

POINTS OF VIEW

Guv 'not committed' to improving education

Question: Because of Governor Engler's "Robin Hood" act, I am being laid off, even with my five years teaching experience. I am bitter! I have always voted for school taxes in the community I live in, both when I was home raising children for 10 years and since I have been teaching. Now the tax money I vote in as a citizen in my community where I teach is being given to other school districts while I sit home. Are there other spin-offs as bad as mine?

Answer: For those who are not aware, the Robin Hood Act takes money away from the wealthy school districts and re-allocates the money to the poorer districts by cutting out the state's share of payments for categorical items.

This move reaches the highest level of legislative hyperactivity. Democrat and Republican Legislatures have gone on record as desiring to cut property taxes.

What they have accomplished is shifting the school tax responsibility to the more financially sound school districts who now must seek tax increases to maintain their present educational programs.

You ask if there are any other spin-offs as bad as your situation. The answer is an unqualified "yes." School-tax vote increases will be much more difficult to achieve in poorer districts as always, but severely difficult in the "out of formula" district where money will be used to support not as affluent districts.

In Northville (my community) the last time a school millage vote was rejected was in 1979. Last week, in my own precinct there were 800 "no" votes and 200 "yes" votes. The vote went down 3-1.

Why? Many professional people I've known for years have not had a raise in two or three years. . . bonuses . . . are you kidding?

Why? General Motors and "others" are downsizing from blue collar through management. My neighbor was recently laid off at General Motors at age 49, lost his home and is in tears. His comments about possibly losing football is I don't give a damn, I don't have a job.



Doc Doyle

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The state is not recognizing its responsibility and, frankly, some teacher unions are not in touch with economic reality. The M.E.A., of which I was a very active member being part of the initial group that fought for teacher bargaining rights in the early '60s, has done a masterful job in improving the lot of educators. Both teachers and administrators have moved from poverty where I started to a decent wage.

However, in today's market, if a local teacher's union believes citizens are going to support seven percent and eight percent raises, their leadership may need a trip to fantasy island. Those are different times.

Other impacts in an "out of formula" district I envision, if millages go down, include: massive teacher layoffs, which translate into huge increases in class size — probably 32 average in the elementary and 35 average in the secondary level as they were in the '50s, elimination of art, music and physical education in the elementary, pay for play-athletic participation, no field trips, no para-professional help. It's pure doom and gloom, but a strong reality.

We desperately need some visionary leadership to address the situation. This piecemeal approach via the Robin Hood Act appears to be only one step by Engler to "gut" education to meet his major goal — balance the budget.

He is consistent and he is driven to win that goal. But, please John, please don't speak about any commitment to education.

James "Doc" Doyle, a former teacher/school administrator/university instructor, is president of Doyle and Associates, an educational consulting firm.

It's time to quit stalling on bathroom equity

Let's hope the bathroom equity issue in Michigan is solved quickly. I'm tired of waiting, not for the legislators to act, but for my wife.

It's something us men have done enough of when our wives or girlfriends need to stop. I've missed the start of hockey games and some of Hank Williams Jr.'s best songs standing waiting for my wife. The reason was that there aren't enough rest room facilities at public places to handle the situation.

The state legislature is trying to fix it by mandating more. It's a good idea, but I'm just afraid of what we're going to end up with. Chances are some equal rights nanny will argue for urinals in women's rest rooms. It's a moot point, for reasons known to many.

But while we all hope the legislature does something about the situation, it's worrisome to turn the issue of rest

rooms over to government. Just look at what the wizards in Lansing have done to school financing. And now they expect us to trust them with rest rooms. While education is important, rest rooms have a certain immediacy to them.

They're just too important to turn over to state lawmakers, overzealous government regulators, feminists and liberals. But then again, even those folks need to find a rest room on occasion.

The trouble with government is that once the lawmakers unleash the bureaucracy on an issue, all sense goes out the window, and the terminally politically correct sneak in the back door.

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one. Chances are the state would end up hiring a legion of rest room inspectors to make sure all would comply with state laws.

And there are probably just some rest rooms that wouldn't survive government, especially those in northern Michigan bars where the owners feel obligated to carry out the theme of the place on the rest room doors. You know the kinds of places that mark the men's room with "Bucks" and the women's room with "Does."

But "Bucks" and "Does" is cliché. There are better ones. A place in East Pawas, a boating bar, marks its rest rooms with "Inboards" and "Outboards." The subtlety keeps non-boaters out of the place and causes some confusion for those who sail.

Bird hunting bars tend to be less subtle. There's the ubiquitous "Pointers" and "Setters," and then there's a turkey hunting bar in the Os-

cola County community of Fairview that uses the male and female names for the game bird to mark the bathroom doors. The names are a bit racy and decorum prevents me from using them.

The point here is that if we let state legislators take over public rest rooms, they won't stop at just making sure there are enough stalls for women in the Silverdome, they'll soon be taking aim at other places.

"Outboards" and "Inboards" will be placed in dry dock and feminists will declare open season on all the "Bucks," "Does," "Pointers" and "Setters" in the state.

Somewhat I'd just as soon resolve myself to wait for my wife or start a movement to bring back outhouses.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer Newspapers.

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