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Taboo

Kansas should heed the vote in Colorado on that state's so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). Unofficial election returns on Wednesday showed Colorado voters suspended their destructive TABOR to protect, among other programs, higher education, transportation and health care.

Over the next five years, according to terms of the referendum, the state will retain an estimated \$3.7 billion, rather than issue tax refunds. A second proposal will allow the state to borrow up to \$2.1 billion for school maintenance, roads, pensions and other purposes.

This election shows the folly of arbitrary restrictions on the decision-making authority of legislators and the executive branch, particularly in times of changing economic conditions. Colorado's TABOR prevented the state from adapting to a recession, thus jeopardizing needed state services and programs.

Anti-tax zealots are at work in Kansas attempting to put our state in the same straitjacket that forced a crisis in Colorado.

The Kansas Board of Regents, a governor-appointed body that governs public higher education in Kansas, understands the destructive impact of TABOR. In recent days the regents adopted a resolution that opposes efforts to impose limits, either through the Kansas Constitution or by law, on tax revenue or state spending.

Other enlightened groups and individuals in Kansas are speaking out against TABOR's threat to the traditional democratic process of governing. We elect governors and the Legislature to make decisions, based on our state's economic conditions and the will of the people to advance the public interest.

Kansans should not be fooled by the promise of lower taxes and smaller government. As Colorado found, TABOR-directed policies can be devastating.