

At state convention

Suburban Republicans cool to Milliken's tax plan

Delegates endorse lowered drinking age

By TIM RICHARD

Michigan Republicans favor Milliken-Legislative tax reform which will be on the Nov. 4 ballot, but the decision was less than popular with many suburban delegates to Saturday's state convention.

The GOP turned an emphatic thumbs down on two other ballot proposals —

the Tisch property tax cut and the Smith-Bullard plan to eliminate the school property tax on homes and farms, collect business property taxes statewide and replace lost revenue with a higher income tax.

The GOP gave 886-564 approval to the Milliken-Legislative plan, which would roll back property taxes and replace lost revenues by hiking the sales tax to 5.5 percent from the current 4 percent.

In other action, the nearly 2,000 delegates to the state convention endorsed lowering the drinking age to 19, a small income tax hike for prison construction, recognizing local zoning as controlling foster care homes and the death penalty for first-degree murderers.

THE 18TH and 19th Congressional

Districts, covering much of Oakland County, said "no" to the Milliken-Legislative tax reform plan.

They opposed it 42-39 and 46-57, respectively.

The 17th District, covering northwest Detroit, Redford Township, Farmington and Southfield, split 34-34. The 2nd District, covering northwest Wayne, Washtenaw and Monroe counties, gave it 45-38 support. The 15th District, in west central Wayne, liked it 52-17.

"Most individual taxpayers will gain from this plan," Milliken told delegates, "because 20 to 25 percent of sales taxes are paid by tourists and businesses. The proposal will mean a tax cut for the vast majority of individual taxpayers; for instance, homeowners with incomes of \$58,000 or less will receive a tax benefit."

THE TISCH tax cut ballot proposal, offered again by Shiawassee County Drain Commissioner Robert Tisch, was gunned down by 352-1,006, a nearly 2-1 margin.

Suburban districts supported the no vote by roughly the same margin.

The Smith-Bullard tax plan lost 170-1,385, even in state Rep. Roy Smith's own 2nd District. The plan is named for Smith, R-Ypsilanti, and Rep. Perry Bullard, D-Ann Arbor.

Smith did not personally ask for convention support of the plan. It will be heavily supported in the fall campaign by the Michigan Education Association, parent organization of most suburban faculty unions.

Michigan Republicans no longer write a lengthy platform. Instead, an issues committee poses a series of brief

questions, and delegates are polled. Debate is usually brief.

HERE IS HOW the convention voted on other questions:

"Shall Michigan Republicans support the ballot proposal restoring the drinking age to 19?" Yes, 878-571. Only the 19th, among area suburban districts, opposed it.

"Shall Michigan Republicans support the ballot proposal calling for an increase in the state income tax from 4.6 percent to 4.7 percent to fund new prison construction and other corrections needs?" Slender support, 775-760. The 17th and 18th districts supported it; the 2nd, 15th and 19th were opposed.

"Shall Michigan Republicans support a foster care home policy which recognizes local government control and zoning ordinances?" Several speakers

urged rejection, arguing "local control" was a subterfuge to discriminate against the retarded, and no one spoke in favor. But the question passed 1,046-476.

"Shall Michigan Republicans support the death penalty for first degree murder?" Once again, Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson's issue held sway, winning 1,068-476.

"Shall Michigan Republicans support immediate steps to reform workers compensation to provide increased benefits to injured workers and eliminate abuses?" Passed 1,489-75.

"Shall Michigan Republicans support state efforts to stimulate minority business?" Rejected at an earlier convention, it passed this time 1,152-423. The bone of contention was whether stimulating minority business didn't involve reverse discrimination.

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