

## Talking Points Opposing the Taxpayer Protection Amendment (TPA) or “Son of TABOR”

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### General Points (all local governments and groups):

- Complex fiscal policy should not be managed by constitutional formula.
- A constitutional formula constrains or prevents authentic tax reform.
- A constitutional amendment is a “one size fits all” approach that constrains or prevents prioritization among all state and local investments.
- A constitutional amendment should be the subject of thorough analysis and open statewide debate including significant public hearings.
- Local decision making is flexible and responsive to community needs and is respected by citizens. It should not be threatened by simplistic constitutional formulas.
- Legislators should make tough choices concerning state deficits rather than abdicating responsibility through a formula running fiscal policy on “autopilot.”

### Specific WTCS Points:

- The state has made choices that have shifted the burden of funding technical colleges from state support to property tax funding. At the same time, state choices have shifted property tax burdens from all property to residential property. The TPA not only does not fix such inequities, it would make addressing them more difficult or impossible.
- Investing in the WTCS creates a huge return on investment that helps grow the state out of economic challenges.
- The very high marks the WTCS receives from employers and WTCS learners who overwhelmingly stay and work in Wisconsin can't be separated from the local flexibility, responsiveness and local control that would be devastated by the TPA.
- Technical colleges are strongly valued and supported by their communities. Nine of ten citizens say they believe that technical colleges are a good investment for their tax dollars. While taxpayers naturally support limiting taxes, most do not support amending the constitution to limit taxes if doing so would reduce technical college enrollment, programs, or local control (according to the 2004 Wisconsin Trends poll).
- Costs driving WTCS costs such as energy, technology and health insurance, increase more rapidly than the general consumer “marketbasket” of costs reflected in the CPI.
- CPI and population are formula factors that do not relate to the drivers for WTCS enrollment and services. Factors driving WTCS enrollment, training services to dislocated workers, and cost increases are often countercyclical to economic change (downward economic trends = greater demand on WTCS).
- A formula does not adjust for or allow for responsiveness as other factors such as demographics or unemployment rates change in a district.
- Formulas limiting debt beyond current controls/accountability will devastate colleges' ability to keep up with the essential equipment and technology business and industry expect colleges to use to produce competent workers.