5 loses over \$300,000 each year due to the negative factor. \$300,000 a year is huge to our small rural school district of 170 students. \$300,000 more in funding would pay for many needed programs and staff that have had to be cut over the last 4 years. I will

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gladly give my TABOR refund back to the state so long as it is earmarked for K-12 education and the kids of Colorado!

**D.A., Colorado Springs:** My ten year old daughter benefited from free, full day Kindergarten in D11 and I want it to be available for my six-month-old son when he goes to school.

**S.B., Colorado Springs:** We currently have 3 class sets of graphing calculators for more than 40 sections of high school math. They are used every period of every day as we rotate them from classroom to classroom. We just don't have the additional budget to purchase these \$100+ calculators even though it's the ONLY type of calculator students will be using for the new state assessment. How are our students supposed to have a fair chance when they won't even have practice on calculators they will need on CMAS? Our yearly budget for our math department of 10 teachers is less than \$7000/year for purchasing/replacing technology, copies, supplies, resources, etc. A class set of calculators is over \$3000. We just don't have the resources we need, especially technology, to help our kids truly be competitive with districts and states that are better funded.

**N.B., Colorado Springs:** Since 2008, we have had 4-years of salary freezes and furloughs, closed three schools, neglected facility maintenance, increased class sizes, and cut programs for students. We are 11th out of 11 comparable districts for teacher salaries. We are years behind in textbook replacement. We are \$28 million a year below where we should be if fully funded by Amendment 23. We need funding to restore resources and to be able to provide the best instruction for our students.

**K.C., Colorado Springs:** Education should be a top priority in this state. It's bad enough that we have the TABOR law, so let's use the surplus wisely. What better use than for education?

**T.F., Colorado Springs:** The meals and lack of resources for activities within the school have only gotten worse in the last 5 years.

**N.G., Colorado Springs:** The fact that the teachers on such small salaries have to buy supplies for their classes not only hurts the students, but takes away from what the teachers deserve. Now we not only send school supplies but we now have to pay for our kids to ride the bus.

**R.H., Colorado Springs:** Due to budget cuts, our principal feels she must accept nearly all permit/choice requests (up to 150/year) to have the maximum number of students in the school. Our son is a permit student and we appreciate this option, but each year the class sizes have gotten larger. It's been continually more challenging for teachers each year we've been in the school. We need to have a more substantial base budget so that we can keep class sizes at a place that is best for students and teachers. Thank you.

**C.K., Colorado Springs:** I'm a parent, volunteer, and substitute teacher and I've seen what the cuts to education have done from all sides. I don't know how we can go much lower and expect our children to get the education they need, starting with inferior technology in so many schools.

**R.M., Colorado Springs:** Well past time to dump TABOR, and get back to funding Colorado government.

**D.R., Colorado Springs:** In our schools, the cuts lead to larger class sizes, and less programs and resources. The fact that Colorado remains towards the bottom of the list for school funding nationally is shameful.

**T.S., Colorado Springs:** Some results of funding cuts: loss of programs (Latin, German), outrageous class sizes, network always down so kids can't access technology because we can't afford to upgrade, students having to purchase their textbooks. I have to buy my own supplies with my frozen, furloughed, lowest paying district's salary in the one of the lowest funded states for education. Schools have been closed to save money, leading

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to overcrowding in the remaining schools. There is extreme turnover due to the horrendous teaching conditions of constant testing, no respect, and no funding.

**B.C., Commerce City:** We live in a growing neighborhood and our schools are overcrowded and underfunded. We have gone for a Mill Levy increase numerous times and have not been able to pass them because of the poor economy. We ask the State to not hurt our community schools by cutting money that we seriously need for our children

**L.E., Commerce City:** School district 27j is one of the fastest growing districts in the state and our children are paying the price. We need money to build facilities so our children don't have to sit on the floor to learn. We need to retain good teachers so our district can improve scores and keep the local economy strong.

**C.G., Commerce City:** My child's district (27J) is one of the lowest funded districts in the state. While we work to get voters to approve tax increases to improve funding, we cannot afford for the state to reduce per pupil spending even further. We should be investing in our children and their futures, not divesting.

**B.G., Commerce City:** Schools in Brighton 27-J are severely underfunded. My children's' school is without valuable resources. For example, our school doesn't employ a Librarian. We are also without a foreign language program. The benefits of learning a foreign language at an early age are well researched and documented. This is a missed opportunity that my children can never get back due to the abysmal funding of our system.

**J.M., Commerce City:** Our district is facing some of the fast growth in the state, while suffering the impacts of the negative factor with one of the lowest mill levy over-rides (~\$48/student). To date, the district has roughly \$90M in funding since the initial take back of the negative factor began. There is no way to recover from that without a deliberate effort by our state officials to do right by our kids.

**W.O., Commerce City:** We are considering moving due to the cuts to schooling. Our schools are overcrowded and underfunded! We used to take care of our children in Colorado.

**A.P., Commerce City:** My children have 30 kids in their elementary classrooms. That's too many. They also have limited access to new technology.

**A.S., Commerce City:** Adams County 27j can use all the help it can get.

**M.T., Commerce City:** Our school district next year will be going to a split schedule because we do not have the funds to build. The thought of refunding \$20 while the state is cutting 100s of millions of dollars is absolutely ludicrous. The death of common sense.

**T.L.T., Conifer:** We have seen tremendous cuts in our classrooms. Our class sizes are out of control! Our school currently has three first grade classes with 30 kids in each. There are just too many children to be able to help all of the children reach their potential.

**L.L., Cope:** The school Districts in Washington County are struggling to survive. Our schools give opportunity and a top notch education to our elementary, Jr. High, and High School students. Protect our dollars for funding education.

**B.C., Craig:** Our district has cut over \$6 million. We have reduced 83 staff and have over \$10 million in capital needs to our facilities.

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**M.L., Creede:** Again this year our district is looking to cut teachers. I repeat: AGAIN. That means we are already barebones. We have gotten rid of woodshop and home economics. Do you want us to get rid of music and art too?

**J.H., Crested Butte:** Please put Colorado children first. They are worth the investment!

**K.M., Crested Butte:** Supporting our schools is vital to every community. TABOR has crushed that support for Colorado kids. So many schools are suffering with limited resources. That's not okay. We need to get rid of TABOR and until then, do whatever we can to ensure Colorado schools are supported.

**S.M., Crested Butte:** Our math specialist was cut because of a funding shortage and my daughter has now dropped to 6% in math because she has no extra support!

**S.S.M., Crested Butte:** As a teacher for 22 years in Colorado and a parent of 15 years, I have seen dramatic changes to my profession and my children's education due to cutbacks. My youngest son suffered greatly a few years ago when the class size was so big. The teacher couldn't individualize instruction nor could she teach the way she wanted due to space and numbers. Please do not cut anymore.

**L.B., Crestone:** Students in our district are very poor with 82% on free or reduced lunch. The value of a good education for them is immeasurable. Colorado needs to end the Tabor limit and give money back to education.

**A.C., Crestone:** Our children deserve the very best education money can buy. Quality education, after school programs, and teachers salaries are extremely valuable. With Colorado's economy doing well, we must provide needed funds for these essential programs. Please give the surplus tax money to the kids. Tabor laws are out of date and should not limit Colorado's education budget. Amendment 64 was designed and written specifically to benefit education in Colorado, therefore it is our duty to see that happen.

**J.P., Crestone:** Colorado should be ashamed at how little the state supports education. Please help!

**K.R.H., Crestone:** Our small school district has faced difficult program cuts every year as a result of Colorado not putting education first. Our kids are suffering as a result. Please give back to the schools. Our future depends on it!

**F.W., Crestone:** The only way for a less fearful and violent future is to have full education programs for the young. Education gives people a chance for a better life. Please don't short change our programs. Give the TABOR money to schools.

**K.G., Del Norte:** Though Colorado's major cities are doing well resulting in this surplus, our rural district's economy hasn't yet recovered. The loss of jobs in our region has dropped our enrollment to a point that we may need to merge our elementary and middle schools and close our elementary building. Crowding our youngest students in with adolescents and increasing class sizes will have a negative impact. Thank you for reading my petition. Consider preserving this fund for our students.

**G.H., Del Norte:** By restoring money lost to the negative factor, we will be better able to meet the needs of all students. Elementary students that struggle to read are at a great disadvantage when we can not provide small classes and interventions to get them to grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Restored funding can be used to assist these students in closing gaps and providing a chance at success throughout their school years.

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**R.R., Del Norte:** It's time we quit talking about what's best for our kids and do something positive. Implementing the new changes (common core, PARCC, 21st century skills, etc.) takes money. Please do the right thing.

**N.S., Del Norte:** These cuts will be detrimental to the students of Del Norte. We are at bare bones as it is. If we have to cut more we will have to cut teachers. That will directly touch the students of Del Norte.

**V.T., Del Norte:** I have 6 kids in Colorado's public school system. The blatant disregard for the students in Colorado is a sign to start looking for a state that values education. Maybe it is time for us to leave Colorado.

**C.T., Del Norte:** We have children in first and second grade who are unable to take the vision test with letters because they still don't know their letters. Teachers are giving it all the can, but with no money, there is little we can do for these children. Education requires time and money. No money, no time.

**L.A., Denver:** I have a master's degree, however, I cannot afford to help my children get an associate's degree with putting myself and them into a lifetime of debt. I even saved for their education and that was gone quickly. How can we expect to compete in a global economy if we cannot educate our children?

**G.A., Denver:** Keep the surplus for our kids!! Education counts!

**D.A., Denver:** For the first 20 years of my career I taught low income students. I loved these kids and still do, but they need a lot more help than those who are not living in poverty. It is no secret that kids of poverty need more in education if we are going to help break the cycle of poverty. However, refusing to recognize that need and turn right around to blame teachers for students' lack of success is driving teachers away from teaching these kids. I know. I did it. I decided to move to a middle class neighborhood school. When kids enter school already so behind and resources are not provided to help them succeed, what teacher will want to teach in the poverty schools?

**K.B., Denver:** Colorado is one of the lowest funded states for public education which is shameful for a state that boasts about how amazing it is to live here. We have a moment to ensure that we as Coloradans build a bright future for our kids.

**B.B., Denver:** I've worked in education for almost 18 years and think that we are facing a crisis like never before.

**A.B., Denver:** As a teacher and a parent we have had far too many cuts in the past 10 years. Our schools need smaller class sizes, buildings repaired, middle school sports, extra programs, equality in technology in every school...the list is endless. Put the money in the schools, where it belongs!!

**K.B., Denver:** I am a special education teacher in a Denver High School. Our school was just told we had to cut 3 more teacher position after we have already cut 3. How can we be effective teachers when the class size is over 35 students? How can we make sure all students are receiving services with less staff? We don't even have a computer class for our at-risk students. How can they compete in the 21st century? We need to fund public education!

**E.B., Denver:** As the mother of a current DPS Pre-K student, I see every day the impact that our tax cuts have had on the education of our students. There is a huge gap in the classroom between students in different socio-economic groups and giving back this surplus will only widen this gap for students in the lowest socioeconomic group. We must continue to fund education so all of our kids have a bright future and can learn about the world around them from their wonderful teachers.

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**C.B.S., Denver:** Funding an all day Kindergarten is quite frankly a "no brainer." Kindergarten is one of the most important grades in a child's career. It is where children learn the readiness skills necessary to be a successful student. Colorado kids are our future! As elected officials I ask you to be courageous leaders and advocate to use at least part of the budget surplus to fund full day Kindergarten for ALL Colorado kids, not just for those who have the money to pay for it. My goodness, returning a lousy \$44.00 to every Colorado taxpayer, not to mention the additional money needed to cut the checks and postage to mail them, is ridiculous! Keep the money and invest it in Colorado's infrastructure...which includes sufficiently funding public education.

**C.B., Denver:** The funding levels for our colleges and universities are shockingly low, a profound embarrassment for this great state. Is it that difficult to put our children first?

**K.C., Denver:** Please consider what is best for the students across Colorado and give them a better chance to succeed through funding education appropriately. It is embarrassing to read the data about the dismal school funding in our state due to legislative cuts.

**L.C., Denver:** Can't we find a way to get rid of Tabor? This is ridiculous!

**J.C., Denver:** I am a 2nd grade teacher. Class sizes keep going up. They are at levels which no longer support student learning. It's time to invest in education and bring class sizes to a developmentally appropriate level.

**D.C., Denver:** Budget cuts to schools have increased some class sizes to 30 pupils in elementary school! Early elementary students learn better when they have increased attention. Please support altering TABOR to provide more money to schools!

**H.D., Denver:** Schools and students have suffered from budget cuts to the extent that they don't have enough books for every student. The books and materials they are using are out of date, and class sizes are too big to give students the individual attention they need. This should not be happening in Colorado. Investing in education means investing in all citizens of Colorado and the students deserve the funds that were cut from them. Education is the most important priority. We should be focused on funding because it is the foundation for everything else. Colorado students who receive the education they deserve will accomplish great things and make Colorado and the country as a whole better and that is what we need!

**B.E., Denver:** Children are the human infrastructure of Colorado. Do not ignore their education. Fund them. Fully.

**K.E., Denver:** The little refund will make no difference most people's lives, but it can make a huge difference for our children and schools. Please make this happen for our children.

**B.E., Denver:** I taught for years with the promise that if we could just take cuts for a few years we would be fully funded again. Then when we met the stipulations, the state government said "see you don't need the money after all." Teachers cannot make up the difference. It takes money to meet all of the academic challenges of the 21st century!

**C.E.L., Denver:** I am an ESL teacher in Jefferson County; before that I was a classroom teacher in Jeffco and Denver. I've taught almost 20 years and have NEVER seen a school or district that had the funding to support students the way they need supporting - I have seen large class sizes, lack of materials and books, lack of space and lack of teachers. With the impact of poverty on the students I work with, this lack of funding for the schools they attend is even more brutal. Our students need the support that great teachers, small class sizes, and resources can bring.



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**S.F., Denver:** My kids' school has a 74% free and reduced lunch population. Our school is ALWAYS cutting important things. We have a dedicated art teacher who gives 200% of her energy to our school, participates in the fundraising and has pitched in with testing and scheduling and always subs for absent staff. She was told her position is being cut in half so the principal can afford teaching assistants. She can't afford to live on that so she has to leave. She is hurt and heartbroken and would have stayed for many years, helping make this school be successful. What a shame we can't afford teaching assistants AND a full time art teacher. We are losing an amazing person and it's not just her. There is a dangerous revolving door. Teachers are leaving left and right because they can't afford to live on the salaries they are given. And they wonder why the school has low test scores every year. When the students have no stability at home OR at school, how can they focus? How can they learn? It should be an embarrassment to the state that we can't retain good teachers at poor schools where they are needed the most.

**A.F., Denver:** There is an estimated 18 billion dollar in deferred maintenance in our PreK-12 schools (CDE Circa 2010 Facilities Assessment) throughout the State of Colorado. The deferred maintenance items include inadequate fire alarms and outdated mechanical systems resulting in poor indoor air quality, non-code compliant buildings and significant vulnerabilities in the areas of safety and security. We not only need to fund the operations side to a level that optimizes the education of our children, but we need to be educating them in schools that will not put them at risk! There is a lot of ground to make up and significant leadership is needed now to ensure our children's future.

**J.A.F., Denver:** Pay back the cuts made to education funding!

**P.G., Denver:** Education is the foundation of our children's future. Why would we shortchange them? Our parents and grandparents didn't shortchange us!

**B.H., Denver:** Plain and simple, Colorado continues to grow and our schools are stretched. My kids have old computers in their classrooms, our school is closing its open enrollment due to capacity issues, and I fear only those born privileged or transplanted to our state will have the education needed to lead Colorado. Please support our children's education in Colorado now!

