

FAST FACTS

Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

ED3/110.10/No. 139

February 4, 1998

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“De-Brucing” Colorado Public Library Income & Expenditures



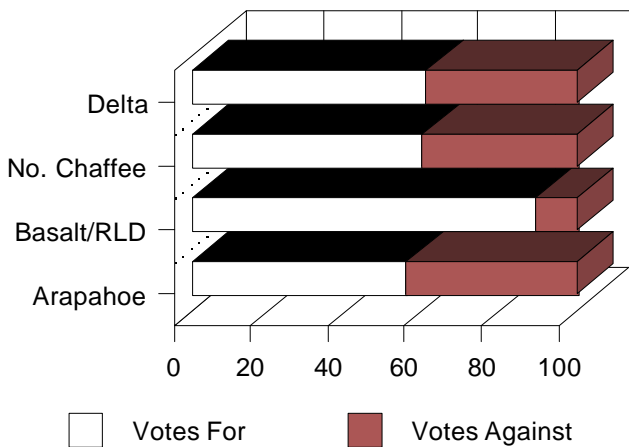
Since passage of Amendment 1, the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR) amendment, many public library districts and county libraries with dedicated mill levies have taken steps to exempt their income and expenditures from the restrictions imposed by that measure. In order to respond to many requests for data about this phenomenon, the Library Research Service surveyed all such libraries to learn what steps, if any, of this sort they have taken. Surveys were sent to 56 libraries in the state. Of the 43 surveys returned, 19 have taken no “de-Brucing” action since enactment of the TABOR amendment. Of the remaining 23 -- **20 libraries reported a “win”** at the ballot box between 1995 and 1997! Some of these had mixed results. For instance, Pine River LD reported a loss when requesting a mill levy increase, while receiving a “yes” from voters in its request to keep and spend all income indefinitely.

Keep and Spend All Income

Libraries throughout the state placed a variety of measures on the ballot in 1995, 1996 and 1997. The measures ranged from asking voters to allow libraries to keep and spend all income indefinitely; to keep mill levy income indefinitely; to raise the library’s mill levy rate and keep and spend income; or to raise the library’s mill levy rate and be subject to TABOR limitations.

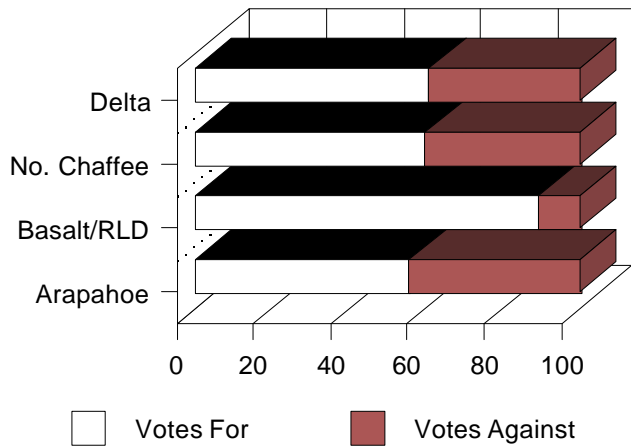
Charts 1 and 2 show how voters responded to ballots petitioning for libraries to keep and spend all income indefinitely in 1995 and 1996. The percentage of voters in favor of de-Brucing rose from 58 percent in 1995 to 66 percent in 1996. Of the 15 libraries requesting to keep and spend income indefinitely, 14 were victorious in their elections! The only library district to lose this measure was Hinsdale, which ultimately won an increase in the mill levy rate.

Chart 2: Library De-Brucing Votes
(Keep & Spend All Income ∞) 1996



Of the 15 libraries requesting to keep and spend income indefinitely, 14 were victorious in their elections! The only library district to lose this measure was Hinsdale, which ultimately won an increase in the mill levy rate.

Chart 2: Library De-Brucing Votes
(Keep & Spend All Income ∞) 1996



Raise Mill Levy Rate and Keep and Spend All Income

Requests to raise mill levy rates and to keep and spend income were less popular with the voters. Table 1 summarizes results for this type of measure for all libraries reporting:

Table 1: Votes to Raise Mill Levy Rates and Keep and Spend All Income

	For	Against
1995	41%	59%
1996	62%	38%
1997	46%	53%

Even though the numbers may not sound promising, the important consequence of these ballot initiatives is **eight libraries won mill levy increases while five lost** between 1995 and 1997. Table 2 lists the winners and their mill levy gains. How can the statewide average vote be adverse when a majority of libraries on the ballot ultimately won? The

"The lesson of the so-called Tax Payer Bill of Rights is very plain. Voters are not fools. Nor are they blindly anti-government. Before they agree to pay a new tax, they simply want to know what they will get, and what it will cost. That's perfectly reasonable -- and for libraries, it's effective."

James LaRue
Douglas Public Library District

answer is because those that won, won by relatively small margins (e.g., 10 percentage points) while some that lost, lost by much wider margins (e.g., almost 35 percentage points).

Table 2: Mill Levy Rates Before and After De-Brucing

Library	Before	After	Percent Increase
Delta	1.500	3.000	100%
Douglas	2.602	4.000	54%
Hinsdale	1.250	1.750	40%
Meeker	1.609	2.150	34%
Mesa	2.730	3.000	27%
Pueblo	3.500	5.250	50%
Rangely	0.327	0.500	53%
San Miguel R2J	2.978	3.478	50%

Table 3: De-Bruced Libraries 1995-1997

Library	Keep All Income	Mill Levy Raised and Keep Income	Year(s) Passed
Arapahoe LD	X		1995
Basalt RLD	X		1995
No. Chaffee/Buena Vista	X		1995
Conejos CO	X		1996
Delta CO	X	X	95 & 97
Dolores PL/Montezuma	X		1997
Douglas PLD		X	1996
East Routt LD	X		1997
Grand CO LD	X		1996
Hinsdale CO LD		X	1997
Kiowa CO PLD	X		1997
Meeker RLD		X	1997
Mesa CO PLD	X	X	1997
Pine River LD/Bayfield	X		1997
Pueblo LD		X	1995
Rangely RL	X	X	1996
San Miguel R2J/Norwood	X	X	1996
San Miguel/Telluride	X		1997
Southern Peaks PL/Alamosa	X		1997

Other winning ballot actions:

- Arapahoe LD also won the measure to keep and spend \$2.4 million in funds from an increased mill levy to generate the amount.
- No. Chaffee/Buena Vista's ballot measure also passed to raise their mill levy rate and be subject to TABOR limitations.
- Eagle Valley won their 1997 ballot to keep and spend mill levy income indefinitely.
- East Routt will keep and spend all 1996 excess revenues (\$7,494).
- Mesa will also keep and spend non-federal grant money.
- San Miguel/Telluride passed a property tax issue for a new library building.