



TNS Associates Urges Estate Plan Reviews During Awareness Week

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Thomas N. Scheffel & Associates, P.C., the law firm operating as TNS Associates, is encouraging individuals and families to review their wills, trusts, and beneficiary designations during National Estate Planning Awareness Week, October 19 through 25, 2026. The firm is directing particular attention to couples who moved to Colorado from community property states, following a state law change that took effect August 12, 2026.

According to the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils, National Estate Planning Awareness Week takes place during the third full week of October each year and was adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008 to help the public understand estate planning and its role in financial wellness. This year, the observance follows two changes affecting existing plans, one at the state level and one at the federal level.

The state change is House Bill 26-1189, which amends Colorado's Uniform Community Property Disposition at Death Act. According to the enacted bill text published by the Colorado General Assembly, the act now reaches real property located in Colorado that is traceable to, or was acquired with, community property

under the law of the state where either spouse was domiciled at the time, regardless of whether the person who died was domiciled in Colorado. The bill took effect August 12, 2026, 90 days after the General Assembly adjourned.

The Internal Revenue Service identifies nine community property states in Publication 555, revised December 2024, which are Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. The same publication explains that when a spouse dies, the full fair market value of community property, including the surviving spouse's half, generally becomes the basis of the entire property, provided at least half of the community interest is included in the deceased spouse's gross estate. TNS Associates said classification may affect both who inherits a Colorado home and the surviving spouse's later tax position, so couples who relocated from those states may benefit from documenting how their Colorado property was acquired.

The federal change took effect January 1, 2026. According to a July 9, 2025 analysis by the law firm Goodwin, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed July 4, 2025, set the federal estate and gift tax exclusion at \$15 million per individual, or \$30 million for married couples, for 2026, with inflation indexing beginning in 2027.

TNS Associates noted that a higher exemption does not update a beneficiary form, transfer a home into a trust, name a guardian for minor children, or appoint an agent under a power of attorney. The firm's estate planning attorneys review wills, trusts, powers of attorney, healthcare directives, beneficiary designations, and guardianship nominations. For clients who previously lived in a community property state, the firm said that review can also include tracing the source of funds used to purchase Colorado real estate.

"Most of the problems that surface after a death trace back to a plan that was sound when it was signed and then left alone," said Thomas N. Scheffel, Founder and President of TNS Associates. "A retirement account still names a former spouse, a trust was never funded with the house, or a couple who moved here from Arizona or California has no record of which assets were community property. Awareness Week is a practical reminder for families to take out their documents and confirm they still match the life they are living now."

Thomas N. Scheffel & Associates, P.C. was founded in 1983 and serves individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Its practice areas include estate planning, probate administration and litigation, elder law, tax law, family law, real estate law, and business law, among others. Scheffel is admitted to practice in Colorado and Wisconsin, as well as before the U.S. Tax Court.

More information about the firm's estate planning practice is available at [TNS Associates](#).

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TNS Associates P.C.

TNS Associates P.C. has been serving our clients since 1983. We would value the opportunity to speak with you regarding any legal questions you may have. We provide ?Legal Solutions You Can Trust.?

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