**K.H., Denver:** Please reduce the negative factor. Our kids need our support. I was living in rural Colorado (Grand County) with two kids with special needs when the cuts started in 2008. I moved to Denver and am living away from my husband in order to get them the services they need. My husband and I still live apart for the children's education. Please return school funding to its pre-recession level. There are so many kids across Colorado that aren't getting what they need. Not only is that wrong, but it also is going to have a long-term economic impact on Colorado. We expect so much from our schools yet we don't fund them to be able to deliver. TABOR is a losing proposition for Colorado. Please review the economics and see why Colorado must invest in its children and its infrastructure. Please take my TABOR rebate!

**L.H., Denver:** I am a school leader in Denver working to ensure my students have what they need to be successful. The cuts have been tremendous particularly in the areas of wrap-around services since we have prioritized funding teachers in the classroom. My students would greatly benefit from increased mental health support and academic counseling.

**T.H., Denver:** I work for the Denver Public School district and I see that more money is needed for more teachers. The classrooms are too large. More funding is needed to support bilingual education for children who speak Spanish only. More funding is needed for technology and innovation, transportation and educational excursions. Parents and students need help with social and emotional learning. The schools are hurting. Trying to do more with less is not working. So many supports are needed and it can only happen with more funding.

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**E.H., Denver:** My students are at a significant disadvantage and deserve more from their education. Here are a few examples. 1) They will be taking the PARCC and CMAS tests on computers, yet our school has a desperately inadequate supply of computers or chromebooks for students to learn and practice on. We have around 90% children in poverty (entitled to free or reduced-price lunch), so many students don't have access to technology at home. 2) My school has the highest percentage of READ Act qualified students in our district, yet we have only a half-time reading interventionist and a team of paraprofessionals to support us. 3) My district is so under-funded that every time I've moved classrooms (probably ten times in my 15 years of teaching in Colorado), I've spent vacation days doing much of the actual moving myself. In what other industry do professionals do things like that? Teachers are working very long hours, trying to achieve what is demanded of them, with students who deserve better-supported schools.

**E.H., Denver:** I teach in a school in north Aurora. Most years, over 90% of our students are qualified for free- or reduced-price lunch because of family poverty. Many have no internet at home, or even computers, so this spring when we're doing all this new computerized testing, they're missing a lot. We tried to prepare them but we had only four chrome-books in our classroom for all to share -- until testing season started, when the administration took those back to be used for testing elsewhere. My classroom has a pretty good library, mostly books belonging to me personally, but the school library is understocked. The school library books are about 30-years-old and are inadequate for writing reports about our state. We need field trips, since our kids' parents can't afford take them to museums or state parks or other places to have learning experiences, but our district can only pay for one field trip bus per class per year. Are we on a level playing field with the school where YOUR children go to? I doubt it! Please don't refund taxpayers like me a trivial amount of money. Instead, keep it and use it to carry out voters' intentions when they passed the amendment to improve school funding.

**S.I., Denver:** I am a teacher in Cherry Creek Schools and my son is a student in Denver Public Schools. We have very different needs in both districts, and I urge you to return funds to all state districts to use them as needed.

**T.J., Denver:** It's time to put the surplus back into supporting the next generation of Coloradoans and stop having to balance the state general fund on the back of Education funding by further cuts. Keep the surplus to help expedite additional education funding and other critical statewide infrastructure projects that continue to be pushed off. Having the money to pay for those projects will be a built-in job creation initiative.

**J.K., Denver:** Principals are making brutal choices about whether math teachers or intervention specialists are hired, counselors or music teachers. We must increase the funding IN THE CLASSROOM.

**K.L., Denver:** We have to rely on PTA grants of \$150,000 to our school every year just to make sure basic programs like Specials can continue. It would be great if our fundraising efforts could go toward other needed projects such as technology or playground upgrades. This year we had to cut an assistant principal position because of budget cuts. Our children deserve to have staff and services that maintain a quality and well rounded educational experience. Our children deserve better. Our schools deserve better.

**L.L.R., Denver:** I am a teacher and have just been informed that my pre/K class will increase to 30 students...imagine that.

**M.L., Denver:** Full day kindergarten, state-wide, will do more to close the achievement gap than any other measure I have seen or experienced in my 20 years as an educator. Presuming that we're looking for common ground, especially in the mine field that is education reform, I believe this proposal presents a unique opportunity for collaboration around an empowering and effective measure.

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**T.M., Denver:** When I moved back to Colorado with my school-aged kids in 2011, I couldn't believe how bare bones the schools were. Lack of arts, gym, music, crumbling buildings. In fact, one school in DPS that my daughter used to attend had mice running around. It was like we lived in a third world. You have made it very unlikely that my children will attend college in Colorado. They can go out of state and pay a comparable price for a better education. Shame on Colorado. We are near the bottom in every list.

**J.M., Denver:** Less money for roads, more money for our children. Health children mean a healthy future.

**J.M., Denver:** This senior citizen fully supports public education in Colorado. Don't shortchange our children by cutting any surplus spending that is needed to enhance their learning possibilities.

**A.M., Denver:** Since 2004, my kids have attended DPS. I've volunteered countless hours to raise money for our schools so teachers have supplies in their classrooms, so there are enough books in the library, so there are amazing teachers, so that the kids from low income families have food to take home over the weekend. School funding in Colorado is so pathetic it's laughable, except for low income families, it's not a laughing matter. Success in school is a route out of poverty for these kids, and our state government is letting them down. We all thrive when our kids succeed in school.

**M.M., Denver:** How is it that the Colorado state taxes we pay have been approved by the voters (as mandated by TABOR), but then after the state collects those voter approved taxes, the state is then mandated by TABOR to hand some of that money right back to the voters? It's ridiculous and it has to stop. Keep the tax revenues and put them toward restoring public education funding! The voting public has already spoken.

**T.M., Denver:** my son is starting kKindergarten this year and I am worried about the cost.

**J.M., Denver:** Why would anyone want to cut our educational funding? I prefer to invest in our future, especially as an educator!

**K.O., Denver:** There are 25+ children in my youngest son's first grade class. While he has an excellent teacher, because he is a good student - with involved parents - my son will be fine, but gets little individualized attention because his teacher has over 25 other children to help manage. That's just one example. Education in Colorado deserves more state support - we are an embarrassment to our nation.

**K.P., Denver:** Education in Colorado is still down hundreds of millions of dollars due to fancy financing in the legislature. I understand why and how it was done, but it was still wrong for Colorado education. It is time to start paying for quality education again.

**T.P., Denver:** I'm one of many experienced teachers (tenured) that the District is throwing out in order to save money. Parents are dissatisfied and going alternative routes so that numbers in traditional schools are dropping.

**K.R., Denver:** As a parent and incoming PTA president I see first hand the impact that poor education funding has on our children. Colorado is at the bottom of the list for per child funding and schools are left to deal with that impact. In schools that have a strong PTA, making up for the shortfall is a bit easier. However, families should not feel that they are continuously being asked to pay for what should be a fundamental right for their children. If the state has a budget surplus, it should go to bringing up the State's ranking for per child funding and help insure that in Colorado, Children Matter.

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**B.R., Denver:** "Colorado schools rank 37thst in the country in Education Week's annual Quality Counts report released Thursday." Need anyone say more? Until we rank 1st, we should increase funding for public education. This is the most important investment we can make in our kids!

**K.R., Denver:** I have been an educator for 20 years, 18 of them in Colorado. We are at a time when we need these resources more than ever. Colorado has implemented so many reforms without the resources needed to enact them in the classroom. At my school of diverse learners, over 50% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch, we lack funds to expand our programming; to retain quality teachers; to hire needed interventionists; and to obtain the technology needed for the new standardized assessments. We can really do great things in education. Colorado has willing, hard-working educators. But it's time to give education the funding it deserves. Thank you.

**L.R., Denver:** I am a Jeffco teacher and the cuts in some places have been disastrous. Especially affected have been high needs kids. Please help restore funding.

**M.R.S., Denver:** A QUALITY education is key to quality of life for the individual and the community. Please give our children the best opportunity to learn in a non-crowded, supportive and encouraging environment. Please give our teachers the right number of students and the resources and support and freedom to be the best teachers they can be. Please give our community a healthy population of people who can contribute significantly to the social and economic health of our community. Thank you.

**J.S., Denver:** The best investment our state can make is in its children.

**R.S., Denver:** I work for Denver Public Schools as a policy analyst and I see funding shortfalls every single day. Giving this surplus back to our children would make a significant difference in the educational opportunities we are able to afford our children, and will ultimately make our state stronger.

**J.S., Denver:** My son will just be starting Kindergarten. Please don't take funds away from our district which is already stretched thin. These kids deserve a chance at a better future.

**S.S., Denver:** Although my only child is now in college, that is no reason for me to want a tax rebate instead of investing in and strengthening Colorado's relatively poor public school system. It is supremely selfish to want a rebate instead of trying to improve our public schools and Colorado's future.

**T.S., Denver:** My children are both just now starting public schools, schools that have been crippled by a lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, underpaid teachers, over testing, and reform school boards that are working to eliminate equitable public schools in favor of unaccountable charter schools with questionable educational value.

**K.S., Denver:** We raise money at our school to help pay for our art teacher. More cuts are happening next year. Parents should not have to fundraise for teacher salaries.

**S.S., Denver:** Give the kids the money they need!

**G.T., Denver:** Seriously, please make this happen. I am regular voter. I care about this and want you to make it happen.

**M.A.T., Denver:** Fixing TABOR is a major problem. The temporary fixes have helped, but unintended consequences have created more problems. Why isn't a simple "repeal TABOR" a one issue ballot amendment?

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**S.T., Denver:** My son is twice exceptional, but receives limited gifted and talented and special ed services because of lean budgets.

**J.T., Denver:** My daughter's school is facing a \$150k budget shortfall, which will reduce needed staff and services for many of our undeserved populations. It is so upsetting that there is over \$50m sitting in reserve at the same time that amazing teachers, staff and necessary programs are being cut. SOS, save our schools.

**T.W., Denver:** As a teacher in the DPS, I have seen firsthand the cuts and their impact. Restore what was taken during a crisis. Colorado children deserve what all of you had growing up. Lets not forget that!

**M.Z., Denver:** Education is important. Can't more of the tax revenue from marijuana sales be used for schools, not just for buildings, but for teachers' salaries, programs, etc?

**A.C., Dolores:** The best return on investment there is! Invest in our future! Invest in Colorado!!!

**S.C., Dolores:** The financial cuts to our schools during the past several years have been devastating! We have cut 20% of our positions in our district to absorb the negative factor. Not only has this impacted our ability to provide high quality learning opportunities for our students, it has slash roughly 20 jobs out of our small, rural community! The economy is booming on the front range, while the southwest corner of the state is struggling to pull out of the Great Recession. Poverty is on the rise in our corner of the state and we need financial help to support teaching and learning in our schools. Thank you. Scott Cooper, Ed.D. Dolores School District Superintendent

**C.M., Dolores:** Quality education for Colorado students does not happen for "free." It requires quality funding for highly qualified teachers, materials, and adequate resources. Do what is "right and just" for the students and children of Colorado. It is time we use monies from the lucrative oil/gas, mining, and green industries in the state, and filter it back into supporting education. As a teacher of almost 40 teachers, it saddens me to see the lack of concern and support for teachers, students, and education. Quality adults equate with a quality education.

**L.V., Dolores:** School districts across the state have made major cuts to their budgets. We've planned ahead for cuts each year for 5 years. You need to solve this problem or start educating the citizens of Colorado to solve the problem if you feel you cannot.

**B.A., Durango:** It is just wrong. Everyone pitches in when times are tough, but our children still pay when we have rebounded. Give credit back from where we have taken it from. If we don't, we will continue to decline and our students will too. Let's show them - and our teachers who pay so much out of pocket for classroom costs - we care.

**R.B., Durango:** The misguided ideology of TABOR should not trump our children's future, which is ultimately the future of Colorado, of course.

**D.N., Durango:** Cuts in funding for K-12 education have resulted in much larger class sizes, the discontinuation of advanced math classes, and several people losing their jobs. There is no librarian or media specialist to work with kids and teachers to learn through books and media resources. There is no more gifted and talented programming or specialist to advocate for the needs of gifted and high potential learners. And this is just one middle school's story.

**P.A., Eagle:** I am concerned about the students of our state. Not only do we not fund schools well, with TABOR we are telling students that they and education are not a priority in our state. Unbelievable.

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**E.B., Eagle:** Currently Eagle County is experiencing class sizes of 27 students as a normal, early (1st-4th grade) elementary class size. The District needs more funding to replace the 60+ teachers lost during the great budget cut three years ago. We offset these budget cuts by one year by using capital reserves. PLEASE help reduce these class sizes that are negatively affecting our children and straining the high-caliber teachers Eagle County has.

**T.C., Eagle:** We've had to cut down on special classes, foreign languages, and teachers are having to teach extra classes in place of those, which decreases the amount of time we have to plan and grade. It is impossible to do all of what is required in 40 hours/week, let alone 50 hours/week. Our wages were cut dramatically and we are now at the same pay level as 8 years ago, despite getting a raise last year. We are paid less for more work. That is not healthy for educators and students suffer.

**B.C., Eagle:** Pay freezes for teachers have led to teacher retention issues. Low starting salary has impacted our ability to recruit. Large class sizes impact student achievement.

**J.C., Eagle:** We are about to lose the most amazing teacher I have ever known. Not only does this impact my children it also hurts all of the upcoming children. He is the best teacher at our elementary school. Very disappointing. Many parents are willing to help in any way to keep him here.

**W.H., Eagle:** I can't believe in a time of the greatest increase in state revenues in recent history that we will provide a refund to our tax payers while our schools continue to fall behind in funding and are starving. Colorado and its funding of education continues to fall in comparison to the other 50 states. What are we waiting for? Our state legislators should be embarrassed!

**H.H., Eagle:** More testing. Bigger classes. It's terrible. It's time to fund our schools properly.

**L.M., Eagle:** I have been working 10 years in Colorado, and my salary is \$43,000. If I were to cross "the border" to Wyoming. I would make \$10,000 more. When I started teaching 10 years ago, I had an average of 18 kids per class. Last year, I had 30 third graders in my class, and this year it is 24 students. Meeting the needs of this many students at a Title 1 school is impossible. I have to perform "triage" and focus on the students that are almost proficient. The students that are proficient receive little additional help, and are left to learn independently. The students who are several grade levels behind continue to be left behind because I do not have the time or resources to support them. We need our money back to give teachers the resources they need to be able to meet the needs of America's future citizens!

**J.M., Eagle:** My wife taught a class of 30 children because a full time position was cut. Many of these kids did not speak English or had social issues/learning issues.

**C.G., Edwards:** My daughter attended high school from 2009 to 2013. During those four years our school experienced funding cuts year after year. The German and French language teachers were eliminated. Students who wanted to study those languages had to do so online. Imagine how hard it is to study a foreign language online instead of in a classroom setting. Two AP and four PE courses were permanently dropped. Average classroom size increased from 20 -35. Please be proactive in assuring that the surplus goes to education. Many thanks.

**W.H., Edwards:** As a school teacher I see how the cuts and the negative factor have affected schools since the start of the recession. I have seen staff drastically cut, tech infrastructure go wanting, and support at all levels diminish.

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**J.H., Edwards:** Colorado being close to the bottom nationally for state funding per student is a crying shame. How will our children compete internationally or even nationally? The State of Colorado needs to improve education on a state basis and we need funding!!!!!!

**M.H., Edwards:** Educating our future leaders and workers is essential. The public school system is of absolute importance in achieving this goal. Please invest and use the surplus for the most important cause in our state.

**C.S., Edwards:** I have been a teacher in Eagle county school district for seven years now. It seems like every year the funding gets worse and worse. We don't have enough money for the quality of education that our children need and the salaries that our teachers deserve.

**N.T., Edwards:** I left Colorado to move back to the east coast because my husband and I are both teachers and we struggle financially in Colorado. We made \$20,000 more each by simply teaching in Vermont. We missed Colorado so dearly that we moved back and sacrificed the ability to be financially stable, but are unsure if we will be able to afford to continue being classroom teachers. We pay bills month-to-month and work additional jobs. Teachers are leaving this amazing state because they cannot afford to stay. Colorado needs to increase funding to education in order to reduce teacher turnover which will keep more experienced teachers in front of Colorado's students.

