

Survey finds abuse

Absentee ballots can be costly

By **TIM RICHARD**
(First of two articles)

Michigan cities and townships are paying a tremendous price for laws that have liberalized the granting of absentee ballots.

A survey of Observer & Eccentric Newspapers communities in Oakland County revealed that between seven and 20 per cent of voters were taking advantage of absentee voting privileges, sometimes improperly.

Basically, three kinds of persons may use absentee voters (AV) ballots: Those who are ill or disabled; those who are age 60 or older; and those who "expect" to be out of town. In some communities, "the word" apparently got around that all you had to do was say, "I expect to be out of town."

The evidence is clear that many persons are taking advantage of AV ballots in November presidential elections to beat standing in long lines at the polls.

THE HIGH COST of AV voting is apparent in several ways:

• It simply costs clerks more to process AV ballots. Estimates range from \$1.25 to \$11 per ballot, with an average of about \$1, compared to a half-dollar or less for a machine vote.

• AV ballots are cast on paper, and

so there is more room for human error. Elections in the neighboring 2d Congressional District and in Canton Township of Wayne County were badly spoiled because of recounts involving large numbers of paper AV ballots.

• Michigan is losing the advantages of machine ballot technology when vast proportions of voters use AV paper ballots.

SOME OF THE MORE affluent suburbs reported the highest rate of AV ballot use in the Nov. 2 presidential election.

Lathrup Village had 527 AV ballots of 2,742 cast, or 19.2 per cent.

Bloomfield Township found 4,131 of its 24,290 votes, or 17 per cent, cast AV.

Southfield Township, encompassing the villages of Beverly Hills, Plough Farm and Franklin, counted 1,431 AVs, or 15.1 per cent, of the 9,481 ballots cast.

The City of Southfield was on the median; 4,233 AVs of 33,427 votes for 12.7 per cent.

The high rate of AVs may have been affected by candidates who printed AV applications and sent them to senior citizens. James Burdick, Republican candidate in the 17th Congressional District, did that, as did other GOP candidates. But some clerks

doubted this had much effect.

Canton Township was an unusual case. The slate of Supervisor Robert Greenstein, defeated in the August Democratic primary, staged a write-in campaign; and the easiest way to do that is by using paper AV ballots.

Greenstein lost in a close vote, but he was unable to get a recount of AV votes. It seems that 15 roll workers in the AV "precinct" voted directly on the machines, and so the number of votes there was 15 greater than the number of paper AV ballots.

IT'S PERFECTLY CLEAR that the main motivation for use of AV ballots was to beat long lines at the polls.

Maximum waits ranged from 30 to 45 minutes in Bloomfield Township to as much as three hours in Troy. A typical maximum wait was about one hour.

Considering that an informed voter can get the job done in a minute, 60 minutes of waiting for a minute of voting seems to strike many voters as inefficient.

In Avon Township, the proportion using AV ballots jumped from four per cent in the August primary to 6.6 in November.

Bloomfield Township's AV turnout leaped from 6.7 per cent in August to 17 in November.

Lathrup Village went from seven

per cent in August to 19.21 in November.

Rochester recorded 8.5 per cent in August and 11 per cent in November.

The City of Southfield's proportion more than doubled—from 5.2 per cent in August to 12.7 in November. Southfield Township went from 6.5 to 15.1 per cent, also more than doubling the proportion of AVs.

Troy's modest increase was from 4.46 per cent AV in August to 7.34 per cent in November.

In the May presidential primary, AV usage was typically about three per cent.

Vacations don't account for many AVs because many persons vacation in August than in November. Business trips can't possibly be four times more numerous in November as they are in May. The number of senior citizens didn't rise that suddenly.

The only possible reason is that many voters—both those with legitimate excuses and the plain lazy—decided to take advantage of AV ballots to avoid the long lines.

(Next: What can be done about abuse of the AV ballot and long lines at the polls? The election clerks have some strong ideas.)

SHOP OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC CLASSIFIED

TO FILL YOUR NEEDS AT BARGAIN PRICES

You and Your Friends can learn to play **TENNIS!**

Starting week of Jan. 10th

FROM \$19 Per Series of Lessons

NON MEMBERS INVITED!!!

Beverly Hills Racquet Club

31555 SOUTHFIELD RD. N. of 13 Mile 642-8500

TWIN, FULL, QUEEN OR KING SIZE PLATFORM BED — REG. \$329

Randomly finished in your choice of white or Carpathian Burl laminates. Innerspring or foam mattresses available.

Your Choice **\$199**

Towne & Country interiors

Dearborn—23600 Michigan Ave.
Bloomfield—4107 Telegraph Rd.
Rochester—1110 S. Rochester Rd. in Winchester Mall

Economist says tax cut inefficient way to create jobs

Using tax cuts to create jobs will cost the government about six times as much per job created than would an expanded public employment program, according to the chairman of the National Council on Employment Policy (NCEP).

Michigan State University Prof. Charles Killingsworth recently presented the NCEP's plan for reducing unemployment by direct creation of jobs.

