

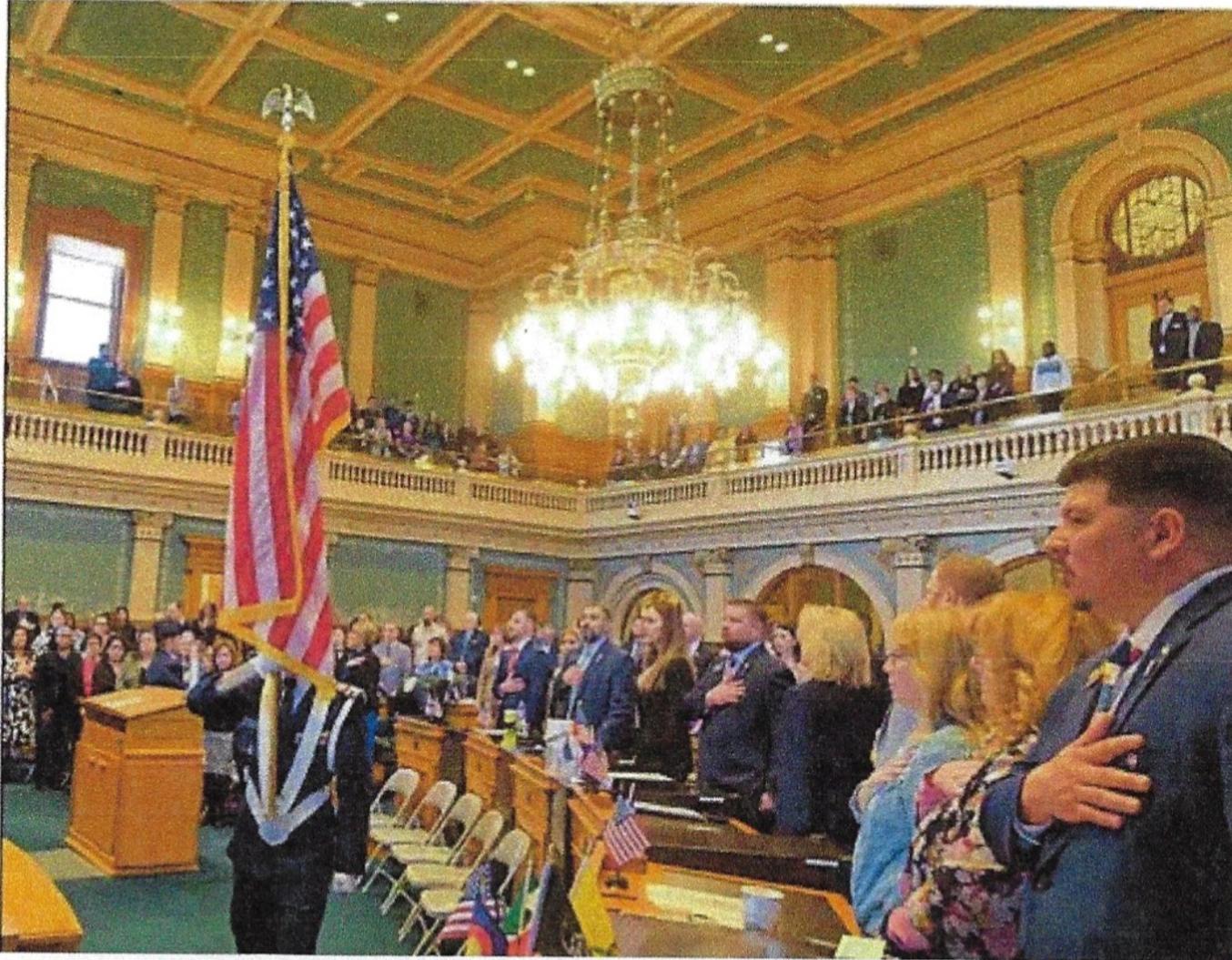
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# Our Democrat-led legislature ignores fiscal reality

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The Denver Gazette · 12 Feb 2026 · B5 · Carrie Geitner represents District 2 on the El Paso County Board of Commissioners.

The failures of our state has led it to pass the costs of its decisions down to counties — forcing local governments to absorb unfunded mandates that cut into our own local priorities. Ultimately, this only hurts our residents.



Note

News reports on recent testimony before the legislature's Joint Budget Committee revealed how Colorado's expenditure of billions in one-time federal funds has directly contributed to today's state budget shortfall. According to the JBC, a series of decisions made since 2021 has steadily built a structural deficit that is now coming due.

Note

One-time federal funds were knowingly used to launch ongoing programs and initiatives, with the hope that future revenues or another federal bailout would keep them afloat. As reported, "The JBC estimates the legislature was spending \$829 million more than the ongoing available revenue."

Predictably, Democrats were quick to reach for their favorite scapegoat: TABOR. But a closer look at the analysis tells a different story — one of purposeful overspending and a willingness to defer the consequences rather than confront fiscal reality.