**B.W., Edwards:** PLEASE KEEP the Surplus for the kids! My two elementary school children are now being taught their core curriculum (Science, History & Math) from the P.E. Teacher and Music Teacher because of these budget cuts. How is it that I hear that there is a surplus from marijuana taxes & that those taxes will go back into the marijuana growers hands - WHY IS THAT MORE IMPORTANT THAT EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN?!!!!?

**B.H., Egnar:** It does not make sense that the state can ignore the intent of Amendment 23 and federal law around marijuana and choose to abide by the one that makes the least sense.

**D.H., Elizabeth:** Our school is cutting three elementary teachers because of budget cuts. Our kids will not be able to have shop, the school may be falling apart, and the track needs repair. Testing requires technology which many schools struggle to supply. And tests require that students are computer knowledgeable and have typing skills in third grade. This means starting out young students with as much technology time and interaction as possible. We're going to see more students home schooled. Between testing and budget cuts, more parents will choose keep their students at home.

**D.L., Elizabeth:** Our teachers make an average of 26% less than what they could make in neighboring districts, that is nearly \$10,000 dollars a year. We have had teachers leave and see increases approaching \$20,000 a year. That makes it very difficult to attract and maintain quality staff, when all is said and done, we can all agree that a good teacher in front of students is a primary key to great education. My kids deserve the same educational opportunities as those students in other communities and states.

**C.R., Englewood:** Build better schools or build better prisons. I know which I prefer.

**L.F., Erie:** I want an educated populace. When people have better jobs, they're able to pay more taxes. I was the beneficiary of a great education before TABOR took place (Prop 13 in CA). Before Prop 13, CA had a great education system. Now it too is out of reach for too many. Quit burdening our youth with debt. I don't need my rebate. Please use it for the future.

**L.T., Erie:** I'm a teacher and a parent of a high school student and CU student. If we don't invest in our children, we won't go anywhere in the future!

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**J.R., Evans:** As a teacher I have experienced the impact of the state cutting funding to schools. It is time to start thinking about what is best for the children and schools of Colorado. What if the TABOR refund ends up being under \$100? Don't you think most families would rather the schools get this money? Ever wonder why more states didn't pass a TABOR amendment?

**J.B., Evergreen:** I am the PTA President of an elementary school and our community is quite concerned about the lack of education funding. It has become a topic of conversation in our meetings often lately. One of the largest concerns is where we stand nationally in relation to per student funding. We live in such a great state - but Education is not living up to the rest of our state. Please stay focused on the kids and Education!

**J.C., Evergreen:** Although my childrens' school is not as affected by cuts as many (because of PTA fundraising) education should be a higher priority for our state. Investing in our schools is important to our state's and nation's future. I understand that all programs are important, and that everyone clamors over the available funds, but education needs to come first.

**A.D., Evergreen:** Please do not cut funds from our great Colorado schools. Please give schools the money they need to provide a high quality education in all core subjects, music, art and athletics. Education is too important for our future and our children's future. Do not cut, but increase funding when possible.

**S.R., Evergreen:** The TABOR law is a nightmare. Why would someone who makes \$200,000 a year need a \$250 rebate on their taxes? Please, do a better job supporting education in this state. Quality education resulting in a literate workforce is imperative to the healthy growth of our Colorado community.

**S.S., Evergreen:** We trusted you when you needed us. Now our kids need you. Please restore the monies to our kids.

**T.T., Evergreen:** Funding our schools is absolutely foundational to the success of our communities and ultimately our nation! Putting money back into our children, teachers, and schools should need no defense!

**M.T., Evergreen:** We want to support our public schools rather than send our exceptional kids to private schools. However these schools need monetary resources to make Colorado the best in the nation, like it could and should be.

**J.W., Evergreen:** I am a retired high school counselor from Pennsylvania and former adjunct professor of counseling at Villanova University. Since moving to Evergreen I have been so dismayed at the direction of Colorado public education and specifically what is happening to Jeffco school district policies. Keeping the TABOR surplus for education and other state needs is critical.

**K.S., Firestone:** We paid for full-day Kindergarten and it was the best thing we ever did. Our daughter had gone to a full-day child care before that so dropping her to part time didn't make sense. The teacher was having a hard time getting through the curriculum as it was. I can't imagine the struggles of a part time Kindergarten teacher, or how much my child would have suffered if she were in half day Kindergarten.

**T.A., Flagler:** The cuts forced us to reduce offerings to our high school students. We have a great swimming pool that is no longer being operated because we do not have funds for it.

**N.B., Fort Collins:** Class sizes for regular classes in my school keep getting bigger. Special Education class sizes are unreasonable. Class sizes in the electives are simply not safe. In my district we have so many repairs needed to the physical structures but can barely afford 1.4% of the needed repairs/replacements.



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**H.M., Fort Collins:** I work in a Title 1 school with 70% of our students qualifying for Free and Reduced lunch. Since the Great Recession, we have seen more and more families unable to keep up with housing and food. Parents are working more hours and not even able to make ends meet. The children in Colorado are in crisis. Classroom teachers see the effect of the economy every day on their students. Teachers have had less resources (personnel) to help students when they need it the most. Teachers are working tirelessly day and night and weekends to do their best, but the demands are great. Unless you work in the schools, you do not see how badly our schools need money to hire more people. We can only do so much. I am pleading with you to make the good, honest, and right decision to allow the tax refund to stay for our schools. If everyone shares a little, it will have a great and positive impact on our schools.

**L.S.G., Fort Collins:** I am embarrassed that Colorado is one of the lowest states in the nation in education funding. We employ high tech people and well-educated people, but we refuse to fund our children's education. Shame on us.

**K.S., Fort Collins:** You can never invest enough in the education of our children. The K-12 programs need all the financial and volunteer support we can offer.

**P.S., Fort Collins:** We cannot cut any more. Our students in Colorado deserve better and the only way we can do better is by increasing the funding for upgrading facilities, providing technology for innovation, and having the supports for 21st century learning to occur.

**T.T., Fort Collins:** Our building needs lots of repairs. The leaves blow in via a door that is closed, but has a gap. The bathrooms are old and disgusting. Books are old and on their last legs. We use most of our tech for testing

**M.V.B., Fort Collins:** Please have the courage and political will to get rid of TABOR. It is hurting the children of Colorado. I, and many others, would rather forgo my share and put it towards the welfare of our state and its citizens. TABOR is a prison - please help Coloradans escape!

**D.W., Fort Collins:** Funding Education in all ways saves money in the long run. We need to be competitive in the world educating all to the fullest extent possible.

**K.Z., Fort Collins:** My technology teaching position has been cut to 80% next year. My job responsibilities won't change, just my pay will. I'll be required to complete everything in 4 days rather than 5 each week. This amounts to \$1,000 less each month. I've been teaching for 20 years and still live paycheck to paycheck.

**S.G., Fowler:** Please help get rid of the negative factor and put money back into the K-12 schools as they are our most valuable resource.

**J.L., Franktown:** Cuts have already impacted the quality of education provided to students. Student classroom ratios have increased by 10% and quality teachers have been let go because there are not enough funds. Electives have diminished to almost nothing because there is not enough funding to provide students with the opportunity to try out areas that they might want to continue their careers in later in life. There are more distractions because of larger class sizes and students' needs are not met as there is little time for one-on-one assistance that is critical to help student bridge the gaps that occur. This impacts the No Child Left Behind and FAPE if funding continues to be cut.

**J.M., Frederick:** Colorado kids need all the help they can get and replacing the cut funds would be a start on that path. Please!

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**G.B., Ft Morgan:** Our small rural schools are on their last breath before we lose our good teachers and our kids suffer. This is NOT a fair and equal educational opportunity at this point. We have been strangled for six years. It's time to make this right.

**V.B., Glenwood Springs:** Our class sizes have gone from approximately 20 to 30 and our school was designed and built for 22 students in a classroom. Some of the rooms are so crowded that students can't get to the restroom and teachers have bruises on their legs from bumping into desks. Three teachers have had to sell their homes and move into rented trailers, apartments, or back with their parents. Our salaries are the same as they were in 2008. That's seven years of stagnation in income compared with an average of 2% increase in costs. How can we attract and keep excellent teachers? How can I recommend becoming a teacher to a young student? Our school used to have two buses, now we have one and we expanded the boundary for bus riding. It was one mile, now it's one-and-a-half miles. We have two bus routes, but only one bus so the bus takes a group of kids home, then returns for a second run. Meanwhile, kids are waiting in line for the second bus.

**P.R., Glenwood Springs:** There is no coincidence in the fact that states with the healthiest economies and highest per capita incomes are closely correlated to highest percentages of tax revenue going to education. A well educated population is critical to driving a healthy state economy. All boats rise with that tide.

**M.A., Golden:** Both of our daughters benefited from All Day Kindergarten and we would love to see that opportunity extended to ALL of our Colorado 5-year-olds. It will help all children with reading and math readiness, plus aid them in interacting socially with other kids.

**T.A., Golden:** Our children are our future. Their education is the greatest investment in our future that we can provide.

**M.A., Golden:** I am seriously reconsidering my professional life as a teacher due to the cuts in school financing which affects more than simply my paycheck.

**S.B., Golden:** My 9 year old daughter loves school. She is in a wonderful Gifted and Talented program that needs more funding. There are 26 students in her class and a huge waiting list of students who have earned a place in a GT center school. There's not enough funding for a second class of 3rd grade GT (or any grade in her school). Too many kids per class means not enough individualized instruction and too many kids do without the GT programming that they need. Please keep the TABOR funds for our kids!

**K.B., Golden:** The middle school is charging for every elective the children takes. They are required to take four. It is horrible that I have to pay extra for public school that is supposed to be free. Before we know it children will have to pay for everything or not be allowed an education.

**C.C., Golden:** As a teacher, I would say that 80% of my job happens outside the classroom. To give you perspective about what class size means, let me give you an example. I am an English teacher and it takes, average, about 15 minutes to grade an essay with personalized, growth-producing feedback (a conservative figure), not a form with boxes checked or criteria circled. That's 2,250 minutes or 37.5 hours without having planned a lesson, attended a meeting, or undergone any PD, all of which have greatly increased in the last 20 months. If I give 3 papers a semester, which is more than I can but less than I should, that's 112.5 hours a semester. Lowering class sizes, for me as a teacher, means more essays and quicker feedback. Practice is how we learn new skills. Smaller classes means more practice for my students, who could use it.

**C.G., Golden:** Our family had to deal with a math class that had no textbooks for the students. We are looking at the budget shortfalls for next year and this will be devastating for our students.

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**D.G., Golden:** My husband is a teacher who like other teachers and state employees had to take a pay cut and salary freeze due to the recession. Our retirement plans were affected by it. Our youngest son had far larger class sizes than his older brother and the impacts are obvious as he struggles in high school. Please use the extra funds to help teachers and kids create a better future for everyone.

**C.H., Golden:** My children are in K-12 public schools. We have only been in Colorado for four years, but have seen excellent teachers leave the profession because of low/reduced pay, families paying bus fees and buying school supplies (including reams of copy paper), and families be required to print homework at home because the school's copy budget doesn't cover the expense. Please support Colorado's children and our future.

**B.H., Golden:** Do we wish to remain 47th in the country or do we want to educate our kids?

**D.K., Golden:** Colorado is not providing the resources necessary for either K-12 or higher education. Education is a public good that promotes a healthy economy, research and innovation, and a society of people who can share ideas and communicate with knowledge. Please support education for the benefit of all of Colorado.

**M.M., Golden:** Cuts have increased fees and cut important enrichment programs at my kids' school. We are fortunate that we are able to provide those opportunities. Other families are not as lucky as we are.

**H.M., Golden:** While my family is fortunate to go to a Jeffco school, an affluent county, I was struck by the significant problems less affluent counties face after listening to a news story on CO Public Radio. Noteworthy to me was the comment of an official in a less affluent and less populated county. He was worried about how they were going to abide by the testing requirements because THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH COMPUTERS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO TAKE THE MANDATORY TESTS WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME PERIOD. This is completely unacceptable!!! Like trying to get blood from a stone, schools are struggling to follow mandatory expectations, which are difficult enough to begin with, without enough funding to accomplish the task.

**H.M., Golden:** The legislature is short changing the children and economic future of Colorado by not restoring the funding owed to the education system.

**S.O., Golden:** It is embarrassing that Colorado is one of the most educated states in the US but cannot fund it's schools

**C.P., Golden:** Budget cuts have increased class sizes to ridiculous levels. As an educator, I know firsthand that my Gifted/Talented son cannot have his needs met nor can his 30 other 6th grade peers when class sizes are too large due to budget cuts. People who say the best teachers can easily deal with it are wrong, it's too challenging with so many varying needs and demands. And we're losing the best teachers (and G/T, Literacy, and Special Education specialists) anyway due to a hundred other reasons on both the state and local levels. Come on Colorado -- it's time to do the right thing and invest in our kids! Aren't they worth it? Who invested in your future?

**D.P., Golden:** I am a retired vocational/industrial arts teacher from the Boulder Valley School District. My construction trades program was cut in 2010. There is a construction boom in Denver and a current shortage of skilled trades workers in Colorado. This doesn't make sense. I would like to see more state money go to support skilled trades training at the high school and post-secondary levels.

**A.R., Golden:** We live in a relatively wealthy area. We have gotten back some of the furlough days from the worst of the 2008 crash. My biggest concerns are the most urban and rural parts of the state. They really need equitable funding for enrichment programs and teacher training.

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**L.R., Golden:** I am growing weary of constantly having to beg our legislators to invest in Colorado by investing in our kids' education. I'm a PTA officer at my children's school. We are constantly trying to raise funds to buy technology and STEM materials such as laptops and equipment for a science lab so our students are prepared to compete in our global economy. The computers in our computer lab are so old that they will be obsolete by next fall and unable to run needed software. PTAs shouldn't be forced to raise money for necessities such as these - the state and district should be investing in Colorado's future by using the TABOR funds for education. In addition, families with kids that most need full-day kindergarten are usually the least able to pay for it. My children's school offers tuition-based full-day Kindergarten. When the half-day Kindergarten students move up to 1st and 2nd grade, they often need more help and more of the teacher's time. This takes away teacher time from other students, which lowers the overall learning opportunities for ALL kids. Please don't squander this opportunity to replace the billions of dollars lost in our education budgets. Thank you for your time and efforts.

**B.S., Golden:** Our textbooks are outdated. Our students have fewer enrichment opportunities. Good teachers are leaving for higher pay.

**C.T., Golden:** Cutting funding is always a near term gain for a long term loss.

**K.V., Golden:** The financial state of our education system has declined, not improved, over the last decades. Please give the money to the schools, I DON'T WANT A REFUND FOR A TAX I APPROVED! Thank you, Kristen

**D.W., Golden:** Money for full day kindergarten is necessary if the people of Colorado want to prepare ALL children for 1st grade and to eventually be citizens of the world.

**D.W., Golden:** I have been a professional teacher for over 40 years. I am appalled that the people of Colorado don't support the education of their children with the necessary money to fix and manage the upkeep of the school buildings; upgrade the electrical systems for the technology essential for today's world (stringing extension cords all over the floor and tables so that students can 'take' the mandated assessments is ludicrous); provide money to purchase the technology (computers and ipads) for ALL students (too many computers are so outdated that it takes 10 minutes to get them booted up and online so they are usable). Class sizes are ridiculous- NO Child should have to be one of 30 - no matter what grade or age. No teacher can do their best work when they are expected to plan and execute lesson plans for 30 children - differentiating for all students' needs, while communicating with parents and participating in professional responsibilities at their building. I have just graded 10 fourth grade math (test) Acuity papers for another teacher. It took me over an hour to grade 9 math problems for these 10 children. This teacher actually has 38 students, I offered to help with the grading. Stop the madness---- reduce class size, provide the necessary tools, update and maintain the buildings, so the highly qualified teachers in Colorado can do their best work. Don't let Colorado's school system fail. Fund your children's education.

