

## Broomfield Taxpayer Matters



**RE: SB26-135 – Senate Finance Committee**

**Hearing Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 @ UA**

Thank you, Chair Kipp, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Thank you for considering this written testimony. My name is Sheryl Fernandez, and I represent Broomfield Taxpayer Matters, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to educate, empower, and advocate for the taxpayers across Colorado – NOT just in Broomfield.

**Broomfield Taxpayer Matters are in OPPOSITION to SB26-135.**

Colorado voters adopted TABOR for a very simple reason: to ensure that when government collects more money than it is allowed to spend, that surplus is returned to the taxpayers who earned it; and over the past several years, this body has worked hard to completely dismantle the taxpayers' voice. Senate Bill 26-135 asks voters to weaken that protection by allowing the state to keep revenue that would otherwise be refunded – AGAIN!

Supporters say this measure funds education “without raising taxes.” But from a taxpayer’s perspective, **keeping money that should have been refunded functions very much like a tax increase.** Instead of returning excess revenue to families struggling with rising housing costs, and higher energy bills - the state would keep that money and **spend it.**

Another concern is transparency and scope. The bill promotes a 2 percent increase for K-12 education, which many people may support. Remember how Amendment 64 (legalization of marijuana was going to be our K-12 funding unicorn – which has yet to become that money rainbow). But the bill also allows the state to retain excess TABOR revenue in an amount tied to state education funding, which could be significantly larger than the guaranteed increase going to schools. After the required school payments are made, **the remaining retained revenue can be used for other government spending.** That means voters could be approving a much broader expansion of state spending authority than the ballot language may suggest.

TABOR refunds belong to taxpayers. They help working families pay for groceries, rent, childcare, and utilities. For many Coloradans, those refunds are not trivial—they are meaningful relief in a high-cost state.

If the legislature believes education funding should increase, the honest approach is to prioritize it within the existing budget or ask voters directly for a clearly defined tax measure. But asking voters to permanently weaken TABOR refund protections while presenting it as “not raising taxes” risks undermining trust.

Colorado already spends billions on education each year. The question before us is not whether education matters—it absolutely does. The question is whether the state should keep money that TABOR says belongs to taxpayers.

For those reasons, BTM respectfully urge the committee to vote no on Senate Bill 26-135. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please encourage the Senate finance committee to vote yes for SB26-135 in favor of better funding public schools.

Susan Gorrell

Brighton, CO 80601

"Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration" Thomas Edison

**TO: SENATE COMMITTEE FINANCE**

**RE: SB26-135 State Public K-12 Education Funding**

**SPONSORS:** SENATE SPONSORSHIP Bridges and Kipp, Amabile, Benavidez, Coleman, Cutter, Danielson, Daugherty, Exum, Gonzales J., Hinrichsen, Jodeh, Kolker, Lindstedt, Marchman, Mullica, Rodriguez, Snyder, Sullivan, Weissman HOUSE SPONSORSHIP Bacon and Lukens, Boesenecker, Camacho, Carter, Duran, Goldstein, Hamrick, Joseph, Lieder, Lindsay, Martinez, McCormick, Nguyen, Paschal, Phillips, Rydin, Smith, Stewart R., Titone, Velasco, Willford

**FROM: Jody M Nickerson 3/12/2026**

**VOTE: NO**

**Thank you committee chair and members for the opportunity to speak on this bill.**

**It took my brain some time to wrap around understanding this bill. As some of you know I do speak on many of the bills here at the Capitol. Can you imagine the constituents that are not as familiar who would need to vote on this? Transparency on layman's terms is not prevalent in this bill.**

**1.**

**“If this proposal is truly good for taxpayers, it shouldn't require taking away our refunds to make it work.”**

**2.**

**“Education deserves honest funding debates, not a policy that quietly redirects taxpayer refunds into permanent government spending.”**

**3.**

**“Colorado voters created TABOR to control government growth, and this bill asks us to slowly step around that protection.” There is no voter friendly transparency in this bill.**

**4.**

**“When government keeps surplus revenue instead of returning it, that's not a refund anymore — that's a tax increase by another name.” We need transparency.**

**5.**

**“The real question today isn't whether we support education — it's whether we respect the taxpayers who fund it.”**

**“Strong schools and strong taxpayer protections should go together — this bill weakens one to fund the other.”**

**PLEASE VOTE NO ON THIS BILL.**

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**PLEASE VOTE NO ON THIS BILL.**