

Campaign against Tisch stepped up

By TOM IONERGAN

As the Nov. 4 election nears, a campaign to defeat the Tisch tax-cut plan (Proposal D) will "bring the people of this state to their senses," Lt. Gov. James Brickley told a gathering of local government officials last week.

Brickley, who is backing an alternative plan, Proposal C, spoke at Schoolcraft College Thursday before the General Assembly of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Brickley referred to an "assault" heaped upon the plan, but he also pointed out that the plan is "not a tax cut" but a "tax shift" by Citizens to Save Our State (SOS), a coalition of labor, business, school, senior citizens and various social services groups formed in September to defeat Tisch on Nov. 4.

The Michigan Education Association, which is backing Proposal A, has also launched a media campaign to oppose Tisch.

State and local government officials have stressed that Tisch, which would cut property taxes 60 percent by reducing property assessments to half of their 1978 levels, will cause "devastating" cuts in government services.



LT. GOV. JAMES BRICKLEY Backing Proposal C and hoping institute anti-Tisch (Proposal D) campaign is successful

A SPOKESMAN for Tisch said Friday that Gov. Milliken was "using elected officials in Lansing to shake down lobbyists and special interest groups to finance a campaign of deceptive lies."

The SOS group began a series of commercials over radio station WJR last week which emphasized Tisch could mean cuts in state police ("three of four state troopers would be laid off"), higher education ("close most of our state funded colleges and universities"), closing of state parks and hospitals, and a curtailment of mental health services.

"You'll lose scores of vital community services, and thousands of more people will be thrown out of jobs," according to the SOS commercials.

A series of statewide television ads will be carried over two of the three major Detroit area stations beginning Monday.

WILLIAM McMASTER, whose Troy-based public relations firm represents Tisch, charged the Tisch opponents with "false advertising."

McMaster said next year's recommended budget for the state police from the state Office of Management and Budget (OMB) was \$12 million more than the past budget year's \$138 million. The Michigan Legislature adjourned earlier this month without passing a new budget.

In his speech, Brickley cited a nationwide study showing "85 percent of people are dissatisfied with the performance of government," but added that Michigan voters have a recent history of "avoiding radical proposals."

He said voter response to ballot proposals during the past 10 years has shown a trend towards "moderation."

In 1978, a similar Tisch proposal received about 37 percent of the vote. A milder tax limitation plan, named after Farmington Hills insurance executive Richard Headlee, passed with a little more than 50 percent.

Headlee recently endorsed the latest Tisch effort, led by Shiawassee Drain Commissioner Robert Tisch.

A telephone survey taken two weeks ago by Market Opinion Research for the Michigan Education Association showed support for Tisch was fading among likely voters. The survey, based on an 800-person sample, showed 36 percent supported Tisch, 51 percent opposed it, and 13 percent were undecided.

A SPOKESMAN for the Save Our State group conceded Friday that Tisch probably has more voter support than two years ago because "people are



RICHARD HEADLEE Endorsing Tisch



DRAIN COMMISSIONER ROBERT TISCH

Recent poll shows 51 percent oppose his D's passage, 36 percent favor it, 13 percent are undecided

trying to vent their frustration."

Tisch backers say state officials have coerced "corporations, unions and lobbyists who depend on the state government for favors" to contribute more than a half-million dollars to finance a "10-day blitz."

But Kathleen Strauss of the SOS group said it has raised "a couple hundred thousand" dollars which will be spent primarily for leaflets and advertising.

tax proposals in a nutshell

Voters Nov. 4 will decide on three state ballot proposals affecting taxes — A, C and D. Voters could approve any or all. If more than one tax plan passes, the non-conflicting parts of those which pass will be put into effect. The State Supreme Court would resolve any conflicts.

PROPOSAL A ("Smith-Bullard") calls for cutting property taxes (residential and agricultural) for schools. Requires state to make up the loss to school districts. State income tax would have to be raised to 6 percent or more from current 4.6 percent to fund school systems. To be phased in over five-year period under a complicated formula.

EFFECTS: A shift from property to income tax; more uniform financing of school districts. Local districts could vote "enrichment" property taxes.

PROPOSAL C ("Coalition Plan") advanced by Gov. Milliken and bipartisan leaders in the legislature: Would cut property taxes by exempting first \$7,100 of residential property assessment. Loss to be made up by increasing state sales tax to 5.5 percent from 4 percent.

EFFECT: Mostly a shift from property to sales tax; probably a small tax savings as time goes on because of phase-out of sales tax on utility bills.

PROPOSAL D ("Tisch") would roll back property assessments to 1978 level and then cut in half, resulting in 60 percent cut in property taxes. Would then require state to pay local governments for some of the lost revenue. New state taxes would require approval of 60 percent of voters.

EFFECT: A tax cut and cutbacks (uncertain as to severity) in state services and facilities. Would affect colleges, local school districts, state police, state hospitals, state parks, revenue sharing with local governments.

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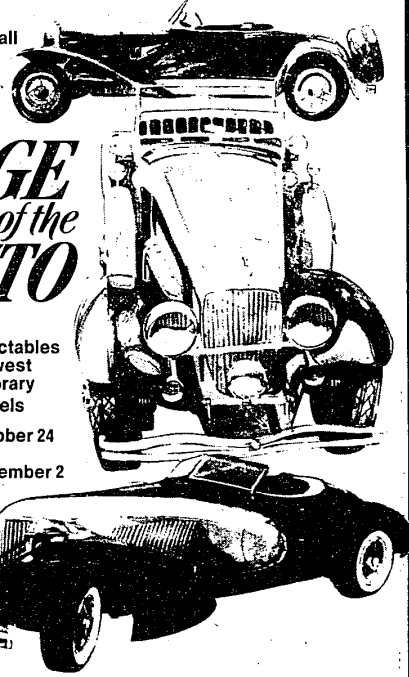
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