

# Faxon

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 on all Michigan employers; and  
 • Federal budget cuts in education, job training programs, transportation and highways, economic development funds and human services.

The state's fiscal crisis will not be solved until the economy becomes more productive and more of our citizens go back to work. As a state senator, I cannot revise the current federal policy. However, the Legislature has already made significant advances in resolving the underlying economic problems in this state. In 1981-82, I enthusiastically supported an Economic Revitalization Package.

Q: The Single Business Tax has been under attack from all sides. What, if anything, should be done to change it?

During the current legislative session, I supported key legislation that would modify the base of the Single Business Tax as well as significantly reduce this tax on small business in Michigan. SB 360, for which I voted, would remove Workers Compensation and unemployment compensation from the calculation of the Single Business Tax.

This measure alone represents a substantial savings for businesses. I also voted for SB 240 which expands small business credits. This law, scheduled to take effect in 1984, will mean that thousands of Michigan's businesses would end up paying a tax solely on their earnings. In addition to these two key changes in the Single Business Tax, the legislature is considering a plan that would provide tax credits for urban enterprise zones and for research and development costs incurred by business in its effort to diversify Michigan's economy.

Q: How will you vote if an equal rights amendment comes before the Congress and Legislature again? Why? How do you feel about the enactment of an equal rights amendment for the state constitution?

I voted for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and would do so again. It is my hope that before America celebrates the bicentennial anniversary of the adoption of the U.S.

Constitution, this remarkable document will clearly state that America stands for freedom and equality for all of its people regardless of race, creed, color, ethnic origin, or sex.  
 Although Michigan has been in the forefront of guaranteeing equal rights for men and women, I would support a state ERA in addition to the ratification of the national Equal Rights Amendment.

Q: Why did you agree/disagree with the six-month, 1-percent increase in the state personal income tax voted in last May?

I agreed with and voted for the recent, temporary 1-percent increase in the state personal income tax for a variety of important reasons:

- \$153 million in city income tax credits;
- \$256 million in city income tax credits;
- \$153 million in farmland preservation tax credits;
- \$1.600 billion in business tax relief. For these reasons, I could not in good faith oppose a temporary income tax increase.

Q: Our state and federal road system has reached maturity in the last few years and is rapidly deteriorating. What programs should be implemented to restore the roads?

We need to review our public policy with regard to our state and national transportation systems. Not only are our roads deteriorating but many of our railway tracks gravely need repair.

Q: Our senior citizens who have retired from public service have not received a pension benefit increase since 1977, and many are struggling to live in today's inflated economy on a \$4,000 annual pension. Our state's social welfare programs are overburdened with the legitimate needs of more than 600,000 unemployed workers. Public health and mental health services have been dangerously reduced, including the layoffs of state employees in all of our state-supported mental health institutions. A sense of compassion was not my sole reason for supporting the temporary tax increase.

It was also necessary to quickly resolve the immediate deficit crisis in order to clearly indicate to the national, financial marketplace and its Wall Street bond credit rating firms that Michigan had the political and financial capability to put its own "house in order".

3. The state appropriates a substantial part of its budget to local units of government. At least 41.6 cents of eve-

ry state tax dollar is returned to local governments. Without this tax restoration, counties, municipalities, and school districts would have had to raise property taxes in order to sustain their current level of services. An increase in property taxes would have certainly had a more regressive and detrimental impact on low-income, senior citizen, and disabled homeowners than an income tax increase.

4. And finally, contrary to what many Michiganians may believe, the state has not increased taxes since 1971. Instead, the state has returned no less than \$5.590 billion to Michigan taxpayers in the form of tax credits:

- \$3.351 billion in property tax credits;
- \$256 million in city income tax credits;
- \$153 million in farmland preservation tax credits;
- \$1.600 billion in business tax relief. For these reasons, I could not in good faith oppose a temporary income tax increase.

Q: Our state and federal road system has reached maturity in the last few years and is rapidly deteriorating. What programs should be implemented to restore the roads?

We need to review our public policy with regard to our state and national transportation systems. Not only are our roads deteriorating but many of our railway tracks gravely need repair.

Without a coordinated solution to this national problem, it is conceivable that rail transportation will decline in the midwest and thereby increase truck traffic on a road system that was never designed to accommodate the transportation of this quantity of freight.

For decades, state and federal tax dollars have been allocated principally to build new roads. It seems foolish to continue this policy of building new roads if we are unable to repair the ones we already have.

Therefore, I would propose a shift in transportation funds from new construction to road maintenance. We must also look for ways to enhance public transportation services in spite of the federal government current policy of cutting back on public transportation funding. The memory of gas lines and oil embargoes is not so faint that we can overlook the eventual need for a sophisticated transportation system.

Q: SEMTA has experienced a 20-percent cut in its operating budget and expects more cuts as federal aid shrivels. How should the public transit operating funds question be addressed?

While I question the wisdom of reducing federal aid for public transportation, it means that the state must act responsibly in the near future to see that this vital public service is not jeopardized. The legislature is studying a proposal to divert additional sales tax

revenues for public transportation. The state expends for public transportation approximately 30 percent of the revenue generated from the tax on transportation-related items.

Adoption of this proposal would decrease general fund revenue at a time when every area of government service from mental health care to public education has been cut.

A transportation package that proposes an increase in gasoline taxes and automobile registration fees is also before the legislature. This proposal is somewhat self-limiting. As people take advantage of public transportation services, consumption of gas and perhaps even automobile purchases will probably decline.

I think we should look also at the possibility of increasing the oil severance tax as well as the royalties the state receives on oil drilling rights in Michigan. In this way we may generate the revenues we need to satisfy our public transportation in the state.

The income from this national resource must be used wisely if we are to develop the means to conserve our oil supply while we prepare for the future.

Q: Do you support a) the "human life amendment" prohibiting abortion? b) Medicaid funding of abortions?

I have consistently supported Medicaid funding for abortions and have voted against every legislative attempt to eliminate such funding.

Q: Utility rates have been adjusted automatically for fuel price changes. How do you feel about requiring state Public Service Commission approval of such rate changes?

I voted in June to prohibit automatic rate increases. While this proposal was defeated in the Senate, I note that the voters will have an opportunity in November to do what the Legislature would not, namely, require utility companies to explain why rate adjustments are necessary. As a long time consumer advocate I have defended and will continue to defend the public's right to know.

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