

# Future

## Both parties claim it belongs to them

AP — Like all elections, the battle for presidential votes this year in Michigan will be waged on the murky high ground of the future, where each party claims it has staked out the brightest spot.

Democrats contend voters are uneasy about a continuation of the GOP policies. Republicans counter that voters really fear a return to the bad, old days of Democratic leadership when the nation's economy was staggering.

Leaders of both parties predict a close race in Michigan and say victory will go to the candidate who can give the best answers for the problems facing families.

RICHARD WIENER, chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party, said that candidate is Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, who offers a special appeal to the blue-collar segment that voted for President Reagan.

"I see the so-called Reagan Democrats voting for Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen," Wiener said. "It's clear that they prefer their style of leadership and commitment to a brighter future for them and for their children and for America and their children than the very weak leadership being offered by George Bush and Dan Quayle."

"What they fear, quite frankly, is their kids won't be as well off as they are, especially if George Bush is elected. They trust the Democrats more to create long-term economic growth, a sound educational system, and opportunities for all Americans," Wiener said.

SPENCER ABRAHAM, the chairman of the Michigan Republican Party, said Wiener has identified the proper concerns, but come to the wrong conclusion.

"I hope they try to run that campaign. I think if they try to make voters feel uneasy about the future, voters are hardly going to want to put the future in the hands of a high-risk, on-the-job-training candidate like Michael Dukakis," he said.

"The record he brings into this campaign is one of higher taxes and (social) liberalism. Given that, I think voters are going to take a more safe choice like George Bush."

"I think one of the issues that we're going to be talking about is taxes. George Bush says no new taxes. Michael Dukakis opposed and still opposes the Reagan tax cuts."

"That's what Blanchard said when he campaigned in 1980 and we all

**'George Bush says no new taxes. Michael Dukakis opposed and still opposes the Reagan tax cuts.'**

— Spencer Abraham

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know what that means," Abraham said, referring to the temporary injury will go to the candidate who can give the best answers for the problems facing families.

"There's a clear contrast on the issues of crime. Vice president Bush is pushing for death penalty sentencing for drug kingpins. Dukakis supports for-  
giveness programs that are extremely lenient for hardened criminals. I don't think people in Michigan would support that," Abraham said.

U.S. SEN. Donald Riegle, a Democrat who is seeking his third term this fall, said the political boundaries have broken down and the labels "liberal" and "conservative" don't work any more, because voters aren't following strict ideological patterns.

Each voter has a list of issues and will vote for the presidential candidate who comes up with the best solutions to the problems on that list, Riegle said.

"The whole question of the economic future for themselves and for their family is very powerful. There are other concerns about the environment and the arms race and things of that kind, but the economic questions are right on the surface and people really feel them," he said.

"I think both candidates will find that about and they have to convince people."

"I think the other major yardstick will be perceptions of leadership, competence, integrity, a sense of command, who can really step into this job and really do it."

Riegle said he believes Dukakis can carry the state, which would make him the first Democratic presidential candidate to do that since 1968, but that it will be close.

STATE SEN. Dick Posthumus, a co-chair of the Bush campaign in Michigan, said any concern about the future favors the GOP ticket.

"I'd say that promising a brighter future would be pretty tough for the party that led us to the time before 1980 when we had 20-percent interest rates, 15-percent inflation, and unemployment at 10 percent for most of Michigan," said Posthumus, R-Alto.

"Everyone is always looking to the future and no one ever knows for sure what's going to happen, but most polls show people are more optimistic about the future today than they have been," he said. "I think that's the tough one for the Democrats."

# Bond issue may help Rouge

By Wayne Peal  
staff writer

An \$800 state bond issue this November could give a boost to the Rouge River cleanup.

The issue, which will be on the ballot now that legislative wrangling is over, would help finance environmental cleanup projects, including the Rouge River, and provide money for county parks.

A House-Senate conference committee last week overcame some obstacles that threatened to keep the issue off the ballot.

