Bottles, taxes among issues

Four proposals face voters

Four state proposals will be on the Nov. 2 ballot for voter consideration.

Proposal A is the bottle bill and was initiated by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and allied groups. Basically, the bill would prohibit the use on non-returnable beverage bottles and cans.

The wording of the proposal on the ballot will look like this:

Proposal A. Proposed law to prohibit the use of non-returnable bottles and cans for soft drinks and beer, to require refundable cash deposits for soft drinks and beer containers, and to provide penalties for violation of the law.

The proposed law would:

a) Prohibit the use of non-returnable bottles and cans for the sale of soft drinks and beer and for off-premises consumption.

b) Set up a requirement for cash deposits and repayment of deposits for soft drink and beer containers.

c) Prohibit the use of metal soft drink and beer containers with detachable openers.

d) Establish fines for violation of the law by dealers, distributors and manufacturers.

Should this proposed law be approved? Yes or No.

Opponents of the bill contend that putting a deposit on containers will not solve the litter problem and will only affect a small percentage of environmental trash. Instead they suggest alternative ways to the litter problem such as increasing community participation of litter efforts, stronger enforcement of the litter laws already in effect and establishing more recycling centers.

The cost of beverages will have to increase, opponents are saying, because machinery will have to be made-over to accommodate an all-returnable product.

More warehouse facilities, an increase in transportation and new machinery will be needed. But most believe the bill would require an increase in employment.

Proponents of the bottle bill contend that beverage container litter is a significant component of the total litter volume and that surveys used by those opposing Proposal A are basing their litter figures on a per item count in which one bottle or can counts the same as one gum wrapper. They contend if the bill is passed, people will be more willing to pick up container litter when they know they can redeem it for cash.

Industrial waste will decrease according to the backers of the proposal, and natural resources will be reserved by re-using already made containers. Garbage pick up will also be reduced.

Although the initial cost of buying a beverage package will be higher, the extra cost will be refunded on container return. Proponents say beverage costs will not increase because drinks that are now available in returnables cost less than throwaways since companies do not have to remake the bottles.

They also point out that because the bill would not go into effect until two years after its enactment, brewing and bottling companies will have sufficient time to make the machinery changeover.

PROPOSAL B on the state ballot concerns the age required to qualify for the offices of state senator and state representative.

On the ballot the proposal will look like this:

The proposed amendment would:

a) Reduce the age requirement to be eligible for the offices of state senator and state representative from 21 to 18.

b) Require that to be eligible for the offices of state senator and state representative a person must be a registered elector of that legislative district.

c) Change the time a person must have these qualifications from the date of assuming office to the date of qualifying as a candidate.

Proponents of the bill, sponsored by State Rep. Jackie Vaughn III (D-Detroit), contend that if a person is old enough to vote he or she is old enough to run for a state office.

Opponents of Proposal B say that at age 18 a person does not have the knowledge or experience necessary to execute the duties of those offices.

PROPOSAL C would impose a limit on state taxes. Basically, the proposal would limit all state taxes and spending to 8.3 per cent of the combined personal income of Michigan residents.

The wording on the ballot will look like this:

a) Limit all state taxes and spending to 8.3 per cent of combined personal income of Michigan, except taxes for repayment of bonds. State taxes means all state revenue excluding federal aid.

b) Provide for refund of excess revenue to individual taxpayers.

c) Permit 8.3 per cent limitation to be exceeded only if governor declares specific emergency approved by two-thirds vote of legislature.

d) Prohibit state adopting or expanding local programs without full state funding.

e) Prohibit state from reducing existing level of aid to local governments, taken as a group.

f) Prohibit local governments from increasing existing taxes without voter approval.

g) Provide for implementation by the legislature.

Proponents of the bill, led by State Sen. John A. Welborn (R-Kalamazoo), believe that a ceiling on state spending will stop any future increases in state taxes and will force government officials to be more practical with the state budget.

The bill would also make Michigan more attractive to new industry, backers say, because it would provide a long-run tax certainty at state and local levels.

Opponents of Proposal C say it would shift the tax burden from state to local governments and that a reduction of state support of local programs, such as state aid to schools, would result in local millage votes to raise property taxes.

Proposal C would also force the legislature to eliminate the current tax credits the state allows senior citizens, homeowners and renters, opponents say.

PROPOSAL D would replace the present flat rate state income tax with a graduated income tax for the calendar year 1977 and thereafter; rates and bases of state income taxes would be determined by the legislature. The proposal was initiated by the Michigan Citizens Lobby.

On the ballot, proposal will be worded like this:

The proposed amendment would:

a) Remove constitutional ban on graduated income tax.

b) Reduce to 3.9 per cent maximum the income tax rate on taxable personal income of an individual or individuals filing a joint return on the first $20,000 of taxable personal income, or joint return personal income, adjusted upwards by $1,500 for tax payer and each dependent.

c) Raise tax rate of individual taxpayers on income over that amount to replace the loss of revenue caused by above tax reduction.

d) Establish constitutional minimum $1,500 exemption for tax payer and each dependent.

e) After Jan. 1, 1978, permit the legislature to establish bases and rates of personal income taxes.

Advocates of Proposal D say that it would benefit lower- to middle-income families and make upper-middle income families pay their fair share of income taxes. It would offer the majority of Michigan residents a chance to vote themselves a tax break by forcing those with incomes in the $20,000-plus range to make up the difference for the state. In this way, backers say, the legislature could replace lost revenue by increasing the tax rate on upper-income families who can most afford to pay more in income taxes.

Opponents of the proposal say that it would create an arbitrary class division and that a true graduated tax imposes gradually rising rates. They contend that since the bill is only designated for 1977, the legislautre could later impose another tax rate and base that might not be as generous. The proposal also would discriminate against two-income families, opponents say, and could possibly raise income taxes at the local level.

Communicators plan workshop

A workshop focusing on career opportunities in technical writing is scheduled at 7:30 p.m., Monday at the Fairlane Conference Center in Dearborn.

Sponsored by the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of Society for Technical Communication, the workshop is the first in a series meeting on the first Monday of each month through May.

The sessions are free to all those interested in technical writing, including editors, writers, illustrators and publishers.

Anyone interested in the society and its activites may call Ernie Mazzatenta at 575-3132.