**M.W., Golden:** I don't have children in school but education funding is important. I think it is disgraceful that the students now are not being funded at the same levels as when I graduated high school in Jefferson County in 1988. The least we can do is use the TABOR surplus for the kids.

**K.H., Granby:** Of the three states I've lived in, CO has the most abysmal schools and education system. Step it up--education benefits everyone.

**J.C., Grand Junction:** Funding for education is imperative. Please use the TABOR surplus to restore education funding!

**B.R., Grand Junction:** How about we give the schools the tools necessary to give kids a chance -instead of having them fail like now.

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**L.S., Grand Lake:** We live in a mountain town and our school was closed due to budget cuts. Even though we have lived in this town for 20 years and have a well-established business, we chose to move to Steamboat Springs with superior educational opportunities. I commute 2 hours so that my daughter may have the level of education that I was afforded.

**B.B., Greeley:** The school district in my hometown of Greeley suffers tremendously in large part to the legislation that is currently in place. Funding, in concert with the right human capital and culture, creates the opportunity to make appropriate and necessary change. Please support our most valuable resource, our children, so that they may be the leaders and caretakers of our state and country, long into the future.

**S.C., Greeley:** Our schools should get the funding they need to support our children. There are more ELL and special education students than ever before. If we don't fund education now, we can expect to pay the costs for many of these kids in prison. Children are our future generation and we need to do better by giving school districts the money they need to help our children. Thanks.

**T.G., Greeley:** We are woefully underfunded here in Greeley D6 - one of the few districts that has not passed a mill levy and with multiple challenges with our student population.

**S.K., Greenwood Village:** Please give this money back to our public schools! Every taxpayer does not need the small change of \$10 to maybe buy a fancy coffee. Our schools need this money! It's been kept from them for far too long. Just because they've "managed" without it during hard times doesn't mean they couldn't use it to improve public education for our children. We need to invest in the future of the children in this state, which means we invest in everyone's future!

**J.H., Gunnison:** We need to do more not less.

**M.K., Gunnison:** TABOR is reducing the amount of resources available for the development of our young people.

**S.M., Gunnison:** Our district and state are already affected by major cuts to education and must include the multi-million dollars now being spent on testing. Let's turn this focus around to our kids once again. We need math interventionists, reading interventionists, writing interventionists, and technology teachers and upgrades to technology in order to support the testing and teach 21st century tech skills. Please, take a tour, spend a week in a classroom. The requests and mandates you are putting on our kids today, and the funding you are taking away are unrealistic and ridiculous.

**W.P., Gunnison:** Gunnison schools have been cut \$8 million over the past four years. We have reduced classroom teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, administrators, classified staff. Our parents, students and community members have much higher expectations of our local public schools than that. Use excess funds as an investment in the future of our children. A \$20 rebate is not that much of a rebate, but it will make a difference in the future of a child if the funds are used to keep the public schools operating at a higher level. Our children are worthy of the best. Thank you, a senior citizen from Gunnison.

**M.B., Gypsum:** Less field trips and class supplies, bus service cut, no free kindergarten, no after school programs!

**C.L., Gypsum:** I have two granddaughters, one in 3rd grade, the other starting preschool in the fall. Very important to me that they get the best education possible.

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**J.M., Gypsum:** Colorado schools are unable to compete with other states in finding quality teachers because of the high cost of living and low teacher pay. We lose our highly qualified teachers to neighboring states like Wyoming and Texas because the starting pay there is \$10,000-15,000 MORE than Colorado. Good teachers know that they are better appreciated elsewhere, making it a struggle for our school districts to find and keep excellent teachers. We know that quality teachers are the key to student success, but how can even a quality teacher be effective without appropriate materials and increases in student class size? How can we prepare students for college and support struggling students if we are unable to do what it takes to make a difference? A lot needs to change. Giving the surplus back to schools is a start.

**M.V., Gypsum:** It is difficult to meet the needs of all the different learners in my classes when they are all over 30 students. It is also difficult to meet 21st century learning skills when technology is poor and often limited. Please help reduce the negative factor so we can bring more teachers into schools so the needs of our students can be met.

**A.H., Gypsum:** [Teacher] Elementary Art: Not enough money for supplies for art projects; big class sizes limit projects. Big class sizes also equate to limited room for art projects. My kids started kindergarten in a class of 31.

**J.S., Hasty:** There are already so many cuts to school districts (teachers, staff, programs, etc.) that we can hardly make it. And yet, as a counselor, I am required by the state to offer students a technical education if they don't want a four year degree. I can't offer something we don't have. We need to bring back vocational education to our rural schools. We're not all DPS!

**M.P., Hesperus:** The cuts harm children and education in this state and cause educators to lose jobs. The schools are already having difficulties financially. I believe in supporting teachers salaries! Preschool to college the cuts in education would cause harm to all. Stand up for the teachers! The numbers of students per educator must be kept at smaller sizes. And the charter schools do not fill all of the gaps. Each child, each teacher has something great to bring to our society if we pay each their due respecting each unique individual. When a teacher can not afford to live in the town where they are teaching, it is a terrible disservice to the entire community. How do we respect educators? Pay them well and let them be recognized and rewarded for the tremendous effort that educating our children takes. Try to teach one day and see what it means to be a teacher.

**C.D., Highlands Ranch:** With classes so large and elementary assistants cut, it is impossible for teachers to provide individual attention. I had to get outside tutoring for my child. We've lost Spanish, keyboarding, library, activity bus, free busing, band in elementary. PTO fundraisers no longer pay for fun extras like field trips and assemblies, but for necessities like curriculum and copy paper.

**K.D., Highlands Ranch:** Students do not have the necessary mental health support available in Colorado schools. Student choice of classes has dwindled. It is necessary to fund schools in a manner which enables students to succeed in life no matter the chosen direction.

**R.H., Highlands Ranch:** Graduation requirements were lowered resulting in part-time students in high schools and students ill-prepared for college and the workforce. Our state ranks among the lowest for per pupil spending. The quality of education here has deteriorated significantly. The universities and employers can verify my statements.

**A.H., Highlands Ranch:** Douglas County hasn't fairly given services to the children who need it most cutting their SPED programs/paras and staff members and adding students & class times without compensating teachers. Not everyone in this district is wealthy and can afford private OTs PTs and Mental Health

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counselors.... Personally I can't imagine how the smaller districts and rural districts have managed. Please fund our schools to be the best and raise them up from the bottom of the national statistics. Refund the TABOR monies to the school districts that need it and have progressive programs to improve the lives of our children and communities.

**E.L., Highlands Ranch:** My daughter is a teacher and she tells me the difficulties schools are faced with when legislatures come up with unfunded mandates. The schools with their very limited budgets, have to come up with some way to provide these mandated requirements. Education should be a priority for the state. Problems arise when people lack sufficient education, problems that the state usually has to address like unemployment, crime, an unprepared workforce, etc.

**M.L., Highlands Ranch:** Cutting funding for education is like retiring without a safety net: the future will be grim. You will end up spending more money to remediate the generation that you short changed, and everyone will suffer.

**L.M., Highlands Ranch:** I fail to understand how TABOR can override Amendment 23. How can we give the taxpayers refunds when we still have the negative factor in place?

**H.N., Highlands Ranch:** As a parent I continue to see my children placed in classrooms with 25 students or more. In addition, many nights I have to print out my daughters' homework since the school doesn't have any money to purchase paper or to make copies. Luckily my family has access to technology which enables us to do this.

**J.R., Highlands Ranch:** Next year will be the first year in my career that I will not have the needed supplies and resources to teach my 3rd graders with fidelity. So much has been cut over the past 5+ years and we have "made do" with the cuts. That can only happen for so long before we start seeing the results of this in the quality of education we can provide. I believe that quality is now becoming sub-par because of all the cuts. If education is a priority to you (can't imagine it wouldn't be), then it's time to fund it like a priority.

**L.S., Highlands Ranch:** As a retired Douglas County teacher, I believe that it is imperative that the surplus tax revenues be allocated to Colorado public school students.

**H.S., Highlands Ranch:** With two children with learning delays and in a school that is behind with working with students who need special education, this is an opportunity to get more resources for them. And for all students that need extra support with their education.

**L.W., Highlands Ranch:** It has been sad to see music and electives removed from our schools.

**T.K., Hugo:** The budget cuts have severely reduced our classroom budgets. Teachers are unable to purchase necessary supplies without supplementing the budget with personal money. This is even more difficult because the lack of funding has resulted in wage freezes. Programs which provide for the education of the whole child, make education worthwhile, productive, and enjoyable for students have been cut or severely reduced.

**C.I., Ignacio:** As the Director of School Health Services all funding has the trickle down effect, including health services budget. I have so many dreams for the health services in our district to enable taking good care of students' health needs. In this rural community, I am often the first health care provider they have access to. Budget constraints often tie my hands.

**S.A., Indian Hills:** Our children in Colorado are being poorly served in educational support. I am embarrassed and have admitted to relatives that our system is inadequate compared to other states; I've discouraged two of

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my own children from educational careers. One of my schools has science texts published in 1995. We have to spend time writing grants for classroom materials and instructional support so that our teachers can stay current in the profession; the district cannot afford these basic elements of a system. Special education staffing is still being cut and those students are having to depend on general education teachers, who are not trained in SPED, for academic support. This negatively impacts SPED students, the general education teachers who are overwhelmed by expectations they do not have training for, and the other students who find themselves in a classroom that has one overwhelmed adult and inadequate resources for their learning. The level of efficacy expected in relation to the amount of essential resources to do our work well is beyond belief. Teachers are working at substantially more than 100% effort. Students are shaking out into economic segregation dependent on local sites' ability to find outside funds for learning materials, technology, staff training, transportation, and fine arts, to name a few. We would appreciate retaining the small amount of funding this TABOR refund would provide. Quality public education is a basic infrastructure of a democracy. Thank you, Susan Arntson

**E.P., Jamestown:** Why shortchange the children who are our future? Our economy is thriving...Invest in our kids!!!

**M.K., Kersey:** As a teacher, I struggle to meet the demands of the state standards and assessments because we do not have the funding to update our classroom resources. I spend hours every week finding resources that will help my students master the content. Our district is also struggling to update facilities because we are working extremely diligently to hire and retain highly qualified teachers. Eliminating the negative factor in the state budget by GIVING SCHOOLS WHAT THEY ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE BY LAW would go a long way in helping schools give students the high quality education they deserve. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

**T.B., Kiowa:** Cuts have already had a significant impact on my special education program. Cutting even more would be devastating.

**J.C., Kiowa:** The impact of cuts for me is that I lost my teaching job! Our small district had reduce staff. We had 5 positions cut! So the funding issue is very personal!!

**P.E., Kiowa:** Why isn't the education of our future the TOP priority? I have been a Colorado teacher for 32 years. Over the years I have gone from having supplies readily available through my district to providing lots on my own or having parents provide them, which in turn puts pressure on their family budgets. I am an elementary school teacher in a small, rural school. We have had to reduce our teacher numbers to stretch our budgets. In rural schools you already wear many hats. Now, besides the reading, math, language, science, social studies, writing, cursive and computers, I face the possibility of teaching PE and music. I had to do this many years ago, but with our more rigorous curriculum, I don't think I'll be physically or mentally prepared to add those classes on top of my other classes and duties. I love teaching, but I can't recommend teaching to the younger generations since the budgets don't meet our needs, the hours are long, long, long and the pay isn't equal to the effort.

**J.K., Kiowa:** I am a teacher. We have experienced cuts for many years. Teaching is the most important job, yet has experienced some significant losses in the past 10 years. When teachers should have access to funds that support them, students and the future will benefit.

**S.S., Kiowa:** I am the mom of three who are all now in college. I am a conservative Republican who believes in smaller government and feels our tax money should be spent more wisely. The small amount of money that Tabor will refund back to us, will be much better used in our schools. The Starbucks coffee I might buy with that refund will be much better utilized in the classroom. Let's place the importance on education where it is deserved.



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**T.W., Kiowa:** I work at a small, rural school district and we have had to cut staff and programs over the last five years because of the lack of funding from the state.

**M.B., La Jara:** I am president of the North Conejos School Board. The negative factor has severely impacted our school district. Since it began, we have received on average \$1 million less than before. This has affected our students and families as we can no longer continue the programs we had. This troubles me greatly because Amendment 23 was voted on by our state and voters are being ignored. PLEASE fix it!

**T.B., La Jara:** I supply my students with essential learning tools but my husband was diagnosed with a serious health issue, so I do not foresee my minimal earnings paying for both. We often do not have the materials we need (i.e., technology, books, paper, ink) necessary for instruction. Teachers are great at improvising, recycling and being creative. We would like to put instructional emphasis into greater depth and experience (making real-world connections) but are not often able to have field trips and assemblies that provide a rich environment for learning. We are held to high standards with SB-191 and we are meeting the requirements successfully and powerfully. We love our students and love to see them succeed! Don't discourage others wishing to pursue teaching as a career! Sincerely, Mother, Teacher, Administrator, Teacher, and Leader.

**K.F., La Jara:** As a student teacher I will be looking for a job this year. If the school budget is cut again, it will not only hurt the school district, it will hurt me and my family.

**J.U., La Jara:** Money alone is not a panacea, however, money is like the grease in the wheels. You can skimp on it, but at what cost in the long run? Words like friction, pressure, overload, catastrophic failure, etc. can apply to unlubricated mechanisms. They apply equally to administrators, districts, and teachers who are in the profession for kids but have human limits. Why do educators make personal and financial sacrifices? To make their classrooms work. I have heard good teachers advise young and talented people to look elsewhere than education for their futures. Is this the Colorado I have always been so proud of? Surplus for Kids!

**A.V., La Jara:** It is both frustrating and difficult to do more with less! The students are the ones that suffer because of the budget cuts.

**C.W., La Jara:** Education is in desperate need of financial help!

**P.B., Lafayette:** As a school teacher, I see how the budget cuts have affected our students.

**J.D., Lafayette:** Because of budget cuts in Colorado, our school has had to rely on donations from our parent community to keep the amazing programs we have in our school, such as small group reading and various learning software. One year we had to cut a teacher position...this shouldn't happen. Please keep the surplus for the kids!

**J.E., Lafayette:** I have one academically gifted child and one with dyslexia. I want to make sure all children (including those with learning difficulties) get appropriate services to make sure they are well equipped to earn a decent living as adults. Short-changing our children in school seems like a good recipe for sending kids out into the world and right into the prison systems if they aren't equipped to succeed in the world of work. I understand the need to make cuts during this Great Recession, but now that our coffers are more full, it's now time to make sure we re-fund education. This is much more important than giving rebates to taxpayers, after years of education cuts.

**C.N.H., Lafayette:** More money doesn't always equal a better education, but making the starting pay for teachers higher will attract and keep the kind of teachers we want to teach our children.

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**G.P., Lafayette:** I do not want to have a school system like other states that lack funding and therefore lack enough teachers, supplies and programs. Let's make Colorado a leader where education is concerned. Thank you for taking the time to make sure education receives all the funding possible.

**L.V., Lafayette:** Our PTO gives teachers classroom allowances (to cover general supplies) which the state paid for before the budget cuts. This year, the PTO will pay over \$60,000 for paras & tutors.

**R.W., Lafayette:** The children are our the future and if we are going to be able to compete in this growing global market we need to provide the best free education.

**B.Y., Lafayette:** I have two sons enrolled in Boulder Valley Schools. I would like to see them receive the support that they not only need, but deserve. Excellent education of our children guarantees jobs and growth in the future. Please ensure that our children receive the best education possible and help guarantee a better tomorrow.

**T.H., Lajara:** I am the principal in a school that has witnessed multiple cuts over the past few years that have been devastating to our school. It is time to re-invest in the future of our nation - our kids!

