

State is California-bound if C and D are approved

I want to preach to you today about the evils of becoming Californianized. It shows a lack of moral fiber. It is fun at first, but has serious consequences down the road. And down that road we will surely go if Referenda C and D pass.

The parallels between Colorado and California are astonishing. They read like something out of a "Twilight Zone" script. Try to read these facts without hearing that irritating theme music:

1) California enacted a tough spending limit measure, the Gann Limit. About 10 years later, Colorado enacted TABOR.

2) For years, Gann helped keep California's budget in check, and returned billions of dollars to California taxpayers. For years, TABOR helped keep Colorado's budget in check, and returned billions of dollars to Colorado taxpayers. Both states experienced strong economic growth during that time.

3) A decade or so after Gann, the California education lobby put everything it had into Proposition 98, mandating increased spending on K-12 education. It passed. Other measures that increased spending soon followed.

4) A decade or so after TABOR, the Colorado education lobby put everything it had into passing Amendment 23, mandating increased spending on K-12 education. It passed. Other measures that increase spending are following.

5) California's state budget became a bloated testament to fiscal irresponsibility. Expenditures increased 48 percent during the three years of Gov. Gray Davis' term, leading to his eventual recall. California legislators and special interest groups are now screaming that there is nowhere to cut, that essential services will have to disappear, and that the state is in the midst of a terrible financial crisis that only a "reasonable compromise" can solve. By "reasonable," they mean increasing spending and raising taxes less than they'd like to. Cutting taxes and cutting spending to match are simply beyond the realm of possibility.

That is exactly where Colorado will be if C and D are approved.

I think I understand why people might support C and D. Most of us, when it comes down to it, want to do the right thing on Election Day. We want to be public-spirited, we want to participate in something bigger than ourselves, and we want to feel that our



OPINION
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vote will make the world a better place.

I think that's the motivation behind the pro-C and D signs, urging us to "Move Colorado Forward." As if those of us opposed wanted Colorado to go backward, or at best to stand still like a car stuck in a ditch. Well, it ain't so.

Some of us have the temerity to believe that progress, in any meaningful sense, is best achieved by letting people keep more of what they earn and letting them, not their elected officials, decide what should

be done with it. You may not agree with that philosophy, and I'm not so naïve to think I can convince you in the space I have left. But we deserve better than implications that we are greedy, mean-spirited and ignorant. On the contrary, I think we're thoughtful, well-informed and practical.

Spending begets more spending and prevents any sort of substantive discussion about what government is for. Medicaid is a spending mandate masquerading as a federal/state "partnership", one drastically in need of reform but currently off the table. Amendment 23 was a spending mandate that has now moved K-12 spending out of bounds as well. Both have led to a "crisis" to which the "only" solution is a multi-billion-dollar transfer of wealth from the private sector to the public one.

C and D advocates sound like the police inspector in "Casablanca." They're shocked, absolutely shocked to find us in such a state. Opponents of C and D are not.

We want a vigorous debate on what government is for.

We want the Legislature and the governor to make hard decisions about what is more important and what is less important.

We want corporate welfare, subsidies to the upper class, and yes even the middle class ended so more people can take responsibility for their own lives. There are plenty of examples of all three in the state budget, none of which will be touched if C and D pass.

Finally, we want continued economic growth. That's absolutely vital for all Coloradans, especially the ones at the bottom of the ladder. That's why progressive voters should vote no on C&D.

Or else, California, here we come.

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