

Suburbs key at GOP convention

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Two suburban Republicans led their minority party Saturday in sending a pair of messages to Gov. James Blanchard and the Democrats: They're united behind a first-class political tactician, Spencer Abraham, as state chairman, and they will insist any state income tax increase be only temporary.

Oakland County Executive Daniel R. Murphy got major credit for Abraham's thin, first-ballot victory. Livonia activist Elaine Donnelly won the heaviest support of the day — 1,664 to 19 — for her resolution opposing Democrat Blanchard's proposed permanent 1.5 percent hike in the personal income tax.

"Spending levels should be reduced before taxes are raised to a minimum level — on a temporary basis — as a last resort," said the GOP in supporting the Donnelly resolution. Her resolution had been turned down in the issues committee, but she introduced from the state convention floor.

Donnelly's speech was a parody of Blanchard's campaign speeches. She said: "Permanent taxes, taxes, taxes will discourage the creation of jobs, jobs, jobs."

MURPHY, WHO made the nominating speech for Abraham, credited him with the ability "to bring together people of diverse philosophies and ethnic groups."

Murphy revealed afterward that sup-

porters of Brighton businessman Richard Chrysler "told me if we'd waited and joined Chrysler, we could have made the difference." Abraham received 933 first-ballot votes with 907 needed for victory.

Abraham, 35, a Lansing politer and lawyer, is best known for doing the polling work for conservative Republican gubernatorial candidate Richard Headlee.

But he was also supported by Carl Russell, R-Plymouth, the most liberal Republican in the Michigan congressional delegation. "Carl was his first paying customer," said Bob Webber, Russell's administrative aide and political right-hand man.

ALAN MAY, 18th Congressional District chairman and Bloomfield Township resident, agreed with the general assessment of Abraham.

"The conservatives had an opportunity to stick it to the moderate wing," said May, a Milliken-lining moderate himself. "This was not a liberal-conservative thing, as the Free Press tried

to make it. The issues were fund-raising, use of computers, organization. . . . It took an awful lot of moderate people to elect Spence Abraham."

Among Oakland or partly Oakland districts, the 17th Congressional District supported Abraham 51-25 over Chrysler, the 18th backed Abraham 91-48, but the 6th gave a 55-52 edge to favorite son Chrysler.

Ranny Blecker, GOP national committeewoman for more than a decade and closely identified with former Gov. Milliken's administration, was a distant third.

THE CONVENTION in Detroit's Cobo Hall was a disappointment to Ellen Templin, who was defeated for reelection as first vice-chair of the state GOP organization.

The Bloomfield Township resident and 1982 nominee for University of Michigan Board of Regents was trailing Jackie McGregor in every district but her own 18th when she conceded. Templin's loss was generally attributed to delegates' desire for new faces and lack of personal fence-mending.

McGregor, a "veteran classroom teacher" by her own admission, has been chair of the Dickinson County GOP in the upper peninsula. She chaired first Bush and then Reagan presidential efforts in the UP during the 1980 campaign.

Mental health group blisters budget cuts

The Mental Health Association in Michigan last week warned that Gov. James Blanchard's proposed budget cuts \$18 million for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) "will ensure the demise of the mental-health system as Michigan has known it."

"DMH has already suffered a multitude of budget cuts resulting in drastic reductions in mental-health personnel and services in both institution and community settings," the group's board of directors said in a statement released through its public relations agency.

Founded by Clifford Beers, a person suffering from mental illness, the Mental Health Association is a nationwide advocacy organization that works to bring about change beneficial to the mentally ill.

"IN ADDITION, as hospital staff-to-patient ratios are reduced and services are eliminated, our state institutions will revert to warehousing facilities — places where patients are stored without adequate treatment or services."

In spring 1982, the Mental Health Association in Michigan board of directors recommended that an appropriation of \$605 million would be necessary for the Department of Mental Health to provide the level of services enjoyed in fiscal year 1978-79. The DMH estimated the amount at \$955.3 million.

"Instead, the appropriated \$537 million — already \$85 million below the Mental Health Association's recommended continuation budget — is proposed to be cut further, forcing an already-stressed system to do even more with less."

AMONG PROPOSED cuts:

- Central and facility administration — up to 30 staff laid off; savings \$520,000.
- Residential and support services staff — savings of \$4.4 million.
- Elimination of psychiatric residential programs — 76 psychiatric residents will have their residences terminated; savings, \$900,000.
- Department hiring freezes and layoffs — approximately 400 DMH staff laid off; savings, \$4.3 million.
- Transfer of Lafayette and Detroit Psychiatric Institute to the private sector — savings, \$2.6 million.
- Dual diagnosis services for both mentally ill and developmentally disabled — eliminated; savings, \$400,000.

"Our board of directors goes on the record as supporting revenue enhancement, including tax increases. Furthermore, the board opposes further cuts in mental health and other human services which affect people who are mentally ill and/or in need of mental health services."

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