**P.V., Lake City:** I've been involved with education in Colorado for over 40 years - school board director, teacher, coach, and leader at state level. The legislature has constantly demanded more of schools without adequate funding. We have been put in the position of beggars. Do what is right, governor and legislature. The TABOR surplus should rightfully go to public school districts!

**E.A., Lakewood:** My work is around helping low income infants, toddlers, and expectant women to have access to multi-generational support that can lead them out of poverty. Families need support and children need opportunities. Full day kindergarten is a proven strategy for supporting academic success particularly for low income children.

**D.A., Lakewood:** This is a no-brainer. Keep the Tabor surplus for the kids.

**K.A., Lakewood:** A community is judged by the quality of its education. This impacts all areas of community development. If our public schools are deemed inferior due to insufficient funding, our communities languish in mediocrity on all levels. Please provide our schools with adequate funding. It is an absolute necessity!

**G.B., Lakewood:** There are so many needs for full education for our students and children. Music, books, and other activities have gone away, or are subject to many fees. If you do not come from a family with strong resources and support, then marginalized students, and even middle-of-the-road families, may not be able to participate.

**L.C., Lakewood:** We need this money to pay for early childhood education specifically Kindergarten!

**S.D., Lakewood:** I have taught all day kindergarten and know how beneficial it is for our children. We continue to expect more and more from our students at a younger age, and free all day kindergarten gets our students off to a great start in learning how to do school and sets them up to be successful learners!

**T.D., Lakewood:** It is just common sense that making an investment in our kids will help our economy and everyone in the state as these kids become educated and join the workforce in Colorado. That is, if we are providing incentives for them to stay in Colorado. To do that, we have to put funding into our schools, not just k-12, but higher education as well. Investing the little refund I would receive as a result of Tabor in Colorado's kids is more than 100 times worth the investment.

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**V.D., Lakewood:** I am a retired educator and was working when the TABOR amendment passed. Why is it still around when the author was convicted of income tax fraud? This not only affects kids, but municipalities too.

**D.G., Lakewood:** it is time to fully fund Amendment 23- approved and expected by the voters.

**A.H., Lakewood:** I have one child in Kindergarten now and another registered for next year. They both need full day for both educational and personal growth and development. The financial burden is great. I have terminal cancer and am fighting for my life, while fighting for my childre's education. This shouldn't be a burden on us. You can change that. You can do what's right for the children of Colorado. Give them all a fair chance at a great life!

**B.H., Lakewood:** I have witnessed the decline of our educational system for many years. I have been a volunteer in Jeffco schools since the late 70's and am still working with middle school students as a cosponsor of a chapter of the Technology Student Association. I have served several years on an advisory board to the Jefferson county School board and have constantly been appalled at the continued decline in both content and quality of education in our state. Allowing for inflation, we spend less now to educate our students than we did 40 years ago and yet there is so much more to teach. Our state had a court case go all the way to the Supreme Court highlighting the lack of education our students get compared to what they are promised and what the law says they should get. Education is the foundation every sector of our economy and social structure is built on. Fund education, it is the best way to improve everything that is wrong in our country. In the Fire service it is said "You don't have to pay the water bill if you don't want to but when the fire starts, you better be willing to watch it burn." We are already seeing the effects of failing to pay for education and it is just going to get worse.

**K.H., Lakewood:** My son is 5 years old and is in Kindergarten all day now, and he absolutely loves it. It is his own time away to be with kids his age, and he has already learned so much from it. I think that more schools would benefit from all day Kindergarten.

**B.J., Lakewood:** My daughter deserves the same education as her cousins, friends, and peers in other states. She deserves a better education and preparation for the new Commom Core demands on a FIRST GRADER! Please put kids first!

**R.J., Lakewood:** Cuts took away my music program 12 years ago. Denver's cuts to elementary music eventually made my program unworkable because there were fewer and fewer students to fill it. Recruiting new students became a form of political suicide, since my recruiting led to other classes being cancelled when they didn't have enough students. Denver's students are shortchanged when it comes to music. Denver's music program was nationally recognized for excellence until TABOR cuts made it too expensive to keep. Music students are better at standardized testing than students without music. Since the legislature is so concerned with standardized testing, they should be doing everything to encourage districts to offer music.

**M.K., Lakewood:** We've moved all of our children to private schools because of the lack of resources in CO's public school system.

**L.L., Lakewood:** I am an Adult Educator (Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary education/GED Test Prep) and know full well that when our students in Preschool - 12th grade do not succeed (cuts to funding, larger classroom sizes, fewer services to those struggling), we see greater numbers of people in jobs that are not sustainable, who are unable to enroll in Community Colleges without remediation, and who often receive services to feed their families. Underfunding P-12 pushes more and more difficult problems down the road. Colorado must be progressive in putting the money where it has the greatest impact - Preschool through 12th grade.

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**A.M., Lakewood:** We all desire full day Kindergarten and our children deserve it!

**A.M., Lakewood:** Just in the process of cutting 1 1/2 teachers from our small school...

**V.R., Lakewood:** As a teacher in Jeffco and parent of Jeffco students, I have seen class sizes increase and money for learning resources decrease. It is harder and harder to give kids a great education. I'd rather not have my TABOR money back, give it to the schools!

**C.S., Lakewood:** As teachers in Jeffco, our class sizes continue to grow and our paychecks continue to shrink.

**V.S., Lakewood:** The amount of school fees for the year is ridiculous for public schools. I have friends who are teachers in other states that have low school fees. Why?

**C.S., Lakewood:** This family hasn't recovered from the bad economy, we can't afford one day of daycare, let alone all day Kindergarten.

**C.S., Lakewood:** Class sizes are increasing. Teacher's salaries are decreasing and the expectation that we can do more with less is ridiculous!

**B.V., Lakewood:** I have two sons, one in elementary and one headed to middle school. I would like to see class sizes reduced at both levels. Teachers are best when they can deliver individual instruction to their students and it's nearly impossible with the large class sizes we have now and the emphasis on testing. Please help our students and teachers succeed by funding the schools. Additionally, please increase GT funding so that we can have the best employees and leaders in Colorado actually be from Colorado - instead of imported from other states.

**L.M., Lakewood And Denver:** My older daughter's gifted and talented program is under threat of being further cut. At a time when there's media attention on the importance of girls in STEM (science fields), why cut those programs because of supposed lack of funding?

**J.K., Larkspur:** Over the past six years, I have seen my children's educational opportunities, extracurricular activities and social/emotional services significantly reduced. As a very involved parent in School Accountability Committees and PTOs at all of my children's schools (preschool through high school), I have witnessed the devastating impact budget cuts have had on schools. My children will never regain the opportunities lost due to decisions made by legislators, lobbyists, staff and taxpayers. It's time for the public to take notice of the impact that TABOR and Gallagher have had on funding schools. The future of our children, communities and state are worth more than annual tax rebates that would likely not cover a single dinner for a family at a moderately priced restaurant. Please reverse the TABOR refunds to help ensure our most valuable assets are protected and encouraged to reach their full potential.

**B.O., Larkspur:** We have faced staff cuts at our elementary school each year due to lower enrollment. Our old neighborhood schools are losing their luster partly due to the new eye candy that's been popping up each year...charter schools. There is a role for charter schools, but it shouldn't be to starve our existing neighborhood schools. This is a request to pass legislation that funds be allocated to improve neighborhood schools from staffing to structural and teaching materials.

**J.R.M., Larkspur:** Please keep the refund and use it to send 66,000 children to Kindergarten for free. Thank you from a parent of three children who is very active in the elementary school's PTO to try to make a difference in their education.

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**C.S., Larkspur:** lost my position of Educational Assistant of 9 years with my neighborhood school due to budget cuts. Once again the children will suffer.

**M.H., Leadville:** My child will attend the same school district that I attended and graduated from. That makes me very proud, however the public schools are not doing well. I don't want to have to make the decision to send my child to a private school system because the state won't do its part for our future.

**L.M., Lindon:** Our school district cut or downsized many programs. It seems silly to refund taxpayers when schools are desperate to get funding back to what it should be. Then, perhaps programs such as music, art, additional PE classes, etc. would be again possible. The legislature has passed unfunded mandates, so at least let TABOR start paying for what the legislature has required of schools.

**H.M., Lindon:** We need to remember that the students we are teaching today are the taxpayers who need to make a good income to pay taxes in the future. We have eliminated our 'cultural' classes - music and art because there is no money and the state unfunded mandates are in my opinion having an adverse impact on these 'cultural' classes.

**P.A., Littleton:** Children need schools that work, please provide resources to make that happen.

**J.A., Littleton:** The cuts to education resulted in a 4 year pay freeze for me. In the classroom I've had less para support, educational materials, supplies, technology, access to fast technology, poorly maintained facilities due to staff reductions, classrooms that are too cold because they don't turn on the heat soon enough to get them warm before kids arrive and turn it off as soon as the kids leave, so teachers are working in rooms that are 58 degrees at times, the furniture is old, broken and not being replaced, computers are 8 years old or more, smart boards for 1190 students = 5. The list of inequity could go on. Last, research shows that the greatest impact on a child's education is the teacher in the classroom, and yet districts across our state are cutting teacher pay, coming up with new salary schemes, and increasing the workload. This equation doesn't add up, and the only answer that makes sense in that equation is teachers are leaving the profession. If we want to keep the high quality of education in Colorado, you, the lawmakers and enforcers, have to step up and stand up for the kids of Colorado. Do it today so the future of our great state will be secure in the knowledge that our future leaders who come from all races and backgrounds will have the education they need to keep our freedoms and rights protected.

**A.B., Littleton:** As a teacher, I can tell you we are always in need of funding. We need to do what's right for kids. Colorado spends less per student than almost every other state. Shouldn't we be embarrassed by this?

**K.B., Littleton:** I am a parent and educator and have taught elementary school for over 27 years. I firmly believe that the surplus needs to be invested in education. It is a win-win situation as a well-educated population will encourage productive, tax-paying citizens. If we use money to pay for short-term needs, then our long-term needs will suffer. Thank you for your consideration.

**K.B., Littleton:** Schools and students in Colorado deserve more support. TABOR is hurting education.

**S.B., Littleton:** As a parent, I am paying more for two college educations and "extras" in the classroom (technology fees, copy fees, and providing school supplies for basic teaching). As a substitute teacher with a master's degree in education and over 20 years of classroom experience, I am making \$10 an hour.

**P.C., Littleton:** There is no reason to refund tax revenue, per TABOR. The refund will amount to \$11.00 give or take. These funds would provide much needed relief for underfunded schools.

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**E.C., Littleton:** Our school had to cut the gifted and talented teacher, computer instructor, and several paraprofessional positions this year. The surplus money could help my children's education.

**S.C., Littleton:** As an elected official, you have a responsibility to educate voters about the critical need to tax themselves to adequately fund public schools. If you don't believe investment in public education is needed, contact Great Ed to arrange a school visit in your district so you can talk to parents, teachers, and administrators to find out why there is a critical need for more resources. Colorado's path for funding public education is simply unsustainable. The equity issues are deplorable. At what point will we make public education a priority in Colorado?

**B.C., Littleton:** When cuts come, we can run our schools on bare bones; however, that provides our students with very little 21st century skills--the primary one being technology. Currently, we are able to purchase all 5th & 6th grade students a Chromebook for next year usage at school. However, if cuts come, we can no longer provide this valuable tool to assist our students in the world of technology. Cutting education so that we cannot provide for students seems very short sighted. They are the ones who will be running the country in 15 years. Let's give them all we can to make a productive society in the future.

**T.D., Littleton:** My daughter's special education program has been cut already, we cannot allow anything further to be cut from these kids because they are not the "cookie cutter" learner. ALL children deserve the right to quality and consistency, please, please put the surplus back into cut programs! It's imperative for our future generations!!

**S.D., Littleton:** Invest in the kids. That is our only real future.

**L.E., Littleton:** I'm a parent and educator who sees firsthand the impact of limited support for students and teachers alike. Stress has taken a toll on many and our children are suffering for it. Mental health issues are increasing while funding for these critical positions are being cut. How can this be? When is this going to stop? Colorado cannot continue to lose good teachers and counselors or students' love for learning and emotional safety.

**R.G., Littleton:** I've seen teachers have to use more and more of their own personal resources and money/salaries to help fund art projects and school projects. This is unacceptable. We need the TABOR surplus to stay in our schools.

**J.G., Littleton:** Cutting school funding when employment, income and revenues are growing is wrong. A \$20 rebate is of no real value to individual taxpayers, but, cumulatively, it is a tremendous investment in education. PLEASE, keep the surplus for the kids.

**T.G., Littleton:** Enough! As I chatted with a friend who lives in the state of Wyoming it was embarrassing and shameful (for Colorado) to compare the importance that each state places on the value of education. The state of Arizona has educators leaving in large numbers...we are next! Our kids are important...now prove it!

**C.G., Littleton:** My kids go to a wonderful school full of wonderful teachers, but they lose more teachers every year as more cuts are made. They need all the funding they can get.

**J.H., Littleton:** Over the last six years that my children have been in public school, I have continued to see teachers' jobs cut, larger class sizes and fewer support staff. This year, our school could not keep our Kindergarten paraprofessionals for our all-day Kindergarten program. Looking to next year, we will lose our full-time Gifted and Talented teacher to a part-time position. These losses hurt our kids and hurt our

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community. And that's putting greater stress on the remaining teachers to pick-up extra responsibility. I'm disappointed that we can't do better for the next generation.

**J.H., Littleton:** Education should be our top priority. We in Jeffco have had so much taken away. Our class sizes are ever bigger. Even after 3A & 3B - which were supposed to shrink class sizes. Please use the surplus for education!!

**D.K., Littleton:** These cuts have hurt my grandchildren.

**M.L., Littleton:** I work in education and have experienced the negative consequences of larger class sizes and fewer social services. Our district closed two elementary schools 6 years ago when there were drastic cuts. Now our schools are crowded. We need money for basic resources. We need to fully fund our Colorado education system. The future depends on it.

**M.M., Littleton:** Please accept our sincere appreciation for your efforts on behalf of all the residents of Colorado. Please vote to reject rebates and instead keep those funds for possible future education needs and/or to help defray any cost of education debt already incurred. Our understanding is that the rebate program is intended to return any "overages." Knowing how individual budgeting works within the home, that after all budget items/expenses are allotted/paid, including the account for emergency reserves, any "extra" income should be used to pay down outstanding debt. Having felt the impact of the cuts to the education budget for our own kids' elementary, middle and high schools over the last several years, we know how important it is to make sure there are no future shortages of funds for the crucial programs, staff and materials needed by our state's students who ARE the future of our state and country.

**M.M., Littleton:** The \$20 TABOR refund won't make a difference to me or most Colorado voters. But what will make a difference is paying that money back to K-12. That money was cut from education, let's give it back. Instead of facing more staff and program cuts, invest in the future of our kids and help give them the education they deserve! It's long overdue. And let each district decide how best to use those funds. No strings attached.

**Y.M., Littleton:** Please do the right thing for our students. We have been faced with budget cuts in a growing economy and our buildings are in need of updates and new equipment. Please allow the state to keep excess tax revenues for education.

**M.O., Littleton:** We are losing two teaching positions at our school this year. This is incomprehensible with a budget surplus. Strong public schools are the pillars of good communities.

**K.R., Littleton:** As a recently retired elementary school principal, I know first hand how lack of adequate school funding coupled with unfunded mandates impacts the learning of our children. Larger class sizes, lack of collaborative team planning for teachers, lack of mental health services lead to difficulty individualizing learning for students that would lead to higher student success and achievement. Please reconsider using new revenues for public education. Our best investment in the future of Colorado is in our children.

**K.C.S., Littleton:** As a proud principal and parent in Jeffco schools, I can testify to the impact that the loss of our district budget has had on student learning. It saddens me that our state continues to miss the mark when it comes to prioritizing our most precious commodity - our K-12 students and their futures as adults. I urge you to use your position in state leadership to do the right thing for education.

