



# Our Property, Not Their Loot

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It's getting harder to hit innocent Coloradans over the head with civil forfeiture laws.

If you live in the Rocky Mountain State and the police want to grab some of your stuff on the basis of a suspicion (or a claimed suspicion) that you have committed a crime, you're better off today than you would have been a few weeks ago.

Colorado [has become](#) the second state of the union to entitle you to a lawyer if police are seizing your property.

The new [law](#) also requires “a conviction of the nonowner criminal defendant before the

noninnocent owner's property may be forfeited,” which is a little *nonclear* but means, if enforced properly, that authorities in the state will not be able to greedily grab your property on grounds of mere suspicion that you or some good buddy of yours has committed a crime.

One needs civil forfeiture laws to disrupt organized crime, say supporters. But *Reason's* C.J. Ciaramella [points out](#) how much evidence has piled up over the years showing how easily civil forfeiture can be abused. And how frequently it has in fact been abused. Undoubtedly, civil forfeiture laws have “created perverse profit incentives for police departments and lacked due process protections for innocent property owners.”

State by state — or in all states at once, if Congress can help in a way that survives judicial challenges — the incentives must be wiped out.

Due process for innocent people subject to the confiscations must be ensured.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.