

# 15th district seat at stake

## Cooper, Ross square off in senate debate

By JACKIE KLEIN

Douglas Ross, Democratic contender for the 15th District state senate seat, claims he's already been in 5,000 homes during his campaign.

Incumbent Sen. Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park) maintains he's too busy working in Lansing to knock on 5,000 doors.

The differences in philosophy and personality of the aspirants surfaced last week during a candidate's night sponsored by the Southfield Democratic Club.

Cooper, majority floor leader of the senate, maintains he's disenchanted with bureaucracy which violates civil libertarian concepts.

Ross was critical of the "isolation" of the senate and the powerlessness of individuals. Voters, he claimed, aren't apathetic but concerned, angry and frustrated.

"Vital legislation is subject to controls," Cooper said. "Bills are torn apart, ripped, re-examined, reconstructed and improved and committees are formed to study social problems. But there are prior restraints on citizens who are told what they can't do."

"I'M THE arch enemy of Lansing

bureaucracy and the number one foe of parochialism. I fought against wire tapping and any invasion of privacy. I opposed the single business tax which is the greatest gimmick ever pulled on a community. I may be considered a maverick, but I stick to my principles."

Ross insisted ways must be found to bring people in the front door of government without kicking a hole in the wall "like they did in California."

"Traditional models don't work," Ross said. "Elections don't solve problems when legislators have no access to their experienced constituents who voted for them. Legislators in Lansing have to guess or rely on lobbyists with a narrow point of view when they decide certain issues."

Ross contended the senate is remote and insensitive and there is a demand for full time legislators. The candidate said he has formed citizen committees to help solve problems.

Asked about waste in government programs, Cooper said Gov. William Milliken is the "worst administrator" in the state and doesn't know what's going on in agencies abusing their spending powers.

"Part-time legislators hold the purse-strings and they have no time to evaluate programs," Ross said. "Under the proposed sunset law, programs would be created with a built-in expiration date and an evaluation process. If it's ineffective, the program should be eliminated. There's a

fragmented approach to solving problems."

THE SENATE, according to Ross, tries to rely on a network of personal relationships trading votes on bills. Bills, he claimed, are locked up before a legitimate debate is held.

"A coalition of citizens, organizations, political parties and the media must have the power outside of the senate," he maintained. "They can't barter with their constituents."

Cooper took exception to Ross's remarks in the first head-to-head clash of the evening.

"The senate is a hell of a good body," Cooper rebutted. "We're virile and we fight like hell. We're not

promised to replace the food and drug tax, but legislators breached faith. We need concrete priorities."

"I haven't traded a vote in the 14 years I've been a legislator. We don't have to be condemned with the mark of Nixon and blasted when we fall out of line. We were elected to do what's right and consult with our constituents."

Cooper and Ross both opposed the proposed tax limitation, but for different reasons.

"I can understand the peoples' frustration because the legislature has been fiscally irresponsible," Cooper said. "In 1977, a \$3 million tax was

"CAN WE cut out education, welfare and jail cells? A tax limit wouldn't support government priorities. We're better off with sunset and moratorium legislation so we can turn the water off before pollution sets in. We have to stop worrying about being popular."

Ross maintained a tax limit would have the effect of putting more pressure on property taxes. Ten years ago, he said, the state paid 60 per cent of education and it now pays 30 per cent.

"We're being assessed for housing ahead of our incomes," he said.

Frank Wright has been appointed director of national account sales for the Wolverine Moving and Storage Co., which has its headquarters in Livonia. A Farmington resident, Wright has been in transportation sales with railroad, airline and motor carriers in the Detroit market for 18 years. Wolverine is one of the top 20 agents worldwide for Allied Van Lines.

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