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TABOR – BAD LEGISLATION IN ANY FORM

(MADISON, April 12, 2004) The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities is opposed to the “Taxpayers Bill of Rights,” better known as TABOR. Similar legislation has passed in other states and has devastated public services for people with disabilities. The Council is very concerned that TABOR will have the same effect in Wisconsin should it become law.

TABOR proposes to amend the state constitution. In order to do that, it must pass two consecutive legislative sessions and then pass a statewide referendum.

TABOR will significantly alter the way state government raises and spends public money. TABOR would limit state spending each year at current levels, with an increase only up to the rate of inflation. State spending would in effect be capped and could be increased only by a statewide referendum.

The Council is opposed to TABOR for the following reasons:

- Fiscal restrictions have no place in the State Constitution. It is the responsibility of the state legislature and the Governor to make hard fiscal decisions.
- TABOR needs a complete and comprehensive public debate prior to action by the legislature. The final language of TABOR has not been made public; however, news reports state it could pass very quickly once it is introduced. It is believed the legislature will introduce and pass TABOR during the two-day session starting April 27.
- Exemptions to revenue and spending caps for one public service reduce the amount of funding available for other public services. If public safety services such as police and fire are exempted under TABOR, education and health care will experience additional cuts because of the overall cap in growth of public services.

"This is bad legislation and it should be defeated," said Gerry Born, chairperson of the Council. "Other states where this has passed wish they could repeal it now. Wisconsin should not make the same mistake."

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