

House: 'no' to budget/con-con proposal

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4-3 support to the unsuccessful measure and senators backed it 3-1.

"Congress will never allow a constitutional convention," said Republican state Rep. W.V. Brotherton of Farmington, a six-term member. "Congressmen would have rivals from con-con delegates. History shows a lot of con-con delegates end up in office."

The Farmington veteran of city and county government said a balanced-budget amendment is needed because "Congress isn't doing it on their own. If they cut services, they catch hell. If they raise taxes, they catch hell. Maybe we need to do it to help them."

THE BALANCED budget/con-con issue was pronounced "dead" for the remainder of this session by House minority leader Michael Busch, R-Saginaw, after Thursday's half-hour session.

Conservative backers of the plan saw their hopes dashed that Michigan would become the 33rd state to petition Congress either 1) to pass a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution and send it to the states for ratification or 2) call a constitutional convention "for the specific and exclusive purpose" of proposing such an amendment.

The Senate Wednesday backed the proposal 24-14.

Here is how area lawmakers voted:

• **No** — Reps. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield; David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield; and Judith Miller, R-Birmingham. Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills.

• **Yes** — Reps. W.V. Brotherton, R-Farmington; Mat Dunaskis, R-Lake Orion; Gregory Gruse, R-Madison Heights; and Gordon Sparks, R-Farmington. Sens. Doug Cruse, R-Troy; Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield; and Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford.

IN THE House, 43 Republicans and eight Democrats supported it while 10 Republicans and 46 Democrats were opposed.

IN THE Senate, 19 Republicans and five Democrats voted yes; one Republican and 13 Democrats were opposed.

In Senate debate, the measure's supporters were mostly silent, confident they had the votes. But not opponent Faxon, who was a delegate to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961-62 and a legislator for 21 years.

"A constitutional convention is a sovereign body, and there is no way to limit the powers of a sovereign body," he said.

Faxon scoffed at the language declaring Michigan's resolution a "nullity" unless a con-con were limited to a single topic. "It is like saying that after you shoot the victim, you can then extract the bullet because it will self-destruct," Faxon said.

AREA LAWMAKERS stuck to long-held positions on the issue.

"For my first four months, it was my top legislative priority," said Dunaskis, whose district includes Oakland Township. As to fears that a constitutional convention would rewrite America's basic document, Dunaskis scoffed. "I believe 100 percent we'd never see a con-con called."

"A Bob Carr (liberal) Democratic congressman in the 6th District would never allow a Tom Ritzer (his 1984 Republican challenger) loose in his district to campaign for con-con delegate. They (congressmen) want the spotlight on themselves," said Dunaskis, a third-term member who opposed it, called the language limiting a con-con to a single purpose "foolish," adding, "Sen. Ed Fredericks (Senate sponsor) wants a con-con. He said it publicly."

A SUPPORTER of the balanced budget amendment who rejected the con-con idea was freshman Honigman of West Bloomfield. "I was for a balanced budget amendment when only about 12 percent of the population supported it," but he voted no and thinks his lakes-area constituents will support him.

"They sent out a mass mailing, that National Taxpayers whatever-it-is. They didn't really mention a con-con."

Tuning in the elections

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for Bob McCann viewed the concept as "brilliant. I hope we have the opportunity to do it again."

Workers behind the scenes brought results to their neighbors on pay-TV station Channel 12. "Residents manned everything," Samouelian added. "The experience brought a local, cooperative spirit to TV production."

Community leader Jean Fox contributed by explaining, on the air, how local government works. On-site producers included David Tietmeyer in Farmington Hills, Pat Voss in Farmington and Todd Whitman in Novi. John Wiley coordinated the effort from the studio.

Although she estimated the election audience "in the thousands," Samoueli-

an could not give an exact viewer count from the 17,500 area cable subscribers. One Farmington council winner, Arnold Campbell, viewed the entire election results on cable from his living room.

THOSE WHO watched gave their opinions, affecting future coverage. Most people want to see and hear candidates directly instead of through a reporter, and want on-going coverage of poll results.

Only one candidate, a Novi council winner, was interviewed on the program. In the future, interviews will be arranged in advance with candidates, Samouelian said.

Results were obtained directly from city clerks, assuring accurate figures.

Doug Ross to speak

The 1985 Distinguished Speaker Series, sponsored by the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College, will conclude with a presentation by former state Sen. Doug Ross, at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14.

Ross, currently director of the Michigan Department of Commerce, will discuss Michigan's Economic Development Program in Room J-294. Admission is free. All interested persons are invited to attend.

At the request of Gov. James Blanchard, Ross conducted an extensive study of the state's economic climate and served as director of both the Michigan Youth Corps and Project Self-Reliance. He also served as director of the Michigan Citizens Lobby and Michigan Chapter of Common Cause.

For additional information, contact Harvey Bronstein at 471-7750.

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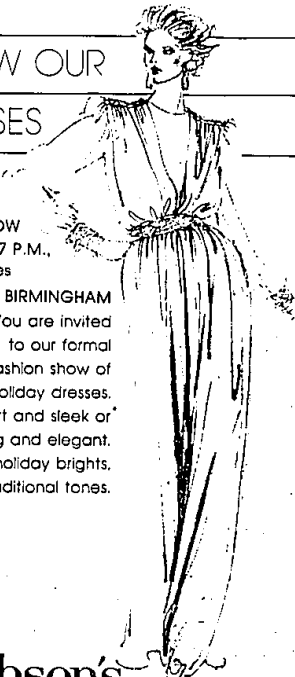
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