

County offers voters 'tax limit'

Taxes are THE issue in Election 78, but an Oakland County "tax limit" proposal hasn't been caught up in the ballyhoo.

A proposal calling for the establishment of a fixed, uniform, 16.46-mill county-wide millage will be on tomorrow's ballot. It also calls for abolition

of the tax allocation board, which many county officials consider an anachronism.

County officials say that the proposal actually looks like a tax increase. Taxpayers in many communities now pay 15 mills in county-wide taxes while others pay more than 16

mills.

Under the fixed millage plan, county officials say, a ceiling would be set at 16.46 mills. That millage would be apportioned as follows: 5.26 mills for county operations, 9.54 mills to the local school districts, 1.41 mills to townships, and .25 mill to the intermediate school districts.

The advantage of the plan, said Oakland County Budget Director James Brennan, is that it encourages local units of government—the county and townships, in particular—to be frugal.

Under the old system, he said, most local units feel forced to make complete use of their annual allocations. If they don't use all of it, Brennan said, they face the possibility of losing a portion of that allocation the next year.

Under the present system, he said, "somebody's savings become somebody else's bonus."

While the plan, officials say, would promote governmental efficiency, the tax revolt and mood of taxpayers across the state would be an additional incentive for governmental units to pass their savings back to the people.

The plan, while it has received very little publicity, has also apparently encountered little formal opposition.

It has the bipartisan support from the 27-member board of commissioners. County Executive Daniel T. Murphy also is backing the proposal.

Commissioner Lawrence Pernick (D-Southfield), chairman of the commissioner's Democratic caucus, said the proposition's biggest advantage is that "it would hold local units accountable."

Minor parties fight to make fall ballot

Minor political parties could be shut out of the November general election, say United States Labor Party leaders.

Only days before the statewide primary election, the U.S. Labor Party and other minor parties are trying to get out the vote. Their supporters won't be voting for candidates, though. They'll be trying to secure a spot on the general election ballot.

A 1976 state law, in effect for the first time this year, requires new political parties to obtain at least 0.3 percent of the total primary vote to qualify for a place on the November ballot.

According to released statements, U.S. Labor gubernatorial hopeful Peter A. Signorelli, a Plymouth native, and U.S. senatorial candidate Melvin P. Brown labeled the law "an attempt by that same immoral, ignorant coalition that has consistently fought against America's progress and progress for progress from appearing on the November ballot."

Not so, say state election officials and state legislators.

Back in 1976, according to published reports, there was the possibility of having too many parties for machine ballots. If there were more than nine

parties on the ballot, state officials said, voting machines would have to be abandoned.

The election process would then have to be shifted to paper ballots, which, officials said, would result in long waits at the polls.

According to a spokesman for State Sen. Patrick McCullough (D-Deerborn), who co-sponsored the bill, "The hope was that enough parties wouldn't make the grade" to force the change in voting procedures.

"The prospect of going over to paper ballots had everybody concerned," said Larry Tokarski, a McCullough aide.

THREE MINOR parties will be listed on tomorrow's ballot—the U.S. Labor Party, the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Labor Party.

A vote for one of those parties will lock the voting machine and the voter will not be able to vote for candidates in the two major parties.

According to 1976 election figures, the three minor parties would have to get at least 3,500 votes apiece to reserve a place for their state on the November ballot.

Last-minute ballots frazzle county clerk

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

As local city clerks struggle to correct ballots and voting machines for tomorrow's primary election, Oakland County Clerk Lynn D. Allen called upon the state legislature and the courts to establish ground rules to prevent last-minute ballot changes.

A court-ordered change last week forced local clerks across the county to correct more than 3,000 voting machines and alter 30,000 to 40,000 absentee ballots. The Michigan State Supreme Court last week ordered Oakland County Circuit Court Judge William J. Beer's name off the primary ballot.

"This has got to be the worst election in the history of elections in Michigan," Allen said.

In the past month, three persons have been ruled off the ballot, William Ottman, who was running for one of three newly-created circuit court seats, and Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen, who sought the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, were also cut from the ballot.

"I DON'T THINK the legislature

and the judges understand the problems the clerks face in preparing the ballot," Allen said.

"Printing the ballot is not just a matter of putting the names down once."

"We have more than 77 different forms of the ballot that must be printed, as well as a rotation of 14 on the judicial ballot and six on the partisan ballot," he said.

"We don't mind the changes," the county clerk said, "but we wish it would have happened a little earlier in the game."

ALLEN AND some staff members said the courts and legislature should set a deadline for persons to begin legal action to change the ballots.

"The legislature ought to set a cutoff date—say 30 days before the election," said one clerk's office employee.

"There have to be some deadlines so that the election can be run properly and on time," Allen said.

The ballot changes, the county clerk said, "are not fair to the candidates or the voters."

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Are writers regular folks? New book says they are

Writers are not necessarily special people in terms of sensitivity or talent, poet William Stafford insists in "Writing the Australian Crawl: Views on the Writer's Vocation," a new book published by The University of Michigan Press (paper, 171 pp., \$4.95).

"They are simply engaged in sustained use of a language skill we all have," he explains. "Their 'creations' come about through confident reliance on stray impulses that will, with trust, find occasional patterns that are satisfying."

"But writing itself is one of the great, free human activities. There is scope for individuality, and elation, and discovery, in writing. For the person who follows with trust and forgiveness what occurs to him, the world

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Professional Experience:

- Oakland Circuit Court Administrator Judicial Assistant
- Federal Prosecutor Chief, Civil Division United States Attorney
- President-Elect Federal Bar Association, Detroit Chapter

Education:

- Wayne State University Law School, Juris Doctorate
- Central Michigan University, President, Student Body
- Royal Oak Dondro High School, President, Senior Class

Family:

- Resides in Huntington Woods with his wife, Lynne, his son, David and his daughter, Kathy.

Military Experience:

- U.S. Army Veteran Captain, Armor

HONORABLE JAMES S. THORBURN (Oakland County Circuit Judge): "Fred is an outstanding lawyer and is a vigorous, efficient and budget-conscious Administrator. He would make an excellent addition to our bench."

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