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PRESS RELEASE

Date: 9/10/13

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This release is a joint release by all members of the Weld County Board of Commissioners.

51st STATE MOVEMENT OFFERS COLORADANS A PLATFORM AND A VOICE

WELD COUNTY, CO – Since June 2013, when the discussion of a 51st state initiative kicked into high-gear, public attention to the idea has grown to national levels, but few people outside of rural Colorado truly understand the frustration Coloradans are experiencing with regard to the state legislature and Colorado's Governor.



NBC Nightly News journalist, and one-time Colorado resident, Harry Smith interviewed Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer on the statehood initiative in late August.

When asked by residents why the Board is supportive of creating a new state, the answer is straightforward: For too long we have endured the arrogance and, yes, elitism of the state legislature and the Governor's Office. They mock us, they refuse to listen and they dismiss our concerns.

Governor Hickenlooper was recently quoted as saying, "...I see our responsibility to lean in and do a better job of listening." This is the same governor who, in response to 2013 firearms restrictions said, "This is an urban issue which is going to require some inconvenience from rural people. They're going to have to change their clip more often if they're shooting varmints." The same governor who said, "We have some of the same, you know, backwards thinking in the kind of rural Western areas you see in, you know, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico."

We will no longer sit silent while the Governor talks down to people he represents.

In a recent interview on The Mike Rosen Show, Governor Hickenlooper finally acknowledged, "There are enough people that feel that their views and opinions aren't being considered that I think that's a serious problem, and I take it very seriously. And you have my commitment that I will, you know, work especially hard this next session to try and make sure that we have a more balanced approach to all Colorado."

As a Board we ask, shouldn't the Governor have been ensuring a balanced approach all along? Shouldn't the Governor do more than 'try' in the future?

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As your Board of County Commissioners, we have been ridiculed for having the audacity to even suggest we pursue separating from the rest of Colorado. The fact is, the state many of us grew up in, the state we love, is slipping away into something many Colorado residents no longer recognize.

We do not believe it is a waste of time to go out into the community and provide an opportunity for residents to be heard. We do not think it is a waste of energy to discuss your concerns and listen to your frustrations. We do not think it is a waste of money to exercise one of our fundamental rights under the constitution – the right to vote. We do not think it is audacious to stand up to a government that has failed to live up to our expectations.

In the pursuit of liberty, we need to change our course of action – change the path we are on. We need to stand up for ourselves. It is time to send THE message: we will no longer be ignored.

Over the course of the next six weeks, this Board will release editorials explaining the frustration Coloradans are expressing to the state legislature and the governor. These editorials will also be posted to the Commissioners' section of the web site on www.weldgov.com.

The frustration is real, the topics are important, and the discussion is vital.

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