

Headlee thumps for tax ceiling

(Continued from page 1A)
 Editorial board to present an opposing viewpoint.

Although the MAB has not taken a public stand on the proposal, Loberherz likens much of the amendment to Proposition C, opposed by his organization in 1976 and defeated at the polls by 57 to 43 per cent of the voters.

Loberherz, like most opponents of the proposal, says an amendment doesn't guarantee fiscal responsibility, but it may handcuff legislative attempts at tax reform because it is "written in stone" as part of the constitution.

While Headlee says the amendment will only reduce the rate of growth of government expenditures, Loberherz warns it may reduce the amount of money going to basic services.

"One of my major concerns with the proposal is that it doesn't get at, in fact, it cannot get at those other outside forces outside of Michigan which have been causing and mandating many of the expenditures upon our state and local governments and will continue to do so."

"We have no control over them," he says. "We've taken this pie and we're giving ourselves a fixed amount of dollars within which to work."

'We always assume government is being run efficiently now. In the public sector, people always respond when a program is failing by asking for more money. They never respond by questioning leadership, creativity, theory, approach or objectives.'

-Richard Headlee, Chairman of Taxpayers United for Tax Limitation

"But it is impossible for us to put any limitation or any constraints upon the courts or the federal government. In essence this pie to continue existing services will be continually eroded as the courts and the federal government increase their mandates."

Loberherz contends the proposal, while well-intended, should start with the federal government.

"We're asking the state of Michigan to be guinea pigs, until enough states adopt similar proposals. When the states become so hamstringed and oppressed by federal mandates, then they can put pressure on Washington."

Headlee responds that the greatest growth in government spending has been at the state and local level.

"That's where we have to do the educational job," he says.

He also contends that sufficient fat in government exists now if additional federally or court-mandated programs were to be imposed on Michigan. "We always assume government is being run efficiently now. In the public sector people always respond when a program is failing by asking for more money. They never respond by questioning leadership creativity, theory, approach or objectives. We need good public policy and management."

OTHER CRITICS of the proposal contend that increases in government spending have come from increased demand for more and better services.

But Headlee says that demand has come primarily from vested interests.

The blame, he contends, lies with special interests: public mismanagement and legislators who aren't "fettered" with a fixed pie of funds.

"We need to bring sanity back. The blame is with the people. We have

allowed the legislators to be governed by special interests, lobbyists and government employee unions."

Others who oppose the amendment say sunset legislation now in the works and zero-based budgeting—which would force intensive review of virtually all state programs—is sufficient to limit spending.

Headlee is sharp with those critics. He calls their arguments rhetoric. "They will continue to be rhetoric until you define the economic pie," he says. "The state creates more problems than it solves when it expands laterally in the economic pie."

"No zero-base budgeting and no sunset theory is presently operating in the state. You must define the pie."

In a brochure against the proposal, the Metropolitan Association for Improved School Legislation warns that the amendment would be "a significant barrier to economic development in Michigan" because it would stifle use of a section of the Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development District Act that encourages industry to locate in Michigan through tax incentives.

Headlee responds that legal advice he has been given says that is not so. If it is, he says, "a simple statutory act" by the legislators could make the necessary changes.

In fact, Headlee charges, tax limitation would make Michigan more attractive for industry.

"The bottom line in a business is profits so you can stay in business. But the bottom line, the absolute bottom line in society is jobs. This amendment would bring more jobs here."



Robert Benyas was re-elected president of the Sholem Aleichem Institute of Farmington recently. Benyas, a West Bloomfield resident, is a national magazine photographer and vice-president of Benyas-Kaufman Photographers, Inc. The Sholem Aleichem Institute is dedicated to the propagation of Jewish culture in all forms developed by the Jewish people throughout history.

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