

To Chairman and Members of the State, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee:

Re: HB 19-1108 Nonresident Electors in Special Districts

This is a letter in support of the above Bill to be introduced by Representative Larry Liston. I find it fitting as a 27-year veteran to be writing to a committee such as yours. After I retired from the Air Force, my wife and I became longtime residents and property owners, both full time and part-time, in Cuchara, Colorado. We lived there full time for the first eight years and since then as part-time property owners and taxpayers for the last 22.

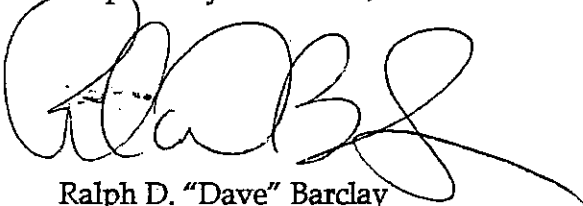
While a full-time resident of Cuchara, I was on the Cucharas Sanitation & Water District (CS & WD) Board of Directors (BOD) from 1998 thru 2005. I served as the Board Chairman or President for the last four, having to resign when for family reasons we moved out of state. Now as a part-time resident of Cuchara, I continue to maintain strong ties to the community. During the five months I am there, I regularly attend the monthly CS & WD meetings, and last summer I was a primary participant on a committee to improve long-overdue commercial water and sewer rates.

In the past, poorly informed and essentially unqualified Board members of the CS & WD have ignored the concerns of the non-resident majority. The way the system is now, directors in the only governmental entity in Cuchara decide critical issues, while not answerable to 66 % of the taxpaying residents. In the past this has had the potential to impact commercial and residential customers in a negative financial manner. It was truly "Taxation without Representation!" I believe that HB 19-1108 would give these customers a say in their local affairs and some recourse if needed.

Citizens would have to be proactive by requesting a ballot, and the Special Districts can still control this process by voting to opt-in to the measure. Also, since Districts can manage their own elections, county clerks won't necessarily have any unfunded mandates imposed on them.

This initiative is strongly desired by many part-time and taxpaying residents of Cuchara. Several states, such as Arizona, California, Nebraska and New Mexico now allow non-resident voting by taxpayers in certain special district elections. Their ability to allow out of state property owners to vote in special district elections is time proven and works well. Colorado should be able to follow suit.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Barclay', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ralph D. "Dave" Barclay