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For additional information, please contact:

**Jeremy Janes (AARP Wisconsin) at 608/286-6308**

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# **NEW AARP POLL SHOWS COLORADANS READY TO DUMP TABOR**

Colorado voters are ready to repeal TABOR, the so-called Taxpayers Bill of Rights that was approved as an amendment to the state constitution twelve years ago.

That's the key finding in a new poll released by AARP Colorado, based on telephone contacts in late November with 1,001 Colorado residents who reported they are registered to vote and are likely to vote in the 2006 Colorado elections. The survey explored their opinions about the Colorado state budget, ways to generate money for state services, and changing or repealing TABOR.

TABOR has had wide-ranging, profound fiscal effects for Colorado that could not have been foreseen. Most Coloradans were not aware of most of TABOR's provisions and believed they were voting primarily on taxpayers' right to vote on any tax increases. While this is indeed one part of the amendment, TABOR's scope and complexity have largely contributed to Colorado's current fiscal problems.

"Colorado's horrible experience with TABOR spells out in detail why voters and legislators in Wisconsin should reject it," said AARP Wisconsin's Gail Sumi. "AARP has consistently opposed any effort to make fiscal policy part of the state constitution, but that's exactly what TABOR does. Surely we don't need to recreate Colorado's TABOR ordeal in order to learn the same painful lessons here."

Because TABOR is embedded in Colorado's state constitution, government has no option but to cut services in times of funding shortfalls. Services that have suffered in Colorado include education at all levels, parks, services to the elderly and disabled, and transportation. Efforts to restore depleted services, however, face almost insurmountable obstacles under TABOR.

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Among the findings by the AARP poll in Colorado:

- More than half (55%) of likely Colorado voters support repealing TABOR outright.
- More than three-quarters (76%) of likely voters in Colorado say that it is important that TABOR be changed to allow funding for state services to be restored when economic growth gets back on track.
- About seven in ten (72%) likely Colorado voters support changing TABOR to allow funding for state services that were cut during periods of recession to be restored to previous levels when the economy improves.
- More than four in five likely Colorado voters believe it is important to restore funding for services that allow the elderly and disabled to stay in their own homes (89%), services for the mentally ill (86%), and higher education (83%).

The survey, which was conducted for AARP by Alan Newman Research, Inc., has a margin of error of +3/-3.

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