

Headlee ties tax cut hopes to passage of his proposal

Speech appeals to Tisch followers

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

"If you want a tax cut, then vote for 'E' and 'J'."

That advice came from Richard Headlee, the Farmington insurance executive who wants to see his tax limitation proposal become a part of the state constitution. Proposal E, the Headlee amendment's name on the Nov. 7 ballot, would limit state spending to a percentage of the state's total personal income.

Ballot proposal J, championed by Shiawassee County Drain Commissioner Robert Tisch, would cut property taxes in half, allow a one per cent increase in the personal income tax and allow local school districts to collect a one per cent income tax.

INSTEAD OF attacking the Tisch amendment before a Detroit Economic Club crowd this week, Headlee appealed to Tisch's supporters for votes.

He said a tax cut without the protection of the tax limitation amendment would be short lived. He predicted the state and local governments would find ways of recouping lost property tax revenue. The tax cut proposal has been branded a "meat axe" by government officials across Michigan.

If both amendments were approved, Headlee said, the tax cut would be preserved and the state government would have to live within its new budgetary limitations. The Headlee amendment, he said, would prohibit governmental units from increasing old taxes or inventing new ones.

There was speculation that Headlee's new strategy was based on a recently-released poll that showed Tisch's amendment had more popular support. That same poll, however, also showed more people opposed Tisch than opposed Headlee.

WHILE HEADLEE was telling the Cobo Hall audience that he could live with the passage of both amendments, Tisch was not reciprocating. "I want tax limitation," the lanky, raw-boned drain commissioner said, "but I don't want Dick's (Headlee's) tax limitation."



Richard Headlee (left) says tax limitation is essential for a tax cut proposed by Robert Tisch (right) to succeed.

He charged that the Headlee amendment would allow more, not less, taxation.

The tax limitation amendment, Tisch said, "is no limitation at all." While Headlee's amendment would allow the state to tax at the current ratio of total government revenue as compared to the state's total personal income, it would allow the state to keep a full one per cent of the revenues in excess of the tax ceiling. That excess revenue, says Tisch, would flow into the state's "rainy day" fund.

"It gives them everything they've got now plus 10 per cent (of that) on top," Tisch said.

IN TURN, Headlee said the Tisch amendment, by itself, offered state taxpayers nothing but a tax shift.

The Tisch amendment, he said, might cut property taxes in half and limit future increases in assessed valuation to 2.5 per cent, but it does not prohibit the state "from increasing the small business tax or any one of 39 other taxes."

Headlee boasted that even Californians, who fired the most famous shot of the tax revolt by overwhelmingly passing tax-slashing Proposition 13, are having a change of heart.

He pointed to recent news reports that Paul Gann, who along with Howard Jarvis authored Proposition 13, is launching a petition drive to get a tax limitation proposal on the California ballot in April.

Four M-275 alternatives ready for U.S. scrutiny

Two federal agencies will scrutinize four alternatives for a north-south state highway in western Oakland County.

The State Highway Commission recently ordered the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation to submit the M-275 alternatives to the Federal Highway Administration and the United States Department of the Interior.

The alternatives under consideration are:

- The original M-275 freeway, which was cancelled by the highway commission 10 months ago. It would have connected I-96 at Novi with I-75 near Clarkston.
- The McConnell Plan, proposed by Oakland County Commissioner Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills), which would build a parkway beginning at the I-96/I-275 junction. It would parallel Haggerty Road to the west, then veer northwesterly in much of the original M-275 corridor to M-59.

• The Citizens in Opposition to M-275 plan, which would build a parkway beginning at Twelve Mile with no connection to the existing freeway. It would connect with M-59 through the Haggerty-Union Lake-Williams Lake roads corridor using existing roadways. The group also proposed a link with Northwestern Highway by widening Fourteen Mile to a boulevard from Orchard Lake Road to Haggerty.

• Widening existing roads to four lanes through the Haggerty-Union Lake-Williams Lake roads corridor. This project, according to the state highway department, might be built as an extension of M-16, which now ends at US-10 near Clarkston.

By submitting the plans to the federal agencies, said Peter Fletcher, state highway commission chairman, "We can learn what is acceptable and what is not before the commission makes a decision on the alternatives." Fletcher did not estimate how long the federal analysis would take.

If tax plans win, panel will evaluate

Gov. William Milliken will appoint a Ballot Proposal Implementation Commission "to cope with implications" if more than one of the three tax related referendums on the Nov. 7 ballot are passed.

The commission, members of which will be named shortly before the election, primarily will deal with conflicts that could arise among the Headlee tax limitation, Tisch tax cut or school voucher proposals.

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