

## 'Good time' scrutinized

## Parole reform bid sparks debate

By TIM RICHARD

"We don't know why these people became criminals, but we want them locked up," said Michael Modelski, an assistant to Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson. Modelski urged support of Proposal B to tighten Michigan's system of paroling convicts.

"It would be an outrageous burden on the taxpayer," answered Howard Simon, state executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, which opposes Proposal B.

Proposal B is aimed at what Patterson calls the "good time" laws. These allow a person who is sentenced to (say) 10-20 years in prison to earn parole days if he breaks no prison rules and to get out as early as 6 1/2 years.

Good time would be repealed for a long list of violent crimes and crimes which result in injury to persons or damage to property. The state Parole Board would be prohibited from granting parole to a convict until he has served at least his minimum sentence.

It's the only one of the 11 proposals on the Nov. 7 ballot which affects a law. The other 10 affect the state constitution.

"A TRUTH in sentencing law" is how assistant prosecutor Modelski described it to an audience at Schoolcraft College in Livonia last week.

By approving it, he said, the public could be assured that when a judge said "10-20 years," the convict wouldn't be out in less than 6 1/2 years.

"Rehabilitation of criminals is not working. There is no way to rehabilitate anyone. What we're talking about is locking them up for a longer period of time."

"Crime is related to youth," said Modelski. If a criminal at age 20 is locked up until he is 30 or 40, there will be "much less chance of his committing a crime when he gets out."

"We don't want the parole board to have this discretion," he said, of letting out prisoners after serving less than the minimum sentence.

THE ACLU'S Simon called Proposal B "a knee-jerk reaction to crime."

Quoting state Corrections Department figures, Simon said the lengthening of sentences that Proposal B would cost \$26 million for the seven additional prisons that would be required and \$23 million a year more to operate.

"If you vote for this, don't vote for Tisch or Headlee," he said, referring to Proposals J (tax cut) and E (tax limitation).

Simon called the legal work on the proposal "arbitrary and haphazard" because it didn't list extortion by public officials and included many non-violent and political crimes.

Among the listed crimes that shouldn't have been there, he said, are treason, presence at an unlawful assembly, gross indecency between consenting adults in privacy, escape from a county work farm and possession of burglars tools.

Rather than spending millions more on building and operating prisons, Simon said, the state should put its money into "more judges and repeat offenders bureaus in prosecutors' offices."

WON'T PROPOSAL B result in judges giving shorter prison sentences?

"That's the problem. We don't know what will happen," said Modelski. Sentences might be

longer "if a judge feels people will be looking over his shoulder."

On the other hand, a judge who used to give out a 10-year minimum sentence on the assumption the convict would be paroled early, might start giving out 6 1/2-year sentences. Thus, he said, the prisons wouldn't be as crowded as Simon and the corrections department suggest.

"All we can honestly say is that we'll have truth in sentencing," Modelski said.

"The fact that he (convict) behaves well in prison does not mean he should have his sentence reduced for his violent crime."

SIMON SAID Proposal B won't eliminate parole—just let prisoners out later. "They will get out eventually" except for lifers.

"This in no way ties the hands of judges," he added. "It is not mandatory minimum sentencing."

Modelski cited 11 Oakland County murder cases where the person arrested was on parole after serving less than the minimum sentence for an earlier crime.

He repeated Patterson's theme that "we are being robbed, raped and murdered by the same

people, over and over. Our prisons are a revolving door for criminals."

"Rehabilitation of criminals is not working. There is no way to rehabilitate anyone. What we're talking about is locking them up for a longer period of time."

—Asst. Prosecutor Michael Modelski



## County to buy club

Oakland County will get a new park.

The Glen Oaks Golf Course, long coveted by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Department, is expected to officially become county property Nov. 14. It will open as a county park in spring.

A \$12 million state grant cleared the path for the purchase of the Farmington Hills golf course, which is owned by the Moslem Temple. The course is west of the Middlebelt-Thirteen Mile intersection.

The course's total purchase price is \$2.4 million. The remaining \$1.2 million, said Parks and Recreation Manager Eric Reickel, will be raised through either a loan from Oakland County's general fund or a bond issue through the county building authority.

It will be up to the county board of commissioners to approve the final funding method.



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