NCEP is a non-profit organization of college teachers who have a special interest in manpower programs and policy. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Ford Foundation.

IF NCEP'S PLAN is adopted, the economist said, it "would bring us within striking distance of President-elect Carter's goal" to reduce the national unemployment rate by 1.5 per cent in 1977.

The plan calls for expanding the present public employment program to provide a minimum of one million jobs (about 650,000 above the present level), at an initial cost of about \$5 billion per year.

"This single action would reduce the national unemployment rate to seven per cent or less within six months," Killingsworth said.

Furthermore, NCEP recommends that \$2 billion be added to the public works program, which would initially create another 112,000 to 140,000 new jobs within 12 months.

"The indirect effects of this expenditure would create an approximately equal number of jobs, for a total of roughly 250,000 jobs," Killingsworth said.

In addition, the council recommends expanding manpower training funds by at least \$1 billion with part of the sum going toward on-the-job training in private firms.

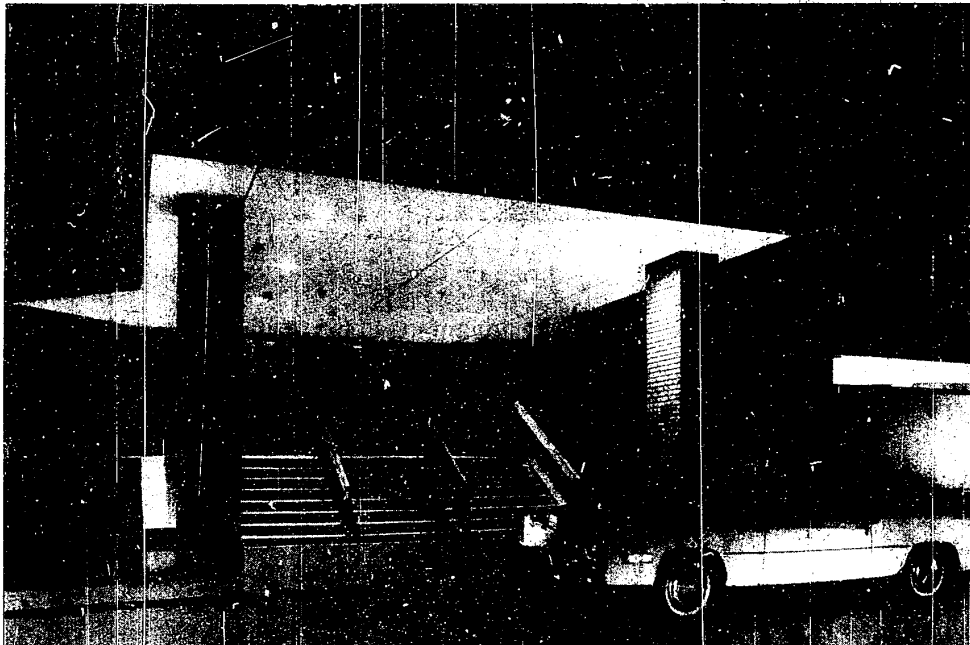
FINALLY, KILLINGSWORTH said, a tax cut of modest size might be considered in addition to the other increases in expenditures.

Any tax cut must be justified, however, on grounds other than its direct job-creating effects, Killingsworth maintained, pointing out weaknesses of using tax-cutting alone to reduce unemployment.

In addition to its excessive cost, he said, the direct benefits of a tax cut are not likely to go to the geographical regions and the labor force groups most adversely affected by unemployment and under-employment.

THE INITIAL BENEFITS of tax cuts obviously go only to those who pay federal income taxes—and this is mainly those who already have jobs," Killingsworth said.

Also, the NCEP chairman added, it isn't likely that Congress could complete legislative action on a tax-cut proposal quickly.



PREMIERES JANUARY 14th.

The new, exclusive, luxurious place to jog, swim, steam, sauna, exercise, play racquetball and more.

The new Bloomfield Vic Tanny Executive Health & Racquet Club. Starting January 14th, enjoy the peerless facilities of the most complete health & racquet club ever. Jog on a 1/16 mile banked track. Swim in the garden atmosphere of the olympic size pool. Relax in the soothing whirlpool bath. Take in some steam, try the sauna... exercise in plush, thickly carpeted conditioning areas that will change the way you think about physical fitness. And do it all in the luxury and comfort you deserve.

Join the Club.

Final 10 days for Special Charter Membership Rates
Rates Increase January 14th
Men...Women, Call Today 855-2300

The New Vic Tanny Bloomfield Executive Health & Racquet Club

VISIT OUR ON-SITE DISPLAY CENTER AT 6420 TELEGRAPH RD., AT MAPLE RD.
OPEN 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. WEEKDAYS, 7 p.m. on WEDNESDAYS

LAMP SALE IN PROGRESS

Michigan Chandelier

BIRMINGHAM 6580 Telegraph at Maple
ROCHESTER 435 W. Main at University

Come on over to our home Michigan's Largest Urban Flea Market