

Farmington library officials oppose Tisch

Editor:

On November 4 there will appear three tax proposals on the ballot. The staff members of the Farmington Community Library urge all library friends and patrons to closely evaluate these proposals in view of their effect on library services.

The Library Board and the Michigan Library Association have recently studied the issues in relationship to their possible effect on library services. It was the conclusion of both the Michigan Library Association and the Board of Trustees of the Farmington Community Library that the Tisch proposal would have the most serious effect on library services.

Library staff wanted library friends and patrons to be aware of the probable effects on library services of this proposal and so prepared this communication to library friends and patrons

regarding the analysis of the Library Board and the Michigan Library Association.

Proposal D, the Tisch Amendment, will cut local revenues between 19 percent and 26 percent, and will also affect the allocation of state revenues. The Farmington Libraries would be affected as follows: Almost 1/2 of the state budget consists of earmarked funds such as gasoline taxes for road maintenance or funds from the federal government that must be spent for specified purposes, such as Medicare.

Thus, the entire effect of the Tisch proposal would fall on the remaining 1/2 of the state's budget, which would result in a cut of 55 percent of the general fund.

Library systems in Michigan, such as the Wayne Oakland Library Federation, are almost entirely funded from the state's general-fund budget. The

from our readers

system provides book purchasing and cataloging services, films, interlibrary loan, printing and numerous other services to libraries and patrons in the state. A cut of 55 percent would devastate library-system services and force some systems in the state to close.

In addition, the Farmington Library receives \$30,000 in state support that could be affected by the cut in the general-fund budget.

Other services funded by the state's general fund include mental health services, state police, aid to senior citizens, public health, colleges and universities, prisons and many other services.

Estimates of reduction in local government tax revenues, if the Tisch proposal passes, range from 19 percent to 26 percent. About 1/2 of the library's million-dollar budget is for fixed expenses such as insurance, utilities and building maintenance. Thus, cuts to the library would affect the budget for library materials and staff.

The materials budget would be reduced to about \$55,000 a year which would allow for the purchase of about 4,000 books a year. Each year the library collection is reduced by about 5,000 books due to wear and tear, books becoming out of date and disappearing.

ance. The book collection is presently about 30,000 volumes below minimum standards.

Such a severe cut in income would permanently limit the book collection to a substandard level. Library staff would be reduced about 40 percent with a corresponding reduction in library hours. The library is currently open 64 hours a week. A cut of 40 percent of the hours would be 25 hours, the equivalent of two 12-hour days a week.

Although additional fees for some services may generate some additional income to offset some revenue losses, the Board of Trustees, after examining Proposal D, believes that the effects of this proposal on library services would be severe.

The residents of the Farmington communities heavily use library services and thus would be affected if library services were sharply curtailed.

Some patrons have asked if voters need to choose one of three proposals. Voters who prefer the present taxing system may vote NO on all three. Abstentions do not count, only yes or no votes.

The Board of Trustees of the Farmington Community Library encourages all residents to consider the three tax proposals in view of their impact on library services. In regard to Proposal D, the Board concurs with the evaluation of the Michigan Library Association that indicates Proposal D will seriously endanger public library services. After careful consideration, the Board urges library friends and patrons to vote NO on Proposal D.

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Director
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Trustee
Farmington Library

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