

# Joan Mondale knows Fritz's policies

By Kathy Parrish  
staff writer

Electrician Mike Ketchum worked 30 weeks last year at different construction sites. Now laid off, the Canton Township resident wants to know how the presidential candidates would hold onto Michigan jobs.

"I am one of those people Ronald Reagan does not count as unemployed. And I have been for a year," Ketchum told Joan Mondale, wife of the former vice president, appearing on behalf of the Democratic presidential candidate Thursday in Ferndale Public Library. "Why are all these jobs leaving the Detroit area?"

CHARGING the present administration has "turned its back on unemployment," Mrs. Mondale blamed federal deficits for driving interest rates up and devaluing the dollar.

"People can't afford to buy products because the dollar is too expensive," she said. "We have no right to have a president turn his back on unemployed people wherever they are in this country. We feel every person needs a job because we find our sense of worth through a job."

UNEMPLOYMENT WAS one of several concerns voiced by community members during the morning round-table discussion.

In her second campaign appearance in this area, Mrs. Mondale also talked about the rising cost of higher education, Social Security, cutbacks in federal funds for education, bilingual education and law enforcement.



Joan Mondale  
Reagan "turns back"



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Fielding questions in the Ferndale Public Library, Joan Mondale (left), wife of the Democratic presidential nominee, answers Ferndale housewife Geraldine Carter and Canton electrician Mike Ketchum.

An enthusiastic campaigner, she discussed them all. When a reporter remarked that she knows Walter Mondale's stands well, she said with a smile "That's my job."

Hand-picked by the Democratic Party, the six questioners represented a cross section of folks — a laid-off electrician, art teacher, student, housewife, police officer and retiree.

About 100 people — half of them Ferndale High School government students — listened intently as Mrs. Mondale relayed her husband's policies. It was the most commotion the small library has seen since Gov. James Blanchard came in to vote on primary day.

WELCOMING the candidate's wife to the governor's hometown, Michigan First Lady Paula Blanchard called Mondale familiar to the state.

"Fritz has always been in there for us, and we will be there for him in November," she said, citing his support of the Chrysler loan guarantee Blanchard sponsored in Congress.

Like her husband, who applauded Mondale for appearing before a group of Wayne Memorial High School students recently, she praised the Democratic candidate and his wife for taking questions. The candidate has made a big point of his accessibility, charging the incumbent won't meet the public.

"The Mondales want to communicate with mainstream America, which is not true of the current president's campaign," she said.

HALF THE QUESTIONS focused on education. Their concerns included the rising cost of higher education, cutbacks in school funding and bilingual education.

"Fritz is deeply committed to education. He's said it's the most important investment we can make as a nation," said Mrs. Mondale, responding to Ferndale homemaker Geraldine Carter's question about costly higher education.

The candidate has proposed five steps to provide excellence in education nationwide. The proposal includes a "super fund" districts could draw on to pay for improvements.

Mrs. Mondale said the administration has cut guaranteed student college loans, thrown out work-study programs and done away with grants to graduate students.

"It's the most insensitive and deep cutting of education we've seen any president make."

A QUESTION from art teacher Martha Kinney on federal cuts in education funding hit close to home.

A potter who lobbied for more art in education, Mrs. Mondale said her husband would definitely increase school funding.

"It's those school children who have been hurt. They don't vote but their future is at stake," she said, adding that she intends to "keep plugging away" for arts-education funding.

"We're not robots. We're human beings and we connect with each other through the arts."

JUST TWO YEARS away from Social Security, retiree Carlton Smith expressed concern about not getting to collect from the fund he paid into for 42 years.

"The federal government made a bargain with you and that bargain is called Social Security," Mrs. Mondale said. "We feel our senior citizens are entitled to security."

Thanking the audience for coming, Mrs. Mondale put in a final plug for her husband's candidacy.

"We're a good country, we're strong but need some leadership," she said firmly.

"We need someone who understands and is in touch with people's concerns."

Charging the present administration has "turned its back on unemployment," Mrs. Mondale blamed federal deficits for driving interest rates up and devaluing the dollar.

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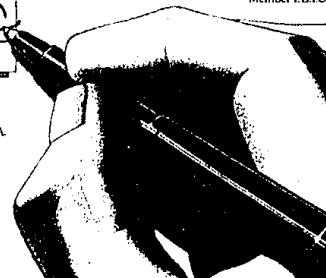
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