

# 2023 Special Session Newsletter

## November 27<sup>th</sup>



### Coloradans Did Not Want Proposition HH, but the Colorado General Assembly Did Not Listen And Passed Prop HH 2.0 Bills During the Special Session...



Coloradans had a short-lived victory after this year's election day when Proposition HH was soundly defeated by a 60% to 40% vote. The voters of Colorado made their voices clear that they did not want their TABOR refunds touched or messed with. However, neither Governor Polis nor the Democrat State Legislatures seemed to care about what the people of Colorado wanted when they passed multiple bills out of this recent Extraordinary Session that either affect TABOR refunds or had nothing to do with the property tax crisis we find our state in.

Now I do want to make something clear, Republicans are not blaming Polis for calling for this Special Session; in fact, we had asked the Governor to call for a Special Session twice before November 7<sup>th</sup> so that way we could properly address the rising costs of property taxes before the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. What Republicans, like myself, are upset over is the lack of communication from our Democrat colleagues who decided that not everyone was needed at the table when discussing proposed bills to address property taxes. In fact, not even the voice or will of the Colorado people was listened to by Democrats, as Democrat leadership went ahead with bills that would touch TABOR refunds and should be referred to as Prop HH 2.0... Both Senate Bill 23B-001 "2023 Property Tax Relief" and Senate Bill 23B-003 "Identical TABOR Refund" will affect TABOR dollars, something the Colorado voters did NOT want to happen.

- SB23B-001 will use TABOR funds to reduce property tax and reimburse (or backfill) local governments. If this is not déjà vu of Proposition HH, I don't know what is.
- SB23-B-003 flattens the TABOR refund checks so that way every Colorado taxpayer will receive the same amount next year in their TABOR refund checks (also referred to as Colorado Cash Back). Why should family business owners and property owners who paid more in taxes receive the same as someone who paid less?

If I have learned anything from this Special Session, it is that party politics seems to have a stronger hold on some of my colleagues than the will and best interest of their constituents.

### Republican's Property Tax Force: No Agreement Was Reached

Earlier this year, I was the proud Senate Sponsor on Senate Bill 23-305 "Property Tax Task Force" with Representative Rose Pugliese. Unfortunately, the Governor's office told me that there were far too many local government representations in this bill and he would kill it in the House. So I moved to Postpone Indefinitely my own bill in committee, as I put far too much work into this bill to allow the Governor to kill it.

Moving forward, we had the chance to re-look at this idea of a Property Tax Task Force during this Special Session with the introduction of House Bill 23B-1003. I worked with the Democrat sponsors on this bill and tried to make it bipartisan. Unfortunately, they wouldn't take the labor person off as a voting member, which normally wouldn't be an issue; however, the teachers' union has made it very clear (with the resolution earlier this year) that they denounced capitalism. My question for you is this: if you don't believe in capitalism, how will you pay your bills? Not only that, but the teachers' union controls the Democrat party and will have them vote anyway they choose. Besides, what does a teachers' union have to do with property tax in terms of how it's allocated and how it's budgeted?

There was too much progressive language that had nothing to do with a solution to the repealed Gallagher amendment in this new bill that I couldn't get behind. I tried to come to the table and work with the bill sponsors, we just couldn't find common ground. HB23B-1003 is nothing more than a highly altered version of SB23-305, that doesn't even focus on the proper people at the table. It was vital that we get folks who actually have local government experience, not labor experience, a seat at the table in figuring out property tax relief. Sadly, we could not get to an agreement on the commission for property taxes. Partisanship got us in this mess, and it is going to keep us in this mess.

### Senator Byron H. Pelton State Senate District 1



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#### Stay Connected:

[SenatorBPelton@gmail.com](mailto:SenatorBPelton@gmail.com)

Office: (303) 866-6360

Cell: (970) 571-0608

Mail: 200 E. Colfax Ave Room 346  
Denver, CO 80203

Facebook: [State Senator Byron H. Pelton](#)

Twitter: [@commish\\_pelton](#)

I Hope You Had a Happy  
Thanksgiving & Wish You A  
Merry Christmas!