

Group pushes for constitutional spending lid

By KAREN ANNE KOPEKIN
Michigan voters may get the chance to put a lid on state spending with a constitutional amendment.

Dick Headlee, head of Taxpayers United, Inc., a group which has organized a petition drive to limit state spending, wants a proposed amendment to the state constitution placed on the November 1978 ballot.

Headlee, a vice-president of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, believes the increasing gap between state spending and personal income in Michigan is overtaxing residents. The spending has been increasing at a greater rate than income has.

His proposal is similar to Proposal C, which was defeated in the November 1976 election.

The issue, like Proposal C, would limit state spending to a certain percentage of personal income of Michigan residents.

Headlee maintains that this proposed amendment is more comprehensive and flexible than the defeated Proposal C.

The Farmington Hills man talked about the proposal and presented a short filmstrip about the petition drive at a recent Livonia Republicans meeting in the Hines Park Inn, Plymouth Road near Newburgh.

HE AND HIS CO-WORKERS must get 266,000 signatures of registered voters by May 1 to get the proposal on the November ballot.

"Restrictions must be placed on the state's spending," Headlee said.

"There is excessive taxation of those persons on fixed incomes, and the discretionary income of others is being eaten up with taxes," he continued. "Let's look at what has happened in Michigan in the last 10 years."

'Taxes too high'

Headlee showed several graphs relating to personal income and state spending.

"The personal income of the state is up 145 per cent since 1968," he said. "While state spending is up 235 per cent."

"Michigan's population is up a only 6.75 per cent while the number of state employees is up 50 per cent."

Headlee discussed what he called the most "revealing figures."

Personal income is up 145 per cent, far less than the state income tax in the last 10 years, he said. "If we, as taxpayers, don't stop the legislators from over spending, we'll be taxed to death."

HEADLEE EXPLAINED how his proposal would limit state taxes.

"The proposal, if passed," he explained, "will put all state taxation under voter control and will not allow legislators to exceed a specified level of spending unless they go to the voters."

"I'll tell you right now that the bureaucrats in Lansing aren't going to like this proposal. They don't want the voters to get involved in making decisions."

The president and chief executive of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. explained that the proposal would not allow legislators to increase spending unless the personal income of Michigan were increased.

to increase the state income level, they won't get any more money," he said. "They'll learn that they have to encourage new businesses and new money for Michigan. If they realize that, we won't lose another auto plant like we recently lost the Ford transmission plant to Ohio."

"There's nothing wrong with making it healthy in Michigan for business," he said to the group of 25 Republicans.

"When businesses settle in Michigan, that means jobs. And jobs mean more personal income for the state."

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL amendment contains eight regulations.

The amendment would:

- Limit state tax rate to a specific percentage of Michigan personal income.
- Provide for tax refunds to residents if there is excess of the state limit collected of more than one per

cent. Otherwise, the surplus will be transferred to the state budget stabilization fund.

• Provide for an extra tax levy for one year, without voter approval, if state legislators and governor agree there is an emergency.

• Prohibit state mandated programs to local governments without providing funds.

• Provide that state support to local governments will not be reduced below present levels.

• Require voter approval to exceed established tax limit except in emergencies.

• Prohibit present shifting of state tax to local property tax without voter approval.

"The proposed amendment simply requires that we have a progressive, responsive, accountable government," Headlee concluded.

Blues unveil mobile dental exam plan

Quality control is the name of the game.

Blue Cross-Blue Shield, one of the largest dental insurance carriers in the state, last week unveiled its mobile post-treatment dental examination program at Schoolcraft College.

The examination facilities are housed in a van, allowing the Blues to take the program to the customers—at factories or shopping centers, for example.

"We're trying to check the quality of dentistry being rendered," said Ruth Ann Klatt, a spokeswoman for Blue Cross-Blue Shield. "And we're trying to verify that no fraud is being committed," she added.

The new program is part of a larger picture, though. The company is pressing to keep insurance premiums down. One way of doing it is to check the quality of service and the truthfulness of claims.

Company officials could not estimate how much money could be saved through such procedures.

Mrs. Klatt said the company had discovered a number of dentists who were doing "less than satisfactory" work. She said the company also identified several dentists who had attempted to defraud the company by billing for work which was not done.

These examinations will "definitely be a deterrent to the fraud," Mrs. Klatt said.

She explained that it would be easy for patients to allow the fraudulent billing practices to slip past.

"The patients," Mrs. Klatt said, "are not really sure what all the codes and nomenclature mean."

In cases where inferior work is uncovered, Blue Cross-Blue Shield asks the dentist to redo the work at no additional cost to either the patient or the company.

The post-treatment examination is part of the contract between Ford UAW members and Blue Cross-Blue Shield. The company, however, is making the service available to all people covered by its dental policies.

Terry Thomas, director of child accounting for Oakland Schools, will speak.

All secretarial and clerical employees in public education in Oakland County can join OAES and are invited to attend. For more details and reservations, call Melva Artman, 879-0500.

Secretaries plan meeting

The Oakland Association of Educational Secretaries (OAES) will hold its spring dinner meeting March 14 at Marion Junior High, Waterford Township. Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7.

Terry Thomas, director of child accounting for Oakland Schools, will speak.

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