

Teens have say on how to run government

By Neal Haldane
staff writer

Instead of discussing the latest gossip on dates or where the weekend action is, students from 21 area high schools discussed balancing the federal budget and the merits of a \$10-billion toxic waste fund.

The students participated in a forum Monday sponsored by U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Southfield, at the John Grace Community Center, Southfield.

Previous forums, comprised of high school students from Levin's 17th District, have tackled education, defense spending, state government and a political convention.

"These issues are ones that will af-

fect you in your everyday lives," Levin said. "These issues vitally concern you and your generation and this spotlight what Congress will discuss next year."

In the forum, the students simulated debate in the House of Representatives on two measures — the balanced budget amendment and the Superfund, money designated to clean up toxic waste sites.

Student groups, ranging from three to 10 depending on the high school, were assigned to represent the Republican or Democratic positions on the two measures with some schools taking a neutral approach.

THE TWO SOUTHFIELD schools both received assignments reflecting

Democratic views with Southfield High supporting the \$10-billion Superfund legislation with Southfield-Lathrup students opposed to the balanced budget amendment.

After presentations on the two measures by Democratic and Republican representatives, the high school groups split into four committee meetings to discuss the legislation.

Each group only had 20 minutes to state their case before a vote on the issues.

In the Southfield-Lathrup session, which included Redford, St. Agatha, Mercy and Thurston high schools, de-

bate on the balanced budget amendment started slowly.

Lathrup students protested that budget cuts or increasing taxes would be needed to balance the budget. But the students pointed out that President Reagan, in the debate Monday night, said taxes will not go up if he is re-elected.

"What's left to cut?" asked Robert Levine in a typical partisan style. "You can't invent the money out of thin air. What you ask is impossible."

Other students, assigned the Superfund legislation, began to get involved in the debate. Floor managers, the stu-

dents responsible for parcelling out precious minutes, started to line up speakers supporting their position while opposition leaders did the same.

One Southfield-Lathrup student, Gary Wright, joined the opposition in support of balancing the budget.

The debate became emotional and drifted off the subject as students made comments about UAW wages, the salary of General Motors' president, MX missiles and inner city jobs.

AT THE END one Lathrup student said stubbornly, "I don't see how you can convince anyone to vote for this

amendment with so many inherent flaws."

And he was right. Few opinions changed during the debate and the majority ruled as the balanced budget amendment amendment went down in a null defeat.

A similar heated discussion followed for the Superfund legislation and the measure also was defeated.

However, the pro-Superfund group called for a show of hands because they felt the voice vote was too close. The measure still lost.

How program takes care of children

Continued from Page 1

strict. Staff members must have a Child Development Certification or they must have taken 12 semester hours of child development classes.

Brooks looks for more than classroom orientation in the people she employs. She would like them to enjoy playing kick ball. Each group has a

personality, she feels, and the staff member should fit into it.

"PERSONALLY, I think the group situation is a real learning experience for children," she said. "It is good for them socially and they learn from being exposed to another adult, who has a different kind of role than their mother, father or teacher."

The cost is considered moderate by most parents. The fee is \$2 an hour. If there is a second child, the fee is \$1 an hour.

The start-up cost for each new school added to the program is around \$1,000.

The administrator of the YMCA supports a bill before the U.S. Senate, the School Facilities Child Act. It would

provide \$15 million a year, for three years to Latchkey programs throughout the United States. This money would help in setting up Prime Time in the five remaining Farmington elementary schools.

Further information about Prime Time is available by calling Brooks at 553-4020.

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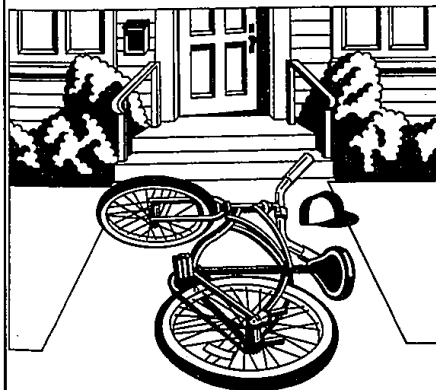
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