

# Coalition fights tax-cut bid

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

They hope "Voter's Choice" won't be on the Nov. 7 ballot. But if it is, a coalition of education, union, local government, business and civic groups will work to defeat the tax-cutting constitutional amendment.

"We want to preserve Michigan's public education system, both K-12 and higher education," said Kathleen Straus, state lobbyist for the Michigan Association of School Boards. She and other members spoke Wednesday in a news conference in the Southfield Board of Education office.

The coalition calls itself the Promote Michigan Committee. It boasts 25 to 30 member groups, according to Larry Meyer of the Michigan Retailers Association.

"It has no budget or money, but its president, Sister Monica Kostelney of the Michigan Catholic Conference estimated it will have to raise 'hundreds of thousands of dollars' to defeat 'Voter's Choice'."

Besides using "all of the techniques of public education at our command," Meyer said, the "Pro-Michigan" committee will mobilize its own members against the ballot proposal.

al, respectively, in 1982, the Voter's Choice '84 group professes to be multi-partisan.

"Right now, we have a total of 314,000 signatures after cleaning them up," said Jim DeHart, Voter's Choice spokesman. "The Secretary of State's office recommends that we have a total of 350,000 to insure an adequate safety margin for the minimum requirement of 350,001."

DeHart asked circulators to return their petitions by July 5 in order to meet a July 9 legal deadline.

IF APPROVED by voters, the Voter's Choice amendment would:

- Cancel state tax increases approved by the legislature since the end of 1981. These include the increase in the state personal income tax rate, a 10-cents-a-pack increase in the cigarette tax, a 2-cents-a-gallon increase in the gasoline tax and increase in the motor vehicle weight tax. By Headlee's estimate, these total \$946 million. Citizens Research Council estimates the revenue at \$1 billion or more. The cuts would take effect 90 days after the election.
- Limit the commuter income tax rate in Detroit and Highland Park to 0.5 percent — a \$40-million revenue reduction.
- Require voter approval of any tax-rate increase or tax change that would increase revenue.
- Allow governmental fees to be raised only by an 80-percent majority of a governing board. Examples: A building inspection or swimming-pool fee hike would need six votes from a seven-member city council. A college-tuition and laboratory-fee increase would require six votes from a seven-

member board, and seven votes from an eight-member board.

IT WOULD paralyze city, county and school services," said Liz Baker, representing the Michigan Education Association, a Pro-Michigan member.

"Those who understand it will reject it overwhelmingly," said Meyer of the retail group. "It has a simplistic and deceptive message... that we can get revenues and still keep services."

Headlee was ready in advance with a reply to those who oppose Voter's Choice:

"Ask them the following question: Do you rely on the revenues of government taxation for your own economic gain? If the answer is yes, you may never overcome their objections."

KOSTELNEY said her Michigan Catholic Conference has no vested interest in government taxation but is concerned with "the quality of life for all persons in the state."

Government-oriented supporters of Pro-Michigan include Michigan Educa-

tion Association, teachers union, Michigan Association of School Boards, Michigan Municipal League, an organization of cities and villages, Michigan Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students, which represents in K-12 public schools, and Michigan AFT-CIO, which represents many state workers.

Other members include the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Retailers Association, Ford Motor Co., Michigan Council of Churches, Michigan Merchants Council and the League of Women Voters.

PRO-MICHIGAN announced its formation and its chief goal as promoting the state's "fragile economic recovery," in Meyer's words. But the only specific issue it addressed in its news release and news conference was the voter's choice petition.

Kostelney said the tax-cut proposal "would cripple Michigan as a place to do business" by disrupting essential services.

"That's why we meet in a school institution," she said of the school board office.

# Home-improvement loan rates are cheap

Home-improvement loans at 9 to 3 percent interest are now available through the Oakland County Community Development Department.

About \$1.5 million in federally subsidized loans are available to low to moderate income families for such improvements as siding, roofing, plumbing, new furnaces and other structural repairs.

The loans do not cover home beautification projects, garages, mobile homes, or additions. Approximately 300 loans will be made this year.

KARBY RUTHE, public information officer of the Community Development Department (CDD), said income qualification is based on the 1980 census, with \$20,000 being used as an average.

Eligibility is then determined on a sliding scale based on family size, ranging from an income of \$17,000 for an individual to \$30,000 for a family of eight.

Loans up to a maximum of \$7,000 are available through the on-site program. Funding is provided by the federal government, but the program is administered through the CDD.

ONCE APPLICATIONS are received by the county, a staff boarder goes to the applicant's home and writes specifications for work that needs to be done.

Specifications are then sent to pre-qualified contractors who bid on the job. The bids are opened at the CDD office. Applicants are able to select from the bidders and have a 15 percent flexibility over the lowest bid.

Applicants must fill out a loan application form and submit a recent income tax form and a copy of a mortgage to prove home ownership. Information on penalties or other benefits are also necessary.

For more information and to make application, call 824-6423 and ask for Rose Courtemanche, applications clerk.

# Oakland seeks bridge repairs

Federal and state aid is being sought to replace seven more Oakland County bridges. They are in addition to five remaining to be funded, according to the county Road Commission.

"Although safe for use as posted, they are inadequate for some vehicles that use roadways on which they are located," said Road Commission Chairman Richard Vogt.

The seven structures for which aid is sought are:

- Oakland Township — Adams Road south of Orion Road.
- Troy — John R. north of Long

Lake Road.

- Farmington Hills — Twelve Mile west of Inkster Road.
- Waterford Township — Rosedale Street west of Cass Lake, and Elizabeth Lake Road east of Airport Road.
- Independence Township — Andersonville Road east of Clement.

All seven are posted for reduced loadings because of deterioration. All are more than 50 years old.

Cost estimates are impossible, Vogt said, because of the uncertainty of when the projects will be accomplished.

# Abstinence talk at Brighton

Brighton Hospital will feature a videotaped lecture by Dr. Russell Smith on "Abstinence" at its next community education program. It is scheduled for 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Brighton Hospital, which treats alcoholism and substance abuse, is on old Grand River Road at the Kensington Road exit south of the I-96 freeway.

Smith, Brighton's medical director

and popular lecturer, notes that drinking alcohol is a learned behavior. He discusses techniques for "unlearning" as part of recovery from alcoholism.

A counselor will answer audience questions afterwards. The informal style allows people concerned about a loved one's drinking to learn about the disease of alcoholism and its treatment.

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