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STATEMENT OF IRIS LAV, SENIOR ADVISOR, ON DEFEAT OF "TABOR" INITIATIVES IN MAINE AND WASHINGTON

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Yesterday's votes in Maine and Washington show clearly that TABOR's crippling and arbitrary spending limits remain unpopular around the country. Anti-government groups have made serious efforts to enact TABORs in 20 states since 2004 — and they have failed every time. While these groups will likely target other states in 2010, there is little reason to believe they will have more success.

By rejecting TABOR, officially Question 4 in Maine and I-1033 in Washington, voters have helped these states preserve needed public services and improve the business climate. Colorado, the only state ever to adopt TABOR, suffered a serious deterioration in education, health care, and other services due to its rigid spending limits. That's why a broad coalition of residents — including business leaders — came together to suspend it in 2005.

As states emerge from the current economic and budget crisis, they will need the flexibility to make much-needed investments in education, health, roads and bridges, and other areas that have been starved for funding during the crisis. If adopted in any state in 2010 or 2011, TABOR would prevent the state from making those investments, and leave it without the skilled workforce and solid infrastructure needed to prosper over the long term. Fortunately, voters across the country will likely continue to reject the TABOR straightjacket.

The bottom line is that it's never a good time to adopt TABOR.

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