Thursday, March 9, 1989 O&E Suburban senators block school tax plan

All seven Observer & Eccentric area state senators Wednesday voted against placing a school tax reform plan on the ballot as the Senate twice rejected it by narrow margins. But supporters wowed to try again — perhaps as early as today — to place the massive plan before vol-

tion.

"The problem is the high property tax," said Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, summing up the feelings of most suburban senators that the proposal ried to do too much. "We're trying to solve two problems (with the proposal) — equalize school funding and high property taxes. We can't do it.

BUT THERE were signs that 26 votes — two-thirds of the 38 members — actually favor placing the plan before voters. Wednesday's votes were 21-41 and 22-14. Senate Democratic leader Art Miller of Warren publicly asked majority leader John Engler of Mount

Pleasant to deliver 13 Republican votes in exchange for 13 Democratic votes. "We ask him to put up 13 outes. We got a little wisdom since walking the plank in 1983," said Miller, referring to the Democratic-supported income tax increase that resulted in the receil of two Democratic senators.

Countered GOP floor leader Phil Arthurhultz of Whitehall: "There are

crease.

Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., said the Senate needs more money to adequately oversee the executive branch.

THE SO-CALLED Nye-Oxender lan, named for two rural Republipian, named to two furar Republi-can state representatives who spon-sored it, would raise the sales tax two cents, yielding \$1.6 billion, and cut school operating taxes \$1.1 bil-lion — an average of one-third state-

lion — an average of one-third state-wide. In addition, it would allow state-wide collection of part of the property tax, resulting in tax base sharing between rich and poor school districts. It would give all districts more money, but poorer districts would be raised most. Nichols, whose district includes the Rochester area, offered an alternative to cut property taxes and use bigger chunks of the state budget for add to schools. It lost 15-23. Seen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, criticized the plan for "too much detail... We're writing a csinoid aid) formula into the constitution." He said voters wouldn't un-

know, vote no."

Faxon offered a 50-50 plan: a 50
percent increase in the sales tax and
a 50 percent cut statewide in school
operating property taxes. It falled
17-20.

17-20. Cruce said even in the less affluent Madison Heights Lamphere district, homeowners would pay \$50 less in property taxes and \$200 more in sales taxes. In Troy, they would save \$500 on property taxes and pay \$800 more in sales taxes—while schools would benefit only \$250 per exhibit an aid.

schools would benefit only \$250 per child in aid.

Sen. Richard Fessier, R-Com-merce, said the real problem is ris-ing property assessments and op-posed the plan.

Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-North-wills, wided on begause "people

Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville, voted no because "peoplewould pay \$486 million more in sales
taxes than they get back in propertytaxes. It's a tax hike, not just a tax
shift." In addition, he said, Michiganians would pay \$95 million more
in federal income taxes because the
higher sales tax wouldn't be deducthbie from taxable income, while propcrty taxes are.

Sen William Faust I-Westland

Sen. William Faust, D-Westland, unsuccessfully sought amendments to protect Taylor and Westland, which have tax increment finance authorities.

Senators multiply newsletters raises absorbing much of the in-

Here's how Michigan's U.S. sena-tors were recorded on major roll call vôtes in the week ending March 3. There were no House votes during the week.

senators' Mailing — By a vote of 50 for and 47 against, the Senate expanded its franking privileges to permit up to a 50 percent increase in this year's budget for material to constituents.

Michigan Democrats Carl Levia and Donald Riegle voted yes.

The vote killed an attempt to block the expansion, under which senators can send up to six self-promotional newsletters annually to each postal patron in their state. That could generate 1.2 billion newsletters nationwide.

Roll Call Report

The new system will cost taxpayers about \$180 million if fully utilized. Senators spent \$36 million last year on all mail costs.

The year accounted desired the senators are accounted to the senators of the senators of the senators of the senators.

year on all mail costs.
The vote occurred during debate on legislation (S Res 66) to fund Senate committees in 1989-90, which later became law.
Supporter "

later became Wendell Ford, D-Ky, said the expansion would put send to the expansion would put send to the expansion would be the expansion would be the expansion would be send to an obstage. House members can send up to six newsletters annually.

Opponent Pete Wilson, R-Callf.,

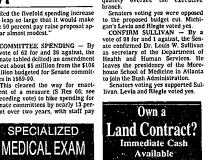
called the fivefold spending increase "a leap so large that it would make the 50 percent pay raise proposal ap-pear almost modest."

COMMITTEE SPENDING — By a vote of 62 for and 36 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment to cut about 35 million from the \$106 million budgeted for Senate committees in 1889-0. This cleared the way for enactment of a measure (S Res 66; see preceding vote) to hike spending for Senate committees by nearly 13 percent over two years, with staff pay

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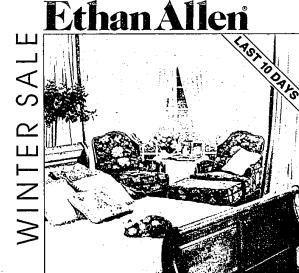
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