

# The Senate race

## GOP candidates differ on defense, nuke freeze

By Suzie Rollins Singer  
Staff writer

For the most part, Republican U.S. Senate candidates had minds of their own when they discussed Japanese trade regulations, the big defense budget and a nuclear arms freeze.

But as the conversation turned to inflation and the Social Security system's problems, they sang from the same sheet of music.

Senate hopefuls Deane Baker, William S. Ballenger, Robert J. Huber and Philip E. Ruppe answered questions Tuesday at the Bloomfield Republican Women's Club.

All men agreed that any of them was a better choice than Democrat incumbent Don Riegle.

"Riegle will be beaten by one of the four men here," Baker told the 125 women gathered around a Bloomfield Hills resident's pool. "The economy has to turn around to make the Republican's chances better, and I'm confident it will."

THE ECONOMY was the first question they addressed. All praised President Reagan for lowering inflation.

"All during the '70s, the major domestic economic issue was inflation," said Ballenger, 40, former state senator and director of licensing and regulation.

"Inflation was over 12 percent then, and the No. 1 priority of the Reagan administration was to cut inflation. We've got to give (Reagan) credit for that — he did it. Interest rates also came down by 20 percent since Reagan took office," Ballenger added.

Huber, 59, a Troy industrialist, former congressman, state senator, mayor and county commissioner, saw a parallel between the U.S. recession and Great Britain's prior to the election of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government three years ago.

"England is just turning around today after three



William Ballenger

Deane Baker

Robert J. Huber

Philip Ruppe

years under Margaret Thatcher. We can't expect ours (economy) to change since October," Huber said.

THE BEEFED-UP defense budget was another area where three candidates supported Reagan. Only former U.S. Rep. Ruppe, 54, said the Pentagon should share in the budget-cutting responsibility.

"In a year that it is so tough on autos, the Pentagon has to share the responsibility of cutting. They owe the taxpayers the best level of efficiency we can afford, but we can't afford every weapon system," said Ruppe, a Houghton businessman. His opponents disagreed.

"The defense of this nation is vital," said Baker, 55, a University of Michigan regent and builder from Ann Arbor. "The president did submit plans to reduce the Air Force wing, but defense is important."

Said Ballenger, "Our military budget is half the percentage of the total budget (compared to the

last year of the Kennedy administration. The Russians have surpassed us in all areas, and I would support the president and try and refurbish the military."

AN OFFSHOOT of the defense budget was the nuclear arms race with Russia. All agreed they don't trust the Russians.

Said Ruppe, "I think the threat of nuclear war is something we don't want to believe could happen. We must reduce the number of Russian missiles. But before we can have a freeze, we must be sure of verification of the Russian arms."

Baker was opposed to a nuclear arms freeze. "I don't trust the Russians. When you make yourself subservient to the Russians, you give up your freedom," Baker said.

Huber agreed. "There will never be peace in the world until the largest power agrees to it. This is

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