

They all promise jobs, welfare reform, prosperity

By Suzie Rollins Singer
Staff writer

It's easy to find a candidate running for governor who promises to create jobs, reform welfare and bring Michigan out of the recession.

It's more difficult to find one who says how he'll accomplish those tasks.

Last week's meeting of the minds was no different when Republican candidates L. Brooks Patterson and Sen. John Welborn of Kalamazoo, independent tax-cut advocate Robert Tisch and Democrat William Fitzgerald met at the same table.

After deploring Michigan's high unemployment rate, low credit rating and unfair workers' compensation laws, the men made campaign pledges — most of which will require support of the Legislature. They told members of the Greater West Bloomfield and Lakes Area chambers of commerce that they had better ideas than current state lawmakers.

FITZGERALD'S solution to rescue the state's sagging economy is to reduce what he calls the "high cost of doing business in Michigan."

"We've got to reform workers' com-

pensation to cut out a lot of disability payments," he said. "We've got to reform unemployment benefits. We shouldn't be paying benefits to people who voluntarily quit their jobs."

"We have to amend the single business tax, roll back school taxes 25 percent and exempt senior citizens over 65 years old from paying school taxes," said Fitzgerald, a former legislator and the party's 1978 gubernatorial nominee.

As a Democrat, Fitzgerald said he gets flak from "party bosses," many of whom call him "anti-labor."

EVEN WELBORN, a state senator, said he represented change. "If you want the same type of government don't vote for me, because I want change," he said.

Welborn assured the audience that he didn't always side with fellow Republicans or Gov. Milliken, and recently voted against imposing the temporary income tax hike.

"We didn't need the increase. We've got enough money in Lansing, but we just have to spend it properly," he said.

"My philosophy about Lansing is the more you spend, the more you get in debt. We put people on welfare, and

they became slaves to the system. There's no work incentive for them. I want to change how the system runs," he added.

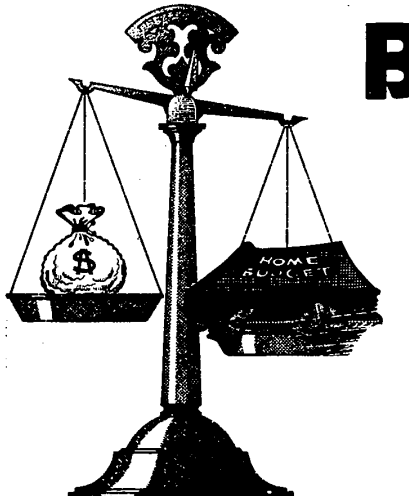
PATTERSON, Oakland County prosecutor, said he is tired of being on the outside looking in and wanted to be a part of the system. He talked of repealing the single business tax.

"This is a hostile place in which to do business. We have a migration out of town. We have to repeal the 'privilege tax' for doing business in Michigan and go back to taxing profits," he said.

TISCH, Shiawassee County drain commissioner and tax-cut advocate, blamed former Gov. George Romney for beginning the practice of not balancing the state budget.

Tisch called Milliken and his staff "liars" but gave no examples. "There's not one thing that comes out of the capital that you can believe. We're not going to correct the situation in Lansing until we take the money away and bring it home," he said.

Because of time limitations, the candidates were only able to answer only a few audience questions.



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