

Super Tuesdays are eyed for Great Lakes

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Michigan voters should pay close attention to tomorrow's Super Tuesday presidential primaries in the South. If a state Senate committee has its way, Michigan could be part of a Great Lakes Super Tuesday in 1992.

Such a step would allow Michigan voters the chance to vote directly in the presidential nomination process and could clear up the nominating chaos suffered this year by Michigan Republicans.

The Government Operations Committee gave 7-0 approval last week to a bill for a closed party primary.

It also reported out a resolution calling on Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio to hold their primaries the same day — the third Tuesday of

They could come to the Senate floor as early as March 15.

"This proposal calls for a modified closed primary," said Rick Simonson, an aide to Sen. Richard Fessler, R-Commerce. A closed primary requires voters to declare their party.

Fessler has contacted an association of city and township clerks who estimated that the procedure for registering people's party preferences alone would cost them \$3.3 million. Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, the only

Observer & Eccentric area senator on the committee, strongly favors voter registration by party.

"I believe I was first to suggest that to the committee," he said. "People should have some minimum commitment to the party in which they're casting that vote. It's not too much to ask to declare a party commitment."

Cruce wanted to extend party registration to all primaries but didn't find enough support in committee.

A PRESIDENTIAL primary would solve the Republicans' 1988 problem of elaborate precinct delegate elections, local conventions and

a state convention that resulted in Michigan's sending a split delegation to the GOP national convention in August.

Democrats will hold party-run presidential preference elections March 26.

Republicans had sought to be first in the nation with their January state convention. When it backfired into a bloodbath between supporters of Vice President George Bush and evangelist Pat Robertson, with Jack Kemp supporters split, Republicans widely agreed that a change was needed.

A five-state Great Lakes primary would affect 41.5 million voters and come a week or two after the South's Super Tuesday.

"It would make presidential candidates' respond to our concerns," Simonson said.

THREE CONCERNS are emerging, said Simonson, who has watched the legislation for Fessler

and served as state convention secretary.

• "One reason we went away from the primary was that it diluted the effect of the political parties."

● "The primary had an excessive cost — \$3 million." In 1976, the last year both parties in Michigan held a presidential primary, only 1.8 million voted — a cost of nearly \$2 a vote.

• A separate bill would require voters who wish to participate in the presidential primary to register by political party, for that primary only, at least 30 days prior to the election. This would be a costly procedure for city and township clerks on whom the work burden would fall.

A CLOSED primary would be a drastic change from the Michigan system of open primaries, where a voter can take part in any party's primary without publicly revealing his or her party preference.

Many party leaders find fault with the open primary because too many voters cross over in order to cause mischief. Two cases in point:

● In 1972, Alabama Gov. George Wallace, never popular among liberal Michigan Democrats, won 809,000 of the 1.6 million presidential primary votes. The Republican primary, in which President Richard Nixon was virtually unopposed, drew only 337,000 voters. Clearly, Republicans had crossed over to back Wallace.

● In 1976, Democrats got even. Their primary drew fewer than 700,000 voters, split between Morris Udall and Jimmy Carter. But the GOP primary drew nearly 1.1 million voters, of whom 364,000 backed Ronald Reagan against home state President Gerald Ford.

Fessler's attitude is to move slowly so there will be "no chilling effect on participation. If we keep changing the system every four years, there will be a chilling effect," the aide quoted him as saying.

Publisher will speak at OCC

David Lawrence, Detroit Free Press publisher, is scheduled to open this semester's Distinguished Speaker Series at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 9, in the Smith Theatre on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College.

His topic will be "Newspapers: Where We Are Coming From." It is free to the public.

The Orchard Ridge Campus of OCC is at I-696 and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

Lawrence, a leader in the request for the joint operating agreement between the Free Press and The Detroit News, has been awarded several honorary doctorates in the field of humanities from area colleges and

universities for his civic leadership.

To complete the spring series Michigan Secretary of State Richard Austin is scheduled at 9:30 a.m. March 21, and David Hermelin, developer of the Auburn Hills Palace entertainment center and international community leader, will speak at 11 a.m. on March 30.

Training is for probate volunteers

Oakland County Probate Court volunteer programs will hold training and orientation sessions on Monday, March 14 and 21, from 7-9 p.m. Meetings are in the Probate Court

conference room, second floor, east wing of the Oakland County Courthouse, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

The sessions are for those interest-

ed in volunteering to work with children aged 6-16. For further information, call the court at 858-0041, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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The graphic is a stylized illustration of a house with a chimney on the left and a bird flying in the sky on the right. The house's roofline contains the text "THERE IS AN AMERICAN HOUSE NEAR YOU!". The front of the house features a large American flag on the left and the text "AMERICAN HOUSE RETIREMENT RESIDENCES" on the right. Below the house, there are two columns of bulleted text listing amenities and a list of locations with their phone numbers.

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