Note

While the governor and legislature were rolling out programs they could not sustain, the El Paso County Board of Commissioners took a markedly different approach.

We understood that one-time money means exactly that — one time.

That clarity forced difficult choices, but it also protected our county's longterm financial health.

We never contemplated creating permanent programs with one-time federal dollars.

Note - the take away! (1)

We did not add new staff that we could not sustain. Many approached us with ideas of how to spend money. In many cases, we simply said no. We made decisions with a clear-eyed understanding that ignoring fiscal limits today would only guarantee deeper budget pain tomorrow.

That's a stark contrast to the Democrat-led legislature's refusal to accept reality. Look no further than this quote from Boulder's Sen. Julie Amabile in one news report:

"Yes, (the program) have ongoing costs, she said, but "I think that was really well spent money." The Democrat-led legislature does not want to be constrained by reality.

There will always be more "good things" for politicians to spend money on. We face this as families every day. It would be wonderful if mom and dad could afford to send Johnny to a fantastic learning camp this summer, or maintain our home with a fresh coat of paint. Money well spent indeed!

But when you don't have that money the fact remains that you must live within your budget or risk failing to provide the basics because you didn't prioritize.

The failures of our state has led it to pass the costs of its decisions down to counties — forcing local governments to absorb unfunded mandates that cut into our own local priorities. Ultimately, this only hurts our residents.

There is no possible way to avoid the need for fiscal responsibility. It requires stalwart leadership in the face of ideas that may or may not have merit.

I am grateful for the discipline, commitment, and example the El Paso Board of County Commissioners sets for good government, particularly as we witness the consequences to our state and even other local governments who failed taxpayers by rejecting fiscal reality.

At this writing, the House is expected to pass the SAVE (Safeguard American Voter Eligibility) America Act, after which it will move to the Senate.

The challenge will be in the Senate, where at least seven Democrats are needed to join 53 Republicans to reach the 60 needed to pass the filibuster plateau.

Should this bill be passed and signed into law? Absolutely.

The core premise of this bill is beyond any question or dispute — that anyone voting in a federal election must be a U.S. citizen and provide documentation to prove it.

In a 2025 Pew Research survey, 83% said they favored requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote. The Republican-Democrat breakdown was 95%/71% in favor.

Options for documentation proving citizenship required when registering to vote include a REAL ID-compliant ID showing citizenship, a passport, military ID, a government-issued photo ID showing place of birth in the U.S., other forms of government-issued photo ID, if they are accompanied by a birth certificate, comparable document or naturalization certificate.

Those registering by mail must present proof of citizenship in person. Picture ID will be required when voting.

Complaints about the bill are that there are those who do not possess any of these options for proving citizenship.

The bill provides other means by which states may establish processes for certifying individuals who have none of the above documentation.

The idea that there are U.S. citizens that will not be able to produce any means for proving or establishing his or her citizenship is absurd.

Might they have to expend some effort, spend a little money to get what they need? Maybe. But isn't the point that freedom is not free? *Note*

We have individuals who have left their homes abroad and crossed continents to arrive to our country. That it is impossible for an American to come up with an acceptable means for proving their citizenship, in order to vote, is something only the most

The principle of the SAVE America Act is that voting as an American is a special and great privilege and responsibility. The only discrimination in this legislation is against those that do not see being an American, living free as an American and voting in our elections as a privilege and responsibility. welfare-driven mindset, that sees people as feckless victims — which unfortunately so characterizes today's Democratic Party — could conceive. *lacking initiative or strength of character, very*

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called the bill “an abomination, Jim Crow 2.0” and assured that Democrats will “do everything we can to stop it.”

Racist Jim Crow voting laws — poll taxes, impossible literacy tests, grandfather clauses, property requirements — were designed as barriers to vote. The principles driving these laws were racism and discrimination.

The principle of the SAVE America Act is that voting as an American is a special and great privilege and responsibility. The only discrimination in this legislation is against those that do not see being an American, living free as an American and voting in our elections as a privilege and responsibility. Unfortunately, we find too much of this pathology in the progressive mindset.

In a Gallup poll last year, only 58% of those surveyed said they were extremely/very proud to be an American — an all-time low.

However, among Republicans 92% said they were extremely/very proud. Among Democrats it was only 36%. *Note*

We might note that progressives, that are most inclined to use the power of government to spend our money, are also those least inclined to take personal responsibility as citizens.

Current federal spending stands at around 23% of GDP. In the 1930s it was around 10%.

So political control of our GDP has increased some 130% since the 1930s. Responsibility of voters, politicization of our economy through federal spending, has increased dramatically.

For sure there should be an equally dramatic increase in voter personal responsibility as citizens.

We Americans like to talk about rights. But the other side of the same coin is responsibility.

The SAVE America Act could just as well be called the Responsible Citizenship Act.

Let's hope this important legislation is passed and signed into law.