**T.T.S., Littleton:** The money collected was intended for education.

**K.T., Littleton:** Our staffing has been greatly reduced by the State cutbacks. Please don't let this continue.

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**G.W., Littleton:** My grandkid attends a school in the suburbs where the PTO raises tens of thousands of dollars to supplement public funds. This is not possible in many, many communities across CO. Thus, public education is not equally funded. It means that those that have more, get more. How many kids are we leaving behind? One is too many and the numbers are much bigger than one.

**P.W., Littleton:** Education has suffered hit after hit over the last few decades. With the enormous funds being railroaded to standardized testing, I see no way for Colorado schools to continue to produce high quality educated students. Our education system has been hijacked and is being starved to death and will soon die. Wake up, Colorado. Take the politics out of education and fund our public schools, Respect and save our teachers.

**S.O., Lone Tree:** How will our children function without an education and who will pay into social security?

**C.B., Longmont:** Doug Bruce has no love for government and his legacy is hurting this state and our kids. To let this continue is a grave disservice to this state. TABOR should be repealed!!

**R.D., Longmont:** It is necessary for the future well-being of our state, our communities, and our families that the governor and state legislature increase the proposed state funding for education from \$25 million to at least \$50 million. This money is owed to the communities, schools, the students, and the parents, and the time to pay it back is NOW.

**B.E., Longmont:** As a Colorado classroom teacher of 11 years, my family and I have felt the impact of the economic downturn, but have yet to see any relief now that the economy is improving. My students feel the squeeze of large class sizes and the uncertainty of high teacher turnover. As a parent of two elementary-age children, my wife and I made the choice to pay for full-day Kindergarten because it was right for our kids, even though it was difficult on us financially. Colorado parents should not have to make this choice, regardless of income. Per-pupil funding is embarrassingly low. Teacher salaries are barely enough to raise a family on. And all Colorado kids should have free access to full-day Kindergarten. And those who think this only impacts teachers and kids and parents, you're so wrong. Quality public education helps all Coloradans. It's time for Colorado to spend the money it already has to improve its state education system.

**J.H., Longmont:** I work in a school with 100% free and reduced lunches. The list of the ways we have been impacted is very lengthy. No libraries and librarians? No professional development? No coaching? Kids who don't have food, medical and mental healthcare?

**J.L., Longmont:** TABOR hurts Colorado. Please use the money wisely rather than returning it to people in tiny bits. Education or infrastructure would be good choices.

**R.L.S., Longmont:** I am a middle school Teacher Librarian. We are an at-risk school with over 80% free and reduced lunch. I spend \$1,500 to \$2,000 a year of my own money to buy school supplies, books, clothes and food for my students. We need help.

**K.O., Longmont:** My son experienced the impact of cuts first hand when his Intervention teacher no longer taught the reading intervention class for 4th grade students in elementary school. This class was cut for all 4th and 5th grade students. He had been receiving reading intervention since kindergarten and he definitely experienced a loss in intervention aide. In addition, class sizes have been increasing through the years impacting the teacher's overall ability to reach every student successfully.



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**J.W., Longmont:** Over the last five years, we watched some of our son's most exceptionally talented teachers and administrators SCRAMBLE to cover costs (and/or keep their jobs) in the midst of devastating cuts. The quality of our son's education has been impacted as a result. It's incumbent on us to expend similar energy to make up for those losses and to get our schools on the most solid, permanent, economic footing possible. Thank you in advance for making EVERY EFFORT to do so!

**B.W., Longmont:** While the passage of the READ Act will ultimately improve reading ability for kids in Colorado, there is a gap between what was required before its passage and now. When I volunteer in my kids' school I can see that there are a number of kids who need extra support in order to catch up to the new requirements. Gov. Hickenlooper, keep the TABOR surplus and use it to support our kids. They need it now more than ever.

**R.C., Louisville:** Teachers have been paying for what our kids needed when the budget was cut. Please keep the money and help out the kids and teachers.

**R.C., Louisville:** I'm a retired teacher now, but budget cuts always affect children directly. Education in Colorado needs to be a priority.

**S.G., Louisville:** As a mother and a teacher, I see the impact of cuts from both sides. This needs to change! Whether you have children of your own or not, they are everybody's future.

**A.M., Louisville:** I am anticipating getting involved in efforts to have BVSD's middle-level center for the deaf and hard of hearing "looped" (a technology that benefits deaf students who use amplification and would likely cut other costs associated with each student's needing their own amplification system). The fact that BVSD does not already have this technology in place is a direct result of budget cuts in prior years. In the face of the TABOR-required rebates, the prospect of getting this essential technology in place is daunting. Are more bonds really the only way that Colorado can ever raise revenue to address the long-overdue needs of our school children? TABOR needs to be fixed.

**R.S., Louisville:** Local schools have been doing okay because of extra money provided by parents. But I worry about school districts that have less affluent parents who cannot afford to give thousands of dollars to music programs and athletics. Please raise the amount of money going to Colorado schools.

**S.S., Louisville:** Classes are so large and teachers are stretched so thin--please do more to support healthy schools.

**D.A., Loveland:** When I was a school teacher, I saw the effects of limited resources and often paid for needed supplies with my own money. Now as a retired teacher I donate whenever asked by my granddaughter's school. The amount of any TABOR return would make no difference in my life, but that amount multiplied across the state would have a true impact for our schools.

**K.A., Loveland:** The negative factor violates the constitution. Fund schools now.

**D.C., Loveland:** My children (1st grade twins) are attending school with funding that is less than that of when they were born. We have out of date computer labs, inconsistent internet, class sizes that are too big, and teachers that are \$7000 behind our nearest neighbor school districts on their pay scale. We have cut every possible position at the administration level to try to shield students. This approach is not sustainable. Please help our students learn by allocating money back to the classroom. It is an investment in the future of Colorado. Education is infrastructure.

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**M.D., Loveland:** Schools in our district are not good - and all we do is fundraise, fundraise, fundraise to try to make up for loss of funds. All this money in Colorado - why can't the kids see any of it?

**B.E., Loveland:** In response to budget cuts, my district had to change its ratio of certified employees to students. I am responsible for meeting the needs of 34 fifth graders including one student with Autism, one with a significant emotional disability, two with identified learning disabilities, and three who read and write at least three grade levels higher than fifth grade. All of these kids are in one room with 27 grade-level peers. And I am responsible for trying to meet their daily intellectual, social, and emotional needs!

**K.F., Loveland:** Students at Truscott Elementary are unable to log in or to stay logged in on computer programs that are used for interventions, teaching typing, and taking state-mandated tests, because of the limited bandwidth for internet use at the school. Gifted and Talented students need more services than they are receiving at all of the schools. Lack of funding limits the amount of resources and the number of specialized Gifted and Talented teachers that are available.

**K.F., Loveland:** I am an educator charged with the task of doing more with less everyday. It's a challenge I'm happy to accept because I believe in my students and what a strong performing arts education provides to them. My ensembles perform all over the state and sometimes across the USA. Our instruments are old and some are beyond repair, our room barely contains our growing program. I teach 9 separate ensembles on my own. I know we could do more for students with this money.

**R.J., Loveland:** The cuts have been too long, too much, and too detrimental to our public education system--including our state colleges and universities! I choose to pool our resources for our children. A small amount of money returned to me doesn't do as much good in the long run as improving public education will for years to come.

**L.K., Loveland:** As a teacher for 31 years, I saw first hand how the cuts impact staff and students in our state. We can't keep cutting funds to our teachers; it's a hard enough job as it is, then add no raises, then add state and federal mandates, then budget cuts....time to find a way to get more money to our educators. Thank you.

**C.M., Loveland:** Colorado spends approximately \$8,000 per child for education, Wyoming spends \$16,000...I see a major problem with this! You know the old saying...you get what you pay for? Well, it's a proven fact and our children are the caretakers of tomorrow...they are worth every cent of our investment!

**B.M., Loveland:** Please use the Tabor refunds to fund urgent needs in Colorado, especially for education. Please leave your politics out of our schools. Thank you!

**R.M., Loveland:** I am working in the Early Childhood program and am so proud of all the wonderful accomplishments our program has made and is continuing to do. I am also a parent of a high school senior and a college student. We must start making education our #1 priority. This is our future! Please come out and visit schools. See what great things are happening in our schools.

**L.M., Loveland:** My daughter teaches in Colorado and absolutely spends more money than she should have to on her students. That money should be provided by the state not the teachers.

**S.P., Loveland:** The first grade classes at our school have 27 students each. Many of these young children come from families living in poverty. They come to school with more needs - both academic and emotional - than one teacher has time or energy to deal with. During my seven years as a teacher I have watched as, year after year, we try to make less and less money stretch to cover the increasing needs of our students. Please turn this around for us! As our economy improves, please ensure that our children's education improves as well.

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**L.S., Loveland:** I am the principal of a K-8 charter school. For the past two years, my staff has donated up to 14% of their salaries to our general fund to be sure our students received the very best learning opportunity possible. Our salaries are far below any school that I know of - almost to the level of pay that I began with 28 years ago. We put our students first, why can't our government vote to do the same?

**D.C., Manassa:** It is a shame that we are having cuts in our schools. How do you expect children to learn when we don't have technology or materials to help them learn? We have bills to pay and we need gas to travel to and from our job. The funding is going in the wrong places. Let's support our teachers who have already given up so much. We have had one raise in the last 7 years. And that is just a step no percent increase. This is NOT right. We have had to give up so much already. First our refrigerator and microwaves in our classroom. Now they are telling us we can't have printers in our classroom. They have cut our materials, so we have to watch what we spend. And you want us to teach. With what?

**C.C., Manassa:** I have been teaching in Colorado for 8 years. Due to budget cuts, my salary has been frozen since 2010. Because of rising health care costs and other expenses, my take home salary is less than it was when I was a probationary teacher. I spend approximately \$600/year of my own money on classroom supplies. I feel unappreciated as an educator and wouldn't encourage my own children to go into education in Colorado. My professional future seems very bleak. Our state budget has improved. Why has education not been a priority?

**W.H., Manassa:** Kids matter! Funding matters! Teachers matter! Please keep dollars flowing to our schools.

**M.M., Manassa:** Please do not cut funding for education.

**D.S., Manassa:** I'm a teacher. We have definitely felt the cuts.

**J.N., Manitou Springs:** A majority of our teachers in our small district are spending their own money to pay for school supplies and activities when kids can't afford it. Teachers don't make enough money to do that nor should they need to. Give money back to Colorado schools!

**I.F., Meeker:** Our district has had to cut deeply to keep afloat after the negative factor last year. The cuts have had a huge negative impact on student learning. Cutting supplies, teachers, and support staff has resulted in low morale and kids are feeling it too. Please consider giving more of the excess to schools. As a taxpayer, I would rather the kids benefit than a small tax refund. Some of our teachers are moving to Wyoming where school funding is a priority.

**M.S., Meeker:** How Colorado's General Assembly can balance the state budget on the backs of our kids through the Negative Factor and allow TABOR to issue tax refunds is beyond understanding. Every school district can tell a compelling story about the impact of cuts caused by the Negative Factor. This year's \$700,004 Negative Factor cut to our school district of approximately 650 students deprived our kids of many things, including adequate staffing. Students are receiving less and the staff is being asked to do more with less. Legislation putting more dollars into K-12 last year didn't bring our district a penny. Every state around us is investing more in education.

**J.C., Minturn:** Our kids deserve the best education possible. We spend more on prisons than education. Maybe if we offered better education, we wouldn't need as much prison funding. My child is in high school now, but last year (in middle school) we lost our buses, art was offered one day a week and PE was offered 1 day a week - alternating weeks. That's what they got for electives. We live in an expensive area and teachers can't make ends meet. I have ALWAYS voted YES on anything funding education. Let's give back to our kids and give them

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the opportunity to experience lots of different things in school. Not every child learns the same way. Tabor has never been a good idea. It takes away funding fast, and takes forever to give it back to the schools.

**L.S., Moffat:** It is tragic that my beautiful home state refuses, year after year, to own up to the educational and developmental needs of our children. I teach in a county where 43% of children under the age of 18 live below the poverty rate. I imagine that number is actually higher but families in rural areas can be too proud to admit their deepening struggles. We do all we can to give our kids a quality education and we have won State awards for our successes. Often digging into our own pockets, we provide help so our families can retain their dignity during hard times- backpacks with food to get through the weekend, sports shoes so kids can play on the team, opportunities for kids to have jobs at school to earn some extra money, clothes for prom, cash for school pictures. Each year I try to take my middle school students on an overnight trip to a new part of the state. We set a goal months in advance, calculating what each individual's expenses will be, and then I suggest ways in which they can earn their own way. They all figure their own way to EARN \$10 a month, maintain passing grades, and show good choices at school. For some, this trip represents the first night in a hotel room, the first ride on an elevator, the first trip out of the San Luis Valley. When they see the hotel room and get a look at the pool they are filled with joy and appreciation. I tell them "don't thank me, thank yourselves...you earned this on your own". It is a trip and a lesson they always remember. This takes me back to my point in signing this petition- my students are not looking for a hand out. THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A HAND UP. This is a promise we are morally obligated to keep, so do the right thing!

**E.W., Moffat:** As a small rural school in Colorado, even the smallest cuts to education funding have an irreparable effect on our students. With over 20% of our student body requiring learning interventions (29 of our 124), there is only one full-time SPED teacher and two paras to service these students. Many other students require academic support for reading and math, but we don't have sufficient funding to hire the needed personnel. Teachers' evaluations are now based on students' growth but with budget cuts and all the standardized tests, teachers have less time to teach and meet their students' needs. Teachers work very hard at fundraising--writing grants and looking for other funding sources--in addition to their very demanding teaching responsibilities. But grants can never replace the funding schools like ours depend on from the state and federal governments. We are reaching the end of our rope. The positions of teachers who are retiring or moving may not be filled. How long before rural schools have to close their doors due to insufficient funding? Public Education is required by law but the Colorado legislature (and TABOR) is making it impossible. While the cost of living (heating, electricity, supplies, etc.) continues to increase, the schools' funding is decreased. How can our state and our country expect to have a democracy without educated citizens? Our children represent our future and are our most valuable asset as future participants in solving the complex problems ahead of them. PLEASE consider how cuts are affecting our children now and the children of everyone's future. As a taxpayer, I can't imagine why anyone would expect a TABOR refund when our state, our country, and our world's future is in the hands of these children. Currently, Colorado ranks close to the bottom in education funding in the United States. Why?

**S.W., Monte Vista:** I am a high school principal and have been involved in education for well over 20 years. My family is involved in education in other states. When you talk about funding for education, Colorado becomes a joke. Our students share 15-year-old textbooks. Our teachers buy supplies out of their own pockets. Teachers that are underpaid. Why should a Cherry Creek kid get more than a Monte Vista kid? Are they more important because they live in a higher tax bracket? Number 1, Colorado school districts should be created equal. Number 2, I am not asking for new money, just the money owed to us. Help the "Negative Factor" disappear. It is time to increase the budget. Make a difference.

**L.C., Monte Vista:** It is not just a fiscal responsibility to fight to use these funds to support our schools but a moral one. Applying these funds to education makes a statement that in Colorado we actually value education and support it for ALL of Colorado's children.

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**R.D., Monte Vista:** Please restore funding for our schools so students have the best possible education that we can afford.

**A.H., Monte Vista:** We as teachers are providing an education to students to become all the other professions of the world. What's going to happen if we keep cutting money toward our children of the future? These students deserve to have resources and opportunities available to them. Please keep the Tabor Surplus for our kids!!

**T.M., Monte Vista:** We keep making requirements and increasing expectations while taking away educational resources. Ask us, the ones involved. Hear our voices. Teacher of 19 years, Del Norte Elementary School

**D.M., Monte Vista:** Do it for the future of our children and grandchildren. They deserve a quality education and a chance at a bright future.

