

# Voters ponder decision on Proposal A ballot

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New Detroit Inc. backs it, contending "it will provide significant property tax relief to homeowners in a mildly progressive manner."

Many statewide groups support it — the Farm Bureau, Municipal League, United Auto Workers, Michigan Association of School Boards, State Board of

Education, Presidents Council of State Colleges and Universities, Michigan Road Builders Association and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT** officials, however, break rank with their state associations. The Oakland County Association of

School Superintendents opposes Proposal A as "harmful to public education." Many K-12 districts agree. One major school criticism is that property tax revenues are capped at 6 percent at a time when consumer price inflation is at 12 percent and property values are rising even faster. They wonder if local revenues will keep pace with inflation. They fear they will have to go to an angry voting public in fall with requests for millage increases or waivers of the 6 percent cap — and they're less

than confident the voters will listen sympathetically. Politically, there is no question that Proposal A backers acted because they fear another property tax cut plan by Shawwassee County Drain Commissioner Robert Tisch might be worse. Tisch II, defeated in 1980, would have cut taxes \$2 billion vs. Proposal A's \$250 million. But as Oakland Community College President Robert F. Roelofs put it, "Nothing will stop Mr. Tisch."

**THE BIGGEST** guns against Proposal A, however, are not local schools but business groups, many in building and real estate. Realtors in the past have been Tisch's most fervent supporters. The Apartment Association of Michigan opposes A as "a poor attempt at tax reform that offers no relief to apartment dwellers or owners. . . . In addition, the 5.5 percent sales tax would boost all apartment owners' costs. . . . Increased costs of carpentry, appliances, repairs and maintenance would likely be passed onto resi-

dents in the form of higher rents." The Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan opposed it because, as President Dave Pink said, "This so-called tax-cut measure would have a devastating effect on an already-troubled housing industry. . . . Furthermore, the proposed 1.5 percent sales-tax increase would add at least \$500 to even the lowest priced home." **THE SALES** tax as a partial substitute for lost property taxes draws a share of the fire.

## how tax cut plan looks on ballot

Here is the official ballot text of Proposal A as it will appear in the May 19 state-wide special election.

### PROPOSAL A

**Proposal to reduce property taxes, reduce city income taxes, limit growth of property tax revenues, return additional sales tax to local governments and schools and give state lottery profits to school aid fund.**

The proposed amendment would:

1. Reduce by 50 percent homestead property taxes used for operating schools and local governments. Reduction limited to \$1,400 in 1981 and changed yearly as home values change.
2. Reduce by 50 percent local individual income taxes on first \$40,000 of taxable income.
3. Make state return to local governments all funds lost by above reductions.
4. Limit yearly property tax revenue growth to 6 percent by property type unless raised by local voters.
5. Raise sales tax from 4 percent to 5.5 percent. Raise must be returned to local governments and schools.
6. Let farms and forests be assessed at use value.
7. Give state lottery profits to school aid fund.

Should this amendment be adopted?

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