**Bad time for this proposition**

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Who wants to stand against proper funding for Colorado's public schools?

Not us. But we do have concerns about the effect and the unfortunate timing of

Proposition 103.

Proposition 103, the brainchild of state Sen. Rollie Heath, would raise state income and sales taxes for *fwe* years, beginning in 2012, to raise an estimated

$3 billion dedicated to Colorado's schools.

A good cause, to be certain, but as with other ballot successes that have tied the hands of the Legislature, this would lock Colorado into a tax and funding box. It does not take into account any other state need for the next five years. The growing problem at the statehouse is that much spending is predetermined, leaving elected representatives little or no wiggle room for decisions, and this merely would exacerbate the problem.

Making budget decisions at the ballot box is a poor way to run a representative government. And Prop 103 is, as some have said, a Band-Aid approach to flawed fiscal policy. When the tax runs out in 2017, then what? Unless the Legislature takes charge-- and that means presenting referenda to disentangle competing amendments, then making difficult budget decisions-­ this five-year fix will not be enough. Yes, ultimately, that likely will mean a tax

increase, but it is preferable to deliberate the state's priorities in the Legislature than to have factions continually coming to voters.

Finally, this is a bad time to come to taxpayers for more money. Even if the effect is only a few hundred dollars a year, supporters of Prop 103 must acknowledge that a tax increase at this time can present a significant hardship on many of the state's residents.

Proposition 103 is a well-meaning idea. Our schools should be properly funded, but this is not the best way to do it.