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Take-Aways from the 2017 Special Session
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Was the two-day Legislative Special Session a waste of taxpayer's money and legislator's time? Some think so; I think not.

Why? Because Colorado citizens had a chance to see, up-close and personal and in 48 hours, what happens each year during the 120 days of the regular legislative session. They were able to observe the raiding of their public coffers, the proclivities of their elected representatives, and the rashness of their Governor.

Special interest groups. For definition, these are the groups that live off of taxpayer money – collected from the many and distributed by the few. Like a spigot from a cistern, those entities that drink from the hose, care neither who fills nor how the reservoir is filled, just that their water keeps flowing and no one touches their valves.

The entire General Assembly was called back into action because two large public entities (RTD and SCFD) had their valves touched. How much? In RTD's case the midnight multi-subject HB17-267 bill caused them a flow reduction of .0048 beginning three months ago. Yes, that's right, less than ½ of 1%. Any private sector company with annual revenues of \$1.257B would have kept moving right along and become \$6M more efficient. But that was not the point. It was the principle of the issue: no one touches their money flow regardless of the amount.

The taxpayers' Take-Away was the realization that every day, the State of Colorado's budget of \$28B, has special interests descend upon it to keep the spigots open for their unquenchable thirst so that no amount of tax revenue will ever satisfy their "needs."

The Legislators: The voters and constituents observed the clear and classic debate on the distribution of taxpayer funds by their elected representatives. Some argued that in the passing of a multi-subject bill, there will always be winners and losers, intended or

unintended. (That's why Colorado's Constitution strictly prohibits bills that are not single subject.)

Voters also observed the other argument that the sky will fall if any program is cut by even .0048. "People will lose jobs", "the homeless will not be able to travel", "kids will not be able to visit their grandmothers", and "people working three jobs will not be able to get to work."

Yes, the voters needed to see that it is completely anathema for a politician to cut a budget.

So impossible is a tax cut that it must be "immediately fixed", it was "a mistake", "a glitch", "inadvertent", an "accident." The Take-Away the taxpayers got was how important the Taxpayers Bill of Rights is to protect their coffers from politicians that would never restrain themselves but for the Constitution – and even then they will chip away at it.

The Governor: Colorado residents observed that their Governor tried to solve a legislative problem by relying on his lawyers and their opinions rather than have conversations with elected representatives about their oaths to uphold the Constitution. It was clear that had he met with almost any Republican legislator (save one House member), he would have learned about their commitment to Article X, Section 20: *"Districts must have voter approval in advance for...any new tax, tax rate increase...or a tax policy change directly causing a net tax revenue gain to any district."*

He should have known the outcome and therefore never have called the Session.

The Take-Away for Colorado citizens was that they saw the Governor bully legislators and test their resolve. The media gladly jumped in to help foster *ad hominem* attacks from other legislators and heap pressure to chip away at the only safeguard the taxpayers have on their spigots.

So thanks, Governor, for giving Coloradans a quick glimpse into the importance of restraining government with a strong Constitution and the constant vigilance of legislative fiscal responsibility.

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