

# Ross launches his campaign on participation platform

By JACKIE KLEIN

Legislators in Lansing alone can't solve problems and state programs often fail without input from citizens who would use them.

That's the contention of Doug Ross, Democratic candidate for the 15th state senate district which includes Southfield, Lathrup Village, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Ross said he is organizing constituent advisory committees as an experiment to develop new techniques for citizens to communicate with public officials and to underscore needs and concerns.

The Senior Citizens Legislative Committee, sponsored by Ross's campaign committee, met last week in Farmington Hills. Members of the legislative committee, Ross said, represent a cross section of senior citizens in the 15th district and do not necessarily support his campaign.

"We need persons with experience and expertise to have a more direct say in decisions which affect many lives," Ross said. "The central problem is finding ways to make government solve problems efficiently and effectively."

"ONE REASON government programs frequently don't work is that



DOUG ROSS

legislators in Lansing lack adequate information. They have to rely either on their own best guess or on information provided by lobbyists who often represent very narrow interests.

"The only way for legislators to use their votes rationally on a vast range of issues is by figuring out ways to tap the tremendous expertise that exists back in their districts."

One purpose of citizens' legislative committees, which Ross maintains will involve about 500 persons, is to allow him, if elected, to take advantage

of the practical experience and knowledge of interested citizens in Oakland County, he said.

The other purpose, he said, is to give interested citizens a chance to have a hand in determining how legislators use their votes in areas of concern. Ross claims his plan will revolutionize the relationship between legislators and constituents.

Senior citizens at their first committee meeting determined their problems are almost identical, Ross said.

"One of the largest concerns," according to Don Smith of South Lyon, "is the problem of senior citizens living on fixed incomes in the face of rapidly rising rental costs. Maintenance payments for condominium units are increasing and yearly property assessments escalate faster than cost of living increases."

TRANSPORTATION is another problem which directly influences the lives of senior citizens, said Molly Warsh of Southfield. Many seniors have no access to cars and can no longer participate in simple, everyday activities because of inadequate public transit in Oakland County, she said.

Committee members expressed concern for better health care for senior citizens unable to care for themselves at home, Ross said.

"While we need higher standards for nursing homes, we should be looking

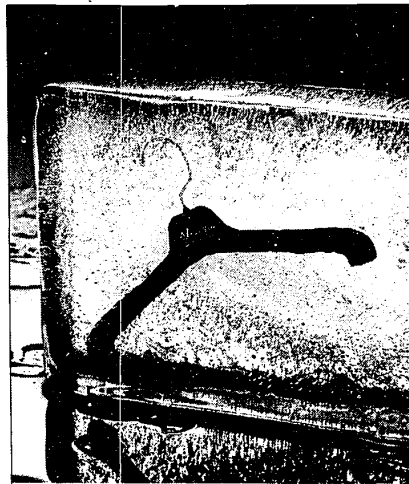
for ways to keep senior citizens out of them," said Rachel Howard of Milford. "Some possibilities are day care centers, a more extensive meals-on-wheels program and better visiting nursing and homemaker care."

It was suggested by Louba Lupilloff of Southfield that the committee should continue to examine these and other problems in open forums in the district to allow more seniors to be heard.

"Better government is a two way street," said Ross. "It's the responsibility of elected officials to let citizens know what's going on in Lansing that may affect their lives. It's up to citizens to let legislators know what they're thinking. That's the only way we can become sensitive to each others' needs and ideas."

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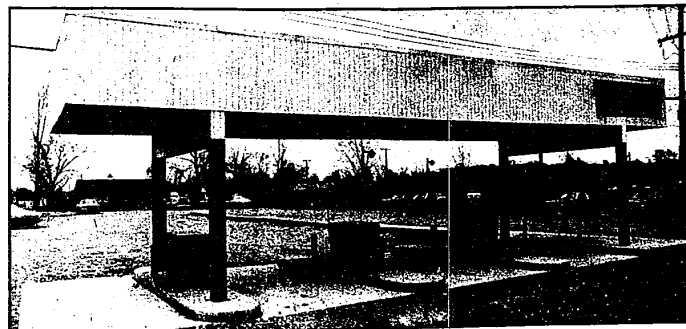
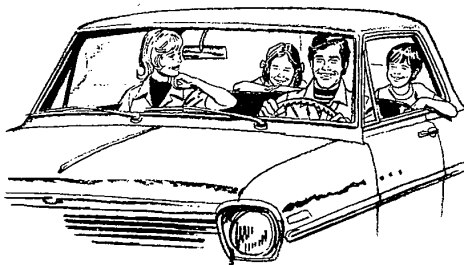
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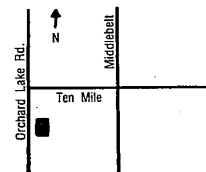


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