Few tears here as tax reform sputters

Suburban Republicans shed few tears as state House GOP leader Paul Hillegonds doubted out loud a school tax reform proposal would be on the hallet.

school tax return proposed on the ballot.
"I doubt think it's going to make it to the ballot," said Hillegonds, R-Holland, speaking Friday at a fundraiser for state Rep. Judith Miller of Victolicakan.

raiser for state Rep. Judith Miller of Birmingham.

"The issue has become partism.

"The issue has become partism of the governor is frightened at putting something on the ballot and having it get creamed," said filligonia. Not only have list chances of getting on the Aug. 2 primary ballot almost vanished, but he added that Democrats don't want it on the Nov. 8 ballot either.

a ballot either.

BUT THE 39-year-old rising GOP star said the issue won't go away. "Some school districts are in crists," he said, polnting to rural districts without tax base.

In contrast, districts with nuclear power plants are rolling in wealth, and many metro Detroit suburban districts in the high-tech belt from Rochester to Ann Arbor have ample funds. The range of resources from poor to wealthy districts is \$2,400 to \$7,000 per student. Both parties seek a better balancy of you are saying 'don't give us that," Hillegonds told the audience in the Birmingham Country Club.



Rep. Paul Hillegonds issue won't go away

The two parties agree on cutting local school operating property taxes and shifting the burden to the sales tax by raising it from 4 percent

es and shifting the burden to the salest ax by raising it from 4 percent to 6.

But Republicans want an overall revenue increase of \$200 million while Gov. James Blanchard and House Democrats want a \$600 million increase. Hillegonds said Republication in the sale of the

have made social services rather than education their top priority. ONE QUESTIONER Bilstered both parties for wanting to shift to the sales tax, which isn't deductible from federal taxable income, while the property tax is deductible. "As a state," replied Hillegends, "we have been much more dependent on the property tax. It has caused the differences between the rich and poor districts." He said House Republicans advocate tax-base sharing to the extent that five mills of business property taxes would be spread statewide. Asked about Blanchard's advocacy of partly replacing the single business tax with a profits tax, Hillegonds said "it's hard to comment because we don't move the specificality of the state of the said it is nevertheless a stable revenue source in recession years. "It has protected the business community from the debate (during recessions) over hiking taxes." He said he has "qualras" about junking SBT entirely.

A YEAR OF work on school tax

he has "qualms" about junking SBT entirely.
A YEAR OF work on school tax reform appeared all but dead last week after a House proposal fell three votes short of passage.
After the vote, House Speaker Gary Owen, D-Ypsilanti, said wasn't optimistle that a compromise could be worked out in time to meet the June 3 deadline for getting a proposal on the Aug. 2 primary ballot. Owen called House Republicans "obstructionists" for blocking efforts

or move the proposal into a House-Senale conference committee.

After a Democratic plan failed, Owen urged all House members to pass a stripped down bill lacking all the key elements of past proposals to the proposal to th

House doesn't have a position." Hillegonds said. "It makes me wonder just how serious we are in trying to get this issue resolved." a leader throughout the yearlong effort or each a compromise, said list's up to Owen to work things out in the House.

"I can't believe Gary Owen can't get three more votes in the House. House the really wants it," said DeGrow, R-Port Huron. "I've seen Gary move mountains. He can get three wotes."

Guy Gordon, a spokesman for Senate Republicans, pointed out that the Senate considered 13 separate school finance plans before one finally

passed on March 16 and that the House so far has considered only

House so far has considered only nine.
"Perhaps five more tries would do it for them," said Gordon.
He said Senate Republicans don't accept the stand by Owen and Blanchard that any school finance proposal must be on the August bailot to avoid politicizing the issue in the November general election.

THE SCHOOL finance issue would require a voter-approved amend-ment to the Michigan Constitution. Placing it on the ballot requires sup-port from two-thirds of both cham-bers.

Local roads to get money

The Oakland County Road Commission is making a pledge to every city, village and township: If voters approve an Aug. 2 ballot proposal, avery one of the \$19 million raised will be spent in the community that generated it.

"The money is being raised to improve the local road system, and the most equitable way to use the money is in the community where it was raised," said chairman Fred Houghten of Rochester, speaking for the three-member bedor. In \$23-gen-vehicly experience of the control of the



"Our resolution adopted the principle of complete local control over the decisions which determine how the money will be spent," Houghten Sald.

The road commission staff is meeting, community by community,

The road commission staff is on or about June 1, based upon our meeting, community, with councils and boards to determine spending priorities. It held such sessions two years ago and is updating the work.

"Actually," said OCRC managing director John L. Grubba, "the requests made during the strategic planning process two years ago by

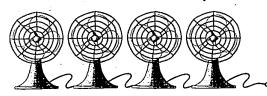


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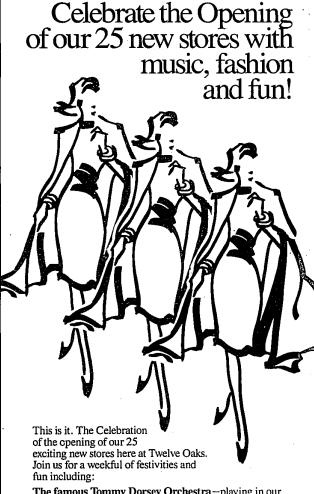
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