If passed, the Rouge effort could receive \$4 million or more. That's a portion of the \$20-year projected cost of nearly \$1 billion, but it helps cut into the local share of that cost. Cleanup

proponents hope to garner federal money to clean up the river that winds through many suburban Detroit communities in Oakland and Wayne counties.

Getting the issue on the November ballot is only a first step. It must then be approved by voters.

Environmental specialist James Rogers of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments said "it's pretty clear" that the Rouge cleanup also support the bond issue.

"THE MAIN thing is that it would re-establish the state revolving (environmental) fund," Rogers said. Re-establishing that financing source was a major recommendation in SEMCOG's recent 20-year action plan for eliminating Rouge pollution.

The issue involves two bond proposals. The first would sell \$600 million in bonds for environmental cleanup, improved handling of solid waste and clean water efforts — potentially including the Rouge River.

The second would involve a \$140 million bond sale with proceeds to be divided evenly between state and local parks.

While no official projections have been made, one Wayne County official estimated the Rouge cleanup could receive some \$4.5 million from the bond issue.

Rouge supporters said they envision a state revolving fund created by a \$355 million federal grant and \$75 million in matching state money.

At that, state financing would be a drop in the bucket. The estimated

Rouge cleanup cost is a minimum \$900 million over the next 20 years — with loan payments on local bonds potentially doubling that figure.

A dispute between Democrats and Republicans over whether cleanup workers should be paid prevailing union wages had threatened to keep the issue off the ballot.

Republicans said they were concerned that paying prevailing wage rates would reduce the number of projects that could be financed under the bond issues.

Democrats saw the issue as a back door attempt by the GOP to rewrite state law and applying prevailing wages.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

# 'A' is for abortion on ballot

Michigan's referendum on state-funded abortions for Medicaid recipients will appear on the Nov. 8 general election ballot as Proposal A, elections officials have ruled.

The Board of State Canvassers, which oversees Michigan elections, determined the order in which ballot questions will be listed on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Proposal A asks whether voters want to implement a law passed by the Legislature prohibiting use of tax money for abortions for women on public assistance.

A "yes" vote implements the law and prohibits Medicaid abortions. A "no" vote supports the position of two governors who vetoed the bill and want Medicaid-paid abortions.

A SUGGESTED crime victims' rights amendment to the Michigan Constitution was designated "B."

The Legislature is still considering whether to add another issue to the ballot — a proposal to sell \$800 million in bonds to finance environmental cleanup and recreation projects.

Proposal A seems bound to over-

shadow any other ballot questions. It may end more than a decade of controversy over abortions for indigent women.

Anti-abortion forces for years have tried to stop state from paying for an annual \$8 million welfare-paid abortions, but gubernatorial vetoes always stood in the way.

Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat, and his Republican predecessor, William Milliken, together issued 17 vetoes, many of them excluding from the budget a line banning Medicaid payments for abortions.

Both governors had the same reason for their vetoes: a belief that it's unfair to limit poor women's access to a procedure readily available to other women.

JUDITH FREY of the People's Campaign for Choice said she didn't think the designation "Proposal A" gave either side a campaign edge.

"I don't think it really matters what letter it is," she said. "We're really glad to have a letter because it was the last undecided issue."

David Szymanski, spokesman for

the Committee to End Tax-Funded Abortions, said he was pleased with the top-of-the-ballot spot.

"We think underscores the importance of the issue," he said. "The whole tax-funded abortion question is, we think, a very important one for Michigan."

He brushed aside questions about the letter designation linking in voters' minds "A" and abortion. "I don't know that it's politically significant," he said.

STATE REP. William Van Regen-

morter, R-Jenison, is leading a "Vote B For Balance" statewide campaign in support of Proposal B.

It asks voters to incorporate the Crime Victims Rights Act in the Michigan Constitution.

Supporters say such a constitutional amendment wouldn't substantially change victims' rights but would give the government the power to make assessments to force criminals to pay for victims' reparations.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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