**H.S., Monte Vista:** In the last 9 years, our first grade team has gone from 4 classroom teachers and 4 paraprofessionals teaching 80 - 90 6 year-old students to read every day for two hours to 4 classroom teachers and 1 paraprofessional (who can only support kids for an hour) teaching 80 - 90 6 year-old students to read. We are being asked to do the same thing with less support. This translates into more kids who aren't supported well enough to become adept at reading. It also translates into low teacher morale, more sick leave being used and higher rates of burnout.

**M.V., Monte Vista:** As a grandparent, I want my grandchildren to receive a quality education in Colorado public schools. As a taxpayer, I want my tax dollars to be focused on education for all children. Let's make Colorado number one in the country in education. Not only will it serve the residents of our state, it will also draw people into our state. Education is the core of our success as a state and country, both now and in the future.

**M.D., Monument:** Our school needs more funding overall. We are a center for special needs kids and there isn't enough funding to support those kids and their needs. The funding is also short for gifted and talented kids. We are shortchanging all the kids. Give them the education they deserve.

**C.E., Monument:** My children endure oversized classes and are lacking individualized attention from teachers. Resources from arts to special education have been cut throughout the district. We have forgotten about the whole child. Our district now charges for bussing so families drive to school, creating new difficulties due to excessive traffic.

**M.R., Morrison:** I am a dedicated retired middle school teacher who now is adjunct faculty at Metro State University guiding upcoming student teachers. Please do all you can to make education a foremost thought in any funding. I have over the 44 years in Colorado education and have seen the changes happen and no matter what teachers day in and out give their best to kids. Do the same, please. Give your best consideration to kids and their education! Thank you.

**T.T., Morrison:** My wife teaches Special ED in Jeffco. She has kids from 4 different grade levels. This means she needs resources for all groups. Because these kids have special needs the resources cannot be shared/borrowed for the grade-level teachers. As a result, we are spending money out of our personal funds from a salary that has been stagnant for 4 years.

**P.Z., Morrison:** Jeffco has suffered severe cuts for many years, and it's time you make things right for them and all students in Colorado. We are so far behind other states and other countries. Help do the right thing and do it NOW! Thank you.

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**L.G., New Castle:** Colorado needs to fund public education. Quality schools create educated citizens.

**L.M., New Castle:** We continue to do more with less. I am a principal of a middle school. We have already moved to a four-day school week, had four years of teacher pay freezes, and multiple teacher/resource cuts. We lose good teachers because we can't pay (especially here on the Western Slope, where the cost of living is very high). We make hard cuts at the expense of our students every year. Our students, parents, staff, and communities deserve so much better!

**M.D., Northglenn:** As a teacher of 20 years I'm continually disappointed in the level of support and investment the people of Colorado give to our educational system, our students, and our future! Over the years I've worked in overcrowded classrooms and seen students suffer from lack of resources, budget cuts, and reduced services!

**D.S., Northglenn:** The school budget is already damaging our students education. Because of the budget cuts, schools cannot afford the right manpower, equipment, and supplies that would enhance the education of our students.

**D.T., Northglenn:** My kids had some amazing experiences in Colorado schools, including drama, art, band, orchestra, and IB. I am so grateful for that. My kids all graduated in the last 10 years and each year we have seen programs be cut more and more. I want the kids of today to have the opportunities that my kids had. I am willing for my taxes to go to give this to children who are not my own.

**J.O., Norwood:** What is with the lack of political courage, lawmakers? NOTHING is more important than the education of our kids. You want Economic Development? Fix the tax rate and PAY for EDUCATION. The resulting excellence of our schools will draw people and revenue like no other plan you currently have!

**V.O., Norwood:** Fortunately my husband was elected to our local school board in 2013. THAT's when we, in our town, found out about TABOR, what it's about and how important it is to keep the surplus for kids. Too many people don't even know about it.

**D.G., Nunn:** Fewer field trips, condensed staff, smaller classroom budgets, out-dated textbooks, nowhere near enough technology. We've kept art and PE, though! (Yay!)

**K.L., Ovid:** Please do what is best for our population of learners in Colorado schools!

**J.M., Pagosa Springs:** The education system in general has been depleted to a point of pushing good people out and making things very difficult for teachers today. Class size must come down. In order for that to happen education needs to be funded. Talk to a teacher, student or parent and they will ALL TELL YOU class sizes must come down. All children need to be taught. The more a teacher can utilize their time to teach one on one the more success you will see, Guaranteed!

**M.S., Pagosa Springs:** I am embarrassed at the low funding our state provides for education. Several friends and I were discussing folks who are leaders in their field, etc., and realized most of them were educated elsewhere. Hmmm.

**E.J., Parachute:** The new forecasts for state revenues indicate that Colorado is growing at one of the fastest rates of any state in the union. While this would seem to be a time for celebration, the news came a bit of irony. Due to the limitations provided within the TABOR laws, revenues may not grow faster in a given year than the sum of the inflation rate and the rate of population growth. If they do, then the net difference is paid

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back to taxpayers. In essence, prior to ever being able to completely get rid of the negative factor built into our state education funding, the state will have to refund proceeds, which will harm schools.

**C.A., Parker:** To hear about public school parents needing to fundraise for basic supplies is INSANE! The best way to improve society is for each generation to have a good education including arts, music, writing skills, creative thinking, and physical ed (not just good test taking abilities). Then they go out into all types of jobs in the world and bring their knowledge, creativity, and inspiration to solving the many, many problems in our world. We need fully educated citizens, not ones that are just stuffed with information to pass tests. That requires commitment and more than bare minimum funds from our great state of Colorado.

**P.A., Parker:** I am a parent and SAC member at my children's school. Our principal this year had to make a gut-wrenching decision to lower his staff level because he doesn't have the funds to keep the educational assistants. These valuable staff was cut because of the limited funds available. Please invest in the future! Please invest in those that will be running the country in the future!

**C.B., Parker:** Please return funding to our kids and protect a future for Colorado.

**E.M., Parker:** I work in a district that, in 9 years, has cut or reduced 9 positions. Five more positions were cut for next year. Districts and schools can not afford to lose more money. Pay freezes have been in effect for a while. It is too much cutting of education funds. I live in Douglas County and work in Elbert County.

**J.M., Parker:** I am a new teacher and already I have been greatly discouraged by the lack of funding for my school. Children are not getting the education they deserve to be effective 21st century citizens. By cutting education, we are cutting Colorado's future.

**M.O., Parker:** I am a high school teacher in a small rural district. Teachers here have been on a pay freeze for years and every year they have cut teaching positions. Our roofs leak, our busses have 300,000 miles on them and we have high staff turnover from the barely livable pay. While some districts are starting to bounce back, many of us are so deep in the hole, a way out seems unattainable.

**L.W., Parker:** My children's schools are in disrepair and more programs and staff are cut every year.

**F.C., Parlin:** We all were children once, hoping for the best from those who raised us. For a moment step back and remember that.

**G.P., Pine:** I am a teacher at Englewood High School and after our budget meeting for next year, I am fearful of dramatic changes and cuts to our staff and resources.

**C.M., Placerville:** Even in a wealthy district like Telluride, the cuts have been significant. Our Board of Education passed a resolution stating that since 2011, we have been shorted \$3,603,691. This money could help us provide training for teachers in the new curricula (in response to new standards), technology that would allow for efficient scheduling of state online assessments, effective implementation of the new teacher evaluation system, and expanded access to high bandwidth Internet for students outside of town. Some would respond by removing these new initiatives but they are the future of a quality education. We need to support these revolutionary changes.

**M.C., Pueblo:** Our district is suffering from a \$20M negative factor. Amendment 23 provides for funding education and it needs to be honored, not ignored.

**T.V.H., Pueblo West:** Education is hurting for funding!

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**A.G., Red Cliff:** Let's make this generation of kids the smartest leaders we can have to protect the future for all generations. It is hard to give all the kids an education with no money to make essential upgrades to learning tools and environments. We need to pay our teachers for their hard work and dedication!

**N.R., Red Cliff:** Keep the surplus for our kids.

**A.G., Rifle:** My children go to school four days a week and the students in this county are already below in testing scores. It costs more than \$1,000 for my high school student to be a cheerleader. We moved here from the east coast and the comparison between school systems is sad. Colorado needs to make some serious changes.

**A.K., Rifle:** I am a teacher in a district where teachers had a raise freeze for 4 years before the year I was hired. We have since gotten only a 2.5% raise at most. Last year it was less than 2%. The teachers in my district are leaving in droves and a large part of it is that they can barely afford to make rent and buy food in the city where they teach. These raises haven't made up for the loss of income the four years prior. If we can't keep quality teachers we are constantly having to battle the cost it takes to train new ones. What does this say to our children about how we respect the people responsible for setting them up for the future? Can we show them that we think they matter and we understand that better educators means better education?

**J.R., Rifle:** Our school district has not been able to maintain competitive salaries. Every year we are left with unfilled positions. When you add unfilled positions to the additional requirements of SB191, I am not sure how we will continue to operate effectively.

**K.B., Rocky Ford:** If we fail to properly fund education now, we will pay a much higher price later in dealing with citizens who are not prepared to enter the work force. As Colorado has increased the stress and workload of our teachers, I have personally watched many excellent teachers leave teaching to pursue other careers. Their reasoning is: if I am going to work this hard under this much pressure, I deserve to earn more money. By funding education properly, Colorado can retain it's brightest and hardest-working teachers, which is the absolute key to providing a good education for our students.

**B.G., Rocky Ford:** Teachers will always strive to give students the best education possible, but lack of funds keeps them from providing optimum lessons, especially in areas of technology.

**J.H., Rocky Ford:** Please use the extra tax dollars to help fund education. You can only cut education budgets so much before you start to kill education.

**N.W., Rocky Ford:** We are already experiencing challenges within our small, rural school district. With equality in funding, we would be in a position to recruit, hire and retain highly qualified teachers and staff.

**C.S., Romeo:** Kids first. Let's support them, fund them, and allow teachers to teach them! Financial cuts surely impact education. Let's put education at the top of the totem pole as our number one priority.

**R.B., Roxborough:** Our district (Douglas County) is currently holding town hall meetings to determine how we will fund the population growth expected through 2040. It's simple, replenish the promised monies to students from previous cuts, use the Marijuana tax dollars we voted for use in infrastructure and there will be property taxes that will pay for it as well. In addition take that TABOR surplus and invest in the future of all our children in CO. Public Education Matters - fund it.



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**C.D., Saguache:** We are a very small school district and state funds are crucial to keep our school running. Our administration works hard to appropriate funds for curriculum and classroom supplies and our teachers give 100% every day. We have had no raises, bonuses, or extras for our classrooms. We take much out of our own pockets to provide students with anything our budget doesn't provide. Now we are faced with combining classrooms and cutting staff because. Teaching is an amazing job, but with budget cuts coming so often, we are losing great teachers to layoffs and other professions. I love my job and my students and I want to prepare them for their future. Thank you.

**K.H., Saguache:** Salaries are well below other industries and it's very hard to hire qualified staff to educate our children. We are at our bare bones with cuts. We no longer have business, home ec or industrial arts classes. And we have a very limited art, music and PE program. These will be our next cuts. It's not about cutting classes, it's about cutting entire programs.

**A.J., Saguache:** As a teacher, parent, and alumni in the district in which I work, it is imperative to provide the money necessary to continue to have a functional education system within a small, rural community. Funding a quality education system is what is best for children and, ultimately, what is best for our nation.

**J.J., Saguache:** I teach middle school Health, Social Studies and PE. The textbooks in my 8th grade class are 16 years old and I use duct tape to keep them together. Our school can't afford to buy the textbooks that accompany the internet curriculum for 6th and 7th grade Social Studies.

**L.L., Saguache:** We are working on a shoestring budget in our very small, rural school. Elementary grades have been combined; we have 1.5 teachers each for secondary English and social studies, 1 teacher for secondary science and 0.91 teacher for secondary math. By secondary, I mean ALL classes 6-12. Yes, we have a PE teacher, a limited music teacher, and an art teacher all shared by the entire pre-K-12 system. We are unable to thoroughly cover the basics of any discipline let alone meet individual students' unique needs. If we take another cut on faculty, we will lose more students; this is an unending spiral until our legislators CHOOSE to fund public education in the state of Colorado, rather than choose to fund assessment in the state of Colorado. Please note that our involvement with the federal lunch program that limits the amount of caloric intake and food provided to children in an effort to teach them healthy eating habits is also hurting our students. Many of our students have limited food provided at home over the weekend because our district is so poor; this problem is magnified by the fact that we are on a 4-day week. Yes, our children are provided limited caloric intake meals at school 4 days a week and then spend the weekend on few calories or junk food calories (parents can't or won't buy healthy). How can we choose to send our children home hungry? When will this state put children first? My experience in teaching for over 31 years is the problem is getting worse, not better, for our children. Hopefully you will see that the time is NOW for putting our children, not our state coffers first. PLEASE HELP!

**B.C., San Luis:** Over the past 6 years our district has cut almost every elective program from our students. We are trying every way possible to add these valuable programs back for our students, but with the increased demands of SB191 and other unfunded mandates, it has been impossible. Please help us educate our students by providing the funding that is required (Amendment 23) before you give money back (TABOR).

**J.C., Sanford:** Without state funding, our CTE programs will struggle to help our students become prepared for their careers. Please do not cut our funding.

**H.C., Sanford:** I am a Kindergarten teacher. I have taught for 7 years now. When I first started we were able to provide our students with the things they needed. We had sufficient funds to provide a fun and safe environment that helped students learn and grow. Now I feel we cannot provide them with those educational practices because we are required to test them often. With prices going up on just about EVERYTHING and the

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fact that funds are being taken away and more and more pressure has been put on us to make students test well, we cannot provide the things students need to learn. I have put in so much of my own money, that I feel it has hurt me in the end. We need the money put back into education. It would save so many students from making wrong choices.

**C.G., Sanford:** The more we cut education, the more we'll spend on prisons. Our children have to be taught the responsibility that goes along with having a good education. I can't believe that anybody could consider cutting education!

**S.L., Sanford:** Please don't cut education, These kids are our future and need all the help and support they can get through exceptional teachers and improvements made in their behalf.

**S.M., Sanford:** Education is my livelihood!

**J.M., Sanford:** I went into teaching because I believe it makes a difference in the world. Why are we cutting funds for schools when we NEED education?

**K.N., Sanford:** Public education is extremely important in rearing educated, hardworking individuals. Public schools are often the very best places for students to be as they are taught, fed, and cared for throughout the day. These cuts to public education will devastate the U.S. economy in the long run as children become less educated due to poor public education funding and adults (teachers) are put out of work and no longer able to contribute to the U.S. economy.

**L.S., Sanford:** The students are the ones who are suffering from the cuts. Our buildings are in bad need of repair. Our ceiling leaks, and we don't have money to buy the materials the kids need to reach their potential.

**B.R., Santa Fe:** I was a teacher in the Huerfano RE-1 School District for 22 years. I know, first hand, what the kids, teachers, and schools lacked. Get rid of this travesty of legislation and do what's right for the children.

**S.W., Simla:** Amendment 23 is just as important as Tabor. Please help constituents understand it.

**N.H., South Fork:** Imagine a place where teachers and students had all the necessary materials and equipment for learning and teachers could help students reach their potential. In the past decade of teaching, I have been asked to do more with less. Schools are asked to reach higher standards, meet growing social needs and participate in more testing with fewer teachers and less funds and students are paying the price. I love Colorado, but I am embarrassed to be ranked at the bottom of the nation for educational funding.

**P.M., Spring Hill:** I support a grandson and work in public education and I am supposed to make it HOW???

**K.S., Springfield:** I'm not comfortable throwing money at things. However, money does provide for basic goods and services. Our needs are going unanswered and increasingly beyond our reach. The so-called "Negative Factor" is a debt we owe children and their parents. Dr. Kirk Salmela, Principal, Springfield HS, Springfield, Colo.

**M.A., Steamboat Springs:** I think it is appalling that we are one of the lowest funded states in our country and continue to fall behind in everything. There is nothing to dispute - all the evidence is very clear about how important early childhood education is. I am talking about social experiences, oral language, being read to, etc. However, Colorado continues to spend money on testing including testing for KINDERGARTENERS (TS Gold/Early Childhood Readiness) but doesn't mandate full day Kindergarten or pay for it!!! How does this make any sense to ANYONE? We are a joke and something needs to change!

