

\$117 million for preschool and kindergarten programs after a district court ruling on state property taxes.

ll Ritter should quickly l the Denver District e decision that declared e unconstitutional. e chief executive and e's Joint Budget Com- d draft a Plan B to cover d preschool and full-day p programs the freeze e to pay for — just in e high court upholds the

e the Supreme Court will vor is unwise.

idge Christina Habas said hich generated more lion this year for school indirectly to the state, Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. Saturday he is so confi-

reme Court will reverse ill that he's assuming ill remain in place as he ning next year's budget. olitical landscape is lit- e bones of politicians t they could predict high

s. nfidence rests in part on Habas was appointed by blican Gov. Bill Owens. e Court has just two Re- tices — Nathan Coats Eid — and five Demo- Justice Mary Mularkey, bbs, Alex Martinez, ader and Nancy Rice.

fair to the court to as- liberations are a simple d count. Rice and Hobbs, e, are centrists who have e decisions that dis- ocrats.

For that matter, Habas' ruling re- flects no hint of partisan bias. She specifically rejected the argument of Republican Attorney General John Suthers that such a freeze required a statewide vote. But she went on to find, among other things, that the re- quired pro and con statements that accompanied the 175 local school dis- trict "de-Brucing" elections that Rit- ter cites to justify the freeze were in- sufficient "to justify an increase in property taxes."

The high court will undoubtedly re- view it. But even if Ritter appeals next week, as he has said he will, it's unlikely the court could resolve the case before it begins its summer re- cess July 1. The court won't return until September.

Since the state fiscal year starts July 1, it's possible the high court might strike down the freeze in the fall, after the new preschool and kin- dergarten programs have begun.

Since the property taxes affected by the freeze are for calendar year 2008 and won't be paid until 2009, an adverse ruling by the court would still allow mill levies to be reduced next January to avoid collecting the \$117 million. But by then, as much as half of that \$117 million would have been spent, forcing the state to juggle reserve funds or tap the state edu- cation fund to maintain the pro- grams.

We wish Ritter good luck on the ap- peal, but we would rest easier know- ing there's a backup plan in place to keep the kindergartens and pre- schools open even if the high court sides with Judge Habas.

A payment to gay and transgender groups

Re: "Anti-bias measure inked," May 30 news story.

The Post notes that Gov. Bill Rit- ter "quietly" signed Senate Bill 200. This is an example of how bills are signed into existence with little fan- fare to avoid upsetting the public.

We've also been told the bill will have little effect since no "right-minded" person would want to enter a facility, whether bath- room or business, where they weren't wanted. The problem isn't the usual right-minded person but the occasional "left-minded" per- son who will take advantage of a situation to further his/her agenda.

This bill is no more than a small

down payment to gay, lesbian, bi- sexual and transgender coalitions for the massive amounts of money given to achieve the leftist Colo- rado legislature that now exists. As- surely more payments will come.

I have no problem with those who wish to live those lifestyles. That's their business and this is presumably a free country. But it does seem strange that so many should be inconvenienced by so few when common sense and de- cency would suggest leaving well enough alone rather than using law to impose values on those who be- lieve differently.

G.H. Thompson, Thornton

The big lie behind politician-controlled medicine

Re: "Who has your health at heart?" May 22 guest commentary.

AFL-CIO executives John Sweeney and Mike Cerbo perpetu- ate the big lie behind politi- cian-controlled medicine: that the free market is not working and that costs have been spiraling out of control because of markets.

But costs have been increasing precisely because of the employ- er-based insurance they espouse, which is a consequence of a biased and non-free-market tax code. It fa- vors employer-based insurance and penalizes other types of medi- cal insurance.

We consume medical care like a business traveler dining on the com- pany's expense account: Since some- one else pays the bill (insurers), pa- tients need not shop around, so pro-

viders don't compete on price. Why?

Tax-discounted insurance en- courages us to buy more costly in- surance than we probably need, hence penalizing saving for future medical expenses. Our "insurance" has become prepaid health care.

Employer-based insurance also coddles insurance companies, which have little incentive to please consumers. They know we're essentially locked to our em- ployer and the costly insurance plans they offer. To buy a competi- tor's product, we must change jobs or pay a stiff tax penalty.

The AFL-CIO should be ashamed of promoting self-serving policies that both empower labor unions and result in expensive medical care and insurance.

Brian T. Schwartz, Boulder

and hoping this tax increase would slip by the general public.

I support tax revenue for our public schools as long as there is accountability. Next time, let's do it legally within the terms of our state constitution.

Bill Christopher, Westminster

Spread the word about humane cow treatment

Re: "Beyond content, these cows are pampered," May 27 business story.

I was delighted to read about Kirk Christie's cows, which have waterbeds and television, and about other dairy farms also treat- ing cows humanely.

However, I recently traveled around New Mexico and saw the most shocking conditions for cows there. Hundreds of animals are packed so tightly into the outdoor pens that they cannot lie down, and they are standing in their own excrement with not a blade of grass or tree in sight.

Temple Grandin, a professor at Colorado State University, has done such remarkable work bring- ing humane treatment to livestock. I wish she could enlighten the dairy farmers of New Mexico also.

Ellen F. Miles, Aurora

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