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**B.H., Steamboat Springs:** I work at a school and it is very apparent that currently the students who need the academic support of full day Kindergarten cannot afford it. It is discrimination at its worst...the "haves vs. the have nots." It is disgraceful.

**S.S., Sterling:** Small rural school districts have made serious cuts that affect students and educational programs because of the negative factor. Some are dipping into small reserves just to survive. We must preserve small school districts. Schools need full funding and support. The money will make a bigger impact for schools and students than the small amount of refund!

**L.Z., Superior:** Our school had to cut back on our librarian, health room nurse, literacy aid, and TAG advisor. Our classrooms have 32 students and one teacher with no paras, which does not allow for differentiation. Whether related to identifying those with learning disabilities and/or those who require more challenge in curriculum, the students' needs are not being met.

**M.A., Thornton:** The Brighton district is growing and now we have kids forced to deal with split schedules. For working parents this is difficult. Teachers are underpaid and kids are paying the price with more crowded classrooms.

**K.B., Thornton:** Apparently the general public does not realize that their taxes make a difference in educating all of our children. The outcry whenever tax raises are suggested shows a disregard for the needs of our schools. Let's see if we can break the TABOR amendment and use these funds to improve education.

**W.C., Thornton:** Over the last 5 years, employees in education (ALL employees, not just teachers) have been asked to do more with less. Programs and jobs have been eliminated. People are doing the work of 2 or 3 people. ONE example from our district is that librarians were SIGNIFICANTLY reduced. This has had a HUGE impact on our students. The economy has improved, so why hasn't funding for education? Our state is one of the lowest per pupil funding. WHY? It is time to find a solution. WE NEED FUNDING!!!! Thank you!

**J.D., Thornton:** Please put the money in education. Dollars have been cut, why are we giving a surplus back when our students need this?

**S.F., Thornton:** Please reserve these funds for education. To refund a check to taxpayers for \$20 will likely cost more than \$20. Thank you.

**J.G., Thornton:** Our schools are overcrowded and will be going to year round school if something isn't done. We are considering trying to get our kids into a different school district if something doesn't change. Keep the money for what it is meant for.

**M.H., Thornton:** School budget cuts have significantly affected the ability of my children's school to provide the instructional support needed for them to achieve the state mandated curriculum. I believe that more funding needs to be provided so that children are able to experience success in the classroom, participate in extra-curricular activities, and benefit from experienced/retained teachers.

**E.J., Thornton:** In our district we haven't passed a construction bond or mill levy in eight years! My daughters' elementary school is only half built. Because of overcrowding and lack of funding to build more schools, middle and high schools will be adding extra hours to their day. High schools will be in split schedule schooling and elementary schools will be on year-round scheduling. This is a nightmare for students, parents, and teachers- especially if you have children in different grade levels. Please don't turn your back on the future of Colorado - give back to our schools!!

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**S.L., Thornton:** Our school has a number of students who have been identified as having Autism. Although they are academically strong, they struggle with many social and emotional issues. We do not have the the staff to support and teach them to cope with life's challenges. Therefore, they are deprived of achieving their fullest potential.

**P.M., Thornton:** I'm a National Board Certified teacher. In the 20 years I've been in the profession, early childhood experiences have nearly disappeared from the majority of young children's life experience before entering compulsory education. Today many children begin school unprepared and gravely behind in normal development and enter programs that are less about play and experience and more about academics. In the perfect storm of raising the standards with children who are even less prepared for school, our schools are struggling to provide the interventions and support to catch children up and raise student achievement. This is a no brainer. Invest in our future. Invest in Colorado's children without raising taxes.

**C.N., Thornton:** My kids are in one of the poorest districts in the state and it needs all the help it can get. It is so short-sighted that educational funding is based on property taxes and guarantees an unequal and unfair system. Poor areas get poor schools, and it is not fair.

**M.P., Thornton:** Our school bond did not pass last year. We are now turning to year-round scheduling and track scheduling to accommodate the growth in our district. Our elementary school is three-years-old, and has grown from 250 to 400 students, with no end in sight. It seems that all of the money that is available for our district, our city, and our state, is being used for other things instead of educating our youth.

**M.R., Thornton:** Please fund education!

**D.R., Thornton:** Two years ago my daughter's Chemistry class had 40 kids jam-packed into it. There were so many the teacher said "we can't light a Bunsen burner in labs this year because it would not be safe with this many students." It now costs \$27,000 per year for a kid to attend CU. It's out of reach for most middle class families. If our society does not take care to maintain an educated populace, how can we expect voters to to have the intellectual tools to make sound choices at the ballot box?

**B.S., Thornton:** We are already facing a huge overcrowding issue in Brighton 27J. They continue to build houses in the area, but are not backing that up with more schools. How can you continue to cram in people and not increase school capacity? More cuts would be detrimental to our kids.

**N.S., Thornton:** Education is the salvation of society!

**L.Z., Thornton:** I taught Kindergarten for 27 years in a variety of ways...half-day kindergarten, extended-day Kindergarten, and full-day Kindergarten. I also testified several years ago to expand and protect full-day Kindergarten at the state capital. I think it is about time we fund our Kindergarten programs. I would also like to see us expand preschool opportunities for all.

**A.C., Vail:** I am a preschool teacher in Eagle County and I'm struggling with speaking to parents who are worried about affording kindergarten next year. More funding for early childhood education these past 2 years through the Colorado Preschool Program was very welcome. We are making headway in preparing more children for kindergarten. Please don't allow all this hard work to stop because their families cannot afford full day kindergarten!

**M.K., Vail:** I have seen a lack of counseling for students and a loss of foreign language instruction. Our children need the special skills that it will take to be to be competitive with the rest of the country and world.

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**L.K., Vail:** Our school was raising money to keep our technologies teacher....come on!! We have had friends move out of the state because of Colorado's school system. That's embarrassing...we can do better Colorado!

**S.L., Vail:** Colorado ranks near the bottom in funding education. We can't prepare our children to compete successfully without adequately funded education. Let's not compromise our children's future here!

**Q.M., Vail:** I am a teacher in our public school system and have experienced firsthand the destruction of education because of budget cuts. Our teachers and students struggle because of lack of resources. Larger classroom sizes and fewer resources only leads to lack of effective instruction. I find it frustrating that our legislature finds education so unimportant that they are willing to take away funds that support our future leaders and workers.

**L.M., Vail:** I have been a fourth grade teacher at Red Sandstone Elementary School in Vail for eight years. I have seen firsthand how budget cuts have affected our children. A few years ago, our school was threatened with closure as an option to balance a slashed budget. Teacher salaries have been stagnant (until this year), which makes it difficult to keep quality teachers in the classroom. This is especially true in a resort community such as Vail.

**G.M., Vail:** Children are the future of our state and states which spend the most on education are the most economically successful. So keep your eyes on the ball and the FUTURE. More money for schools.

**A.M., Vail:** I have two children, one in high school and one in grade school. I see the teachers at both schools stretched beyond their means and not able to truly fill the position they set out to, due to cuts and not enough staffing/supplies for the schools. We fundraised last year for our library at our elementary school. I would be ok with doing this to help and enhance the system, however we are doing it to maintain staffing. The schools need help in all levels. Eagle County has had to cut its budget severely. This cannot continue.

**L.M.P., Vail:** Our first grade teacher has a class of 25 children. Six of them read only three or four sight words. Half are reading at grade level and the rest significantly above grade level. She cannot instruct all the groups alone and desperately needs a trained assistant as volunteer parents like me simply aren't qualified to fill the gaps.

**M.O., Vail:** Due to cuts, our elementary school lost our technology and library teachers. Our school community has fundraised to put these positions back but they are not held by qualified teachers. Now with the expectation of 3rd -5th graders having to use a computer to write essays and complete the P.A.R.C.C. test, it seems ridiculous that the state would not refund money to our schools.

**J.W., Vail:** I believe children have a right to music and arts. I was a music teacher for years and saw first hand the positive effects of the Arts on children.

**S.S.D., Victor:** Please support our children and help ensure that they will be contributing adults in the future!

**J.P., Villa Grove:** These are great schools that need more educational funds, not less. These are the places where a good education is needed too. DO NOT SHORTCUT our future, our kids.

**N.B., Westminster:** When schools were closed in Jeffco in 2012, my son's kindergarten class had 31 kids and one teacher. We only had one part-time assistant (TA) and some dedicated parents. Even the veteran teacher of 20+ years was overwhelmed. Things have improved, but due to so many cuts a lot of vital classes and programs were cut and we need to restore many of these. Where would we be if we didn't learn to blow off

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steam in music, drama, art class and recess? All classes are important learning and coping tools in today's world. No more cuts!

**L.C., Westminster:** In 2015-16, we will have fifth-grade students who have never known their school life without larger class sizes and less resources. My older daughter is one of those fifth grade students. Her younger sister will start kindergarten in a class potentially as large as 29 children. I know there's talk of potential cuts by 2017, and yet we have not restored the cuts that were made for the 2010-11 year. The idea that my children could begin school with less than what previous students received and then face cuts of even that meager amount so people can have an extra \$20 this year is pennywise and pound foolish. These students are our future economy, our future health care workers, policymakers, and engineers--provided we restore funding and stop this unnecessary downward spiral.

**D.F., Westminster:** My teaching position was cut! First year teacher. Last in first out.

**B.G., Westminster:** Look around! What do other states invest in the education of their children? Come on Colorado, it's time to open your eyes and act. OF COURSE we need to keep the money for our schools! Mr. Hickenlooper, please spend one day teaching in an over-crowded classroom, then decide how you would like to guide tax-payers.

**S.G., Westminster:** Both of my children attend Adams 50 Mesa Elementary in Westminster. Most of the children that attend are on free or reduced lunch. What the teachers are doing with limited resources is amazing. I want the district to keep those amazing educators and continue to allow our children to soar. This is going to take resources our community just doesn't have. With additional funds, the state can show that it believes in quality education for everyone and it believes in our children.

**C.H., Westminster:** I live and volunteer in a district where free and reduced lunch recipients are 70 - 80% of the enrollment. There are so many students needing intervention that it's difficult to provide sufficient resources for the highly motivated students. The motivated students tend to leave the district which is a detriment to our schools, other students, and the community. These kids can motivate each other and serve as role models. Good schools attract families and businesses. Schools continue to be asked to do more with less funding every year. The world continues to become more technologically-based and that translates to considerable resources to keep pace with real-world tools. No longer is a blackboard and chalk sufficient to educate our children. Invest in our future.

**J.K., Westminster:** These cuts are hurting our kids' futures. When resources are reduced and the number of kids per class are increased like is happening every kid gets shortchanged. At most jobs people just look for ways to do more with less - which normally means less attention to detail and corners get cut. In some jobs this doesn't have much of an impact. But when it happens in education every kid is cheated and their future is negatively affected. As a voter I will be paying attention to how people vote on this, and talking with other parents. Please don't cheat an entire generation of kids - This is America, we need to value our kids' education.

**M.M., Westminster:** As promised, the revenues need to be used for education.

**J.M., Westminster:** I have two children with special needs. Services for both have not met my expectations as a parent and taxpayer.

**F.M., Westminster:** Our parents and grandparents addressed the need for a globally competitive society by finding and paying the best and brightest to become educators. They addressed the greatest threat to our security by locating the best mathematicians and scientists and beat the Russians to the moon. They addressed the greatest threat to their children's health and well being by funding research into cures for polio, TB,

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measles, mumps and other crippling childhood maladies. They provided a safe, stable and prosperous economy by ensuring quality education for everyone. We can no longer afford the luxury of letting other states fund THEIR schools on the hope that some those students from other states will immigrate to Colorado. Importing talent and education in that manner puts every Colorado kid steps behind in the race of a lifetime; the race for a quality education, a quality life and a quality state.

**S.N., Westminster:** Would love some of legalization of marijuana money to be spread to the schools sooner rather than later!

**C.O., Westminster:** Please, for the love of all that is sacred and holy, KEEP THE SURPLUS!! Colorado kids have been ROBBED for years because of TABOR and it's only going to get worse. Taxpayers can't afford to take the surplus- the cost of our kids' education is too great!

**E.P.F., Westminster:** I see six classes a day in my art room. Classroom teachers drop them off for a much needed "planning period." The size of classes has gone up tremendously in the past few years. I've seen classes of 36 sixth graders and 25 kindergarteners. It's wearing out our teachers, but most importantly, it's not fair to the kids. It's making it so we can't give as much attention to our students individually. As my classes get larger, my time with each class stays the same.

**K.S., Westminster:** Colorado needs to start putting an emphasis on education. Stop cutting funding to schools and start providing for those too young to vote. I support free all day kindergarten.

**A.T., Westminster:** Schools need the funds way more than I do.

**Z.V., Westminster:** I'm a teacher and know that my parents would rather a better school than an extra few dollars that they'd have to spend on school programs to keep them from being cut.

**K.V., Westminster:** As a principal in a Jeffco charter school, I have had to make extremely difficult decisions stemming wholly from lost funding due to the Negative Factor. While I understand the legislature's need to trim across the board during the recession, it's now time to eliminate the Negative Factor and return to the funding formula approved by the voters with Amendment 23. With the state's financial picture in a healthy state, and the meager per household refunds, it's unconscionable that the state would not return the surplus to K-12 education, which bore the brunt of recession-era cuts. Please. Keep the surplus for K-12 education. The youngest citizens of our state are depending on you to make the ethical choice and invest in their future by taking concrete steps to fill the hole created through the Negative Factor over the past several years.

**C.W., Westminster:** I'm a teacher and a parent. I taught for many years in another state. It sickens me that we live in a state that has made little progress in improving the lives of our children. Colorado needs to work harder in closing the gaps between the privileged and underprivileged. We also need to show more support to our teachers. None of this will happen if we continue to underfund our schools!!!

**B.C., Wheat Ridge:** The schools and their kids need the 20 bucks. Have a heart, folks.

**T.F., Wheat Ridge:** Counseling services get limited first, because support services are the "first to go". Consequently, we have seen a surge in mental health needs, yet cuts to education continue to be made. Do we really need another Arapahoe, Columbine, or Aurora? Start paying back the debt to our children, we owe it to them, and to their mental health.

**J.L., Wheat Ridge:** As an educator, I can see so many needs not met. It's time to support an upgrade in our educational systems.

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**L.O., Wheat Ridge:** High quality education for our students is one of the most important challenges we face. Colorado schools are poorly funded compared to most other states. Therefore, please use the surplus tax money to help eliminate the K-12 debt incurred when over \$1 billion was cut from education in this state.

**C.W., Wheat Ridge:** Please fund our schools. This our future!

**W.N., Windsor:** My district has cut our services to the quick and we can cut no further. The one-time money last year was very helpful to remain close to current funding levels, but doesn't help us regain services we've lost over the course of many tight budget years. Colorado children need your help to compete in our rough economy! Please consider the children as you think about refunds. Haven't they sacrificed enough?

**S.H., Woodrow:** Colorado needs to return the negative factor to schools. The base pay makes it hard to recruit quality teachers. Costs are increasing, yet the state wants to cut schools even more. Our music program was eliminated and physical education was cut from full-time to 3/4 time. Increases in food costs are making it difficult to support the National School Lunch Program with general fund dollars.

**K.S., Woodrow:** We need forward thinking legislators who will take action for the state of Colorado - to fund education at the levels we had six years ago.

**D.V., Woodrow:** I am on the school board and know first hand the choices that were made on educating kids. We've had to go to part-time teachers and combine jobs just to keep the bare minimum staff. Almost every teacher wears two or three hats. Thank God our community sees the detrimental effects that Tabor, Gallagher, and the reinterpretation of Amendment 23 has done by creating the negative factor. We have survived because of mill levy overrides. This November, we have to AGAIN ask our community to put a bandage on a wound.