

Faxon plans to 'hold the fort' for schools

By Jan Jeffers
staff writer

As the representative of an affluent suburban district, state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, describes his position for the year ahead as holding the fort.

"A lot of what I'm going to do is defend our turf and hold on to what we have. There's a strong sense of attack against the out-of-formula school districts. There's a redistribution of wealth concept," Faxon said.

Faxon said that Gov. James Blanchard's budget proposals for fiscal year 1990-1991 will include the proposal that out-of-formula school districts will pay Social Security for teachers, which could cost a district several million dollars per year. In addition, Faxon said that the governor will propose to eliminate categorical payments made by that state to the school districts, including financial assistance in areas such as

special education, vocational education and transportation.

The impact of a change of that magnitude would be extraordinarily dramatic," he said.

THE ASSISTANT minority floor leader in the state senate, Faxon represents District 15, which covers Novi, Southfield, Farmington, Farmington Hills and Berkley. He is a 19-year veteran of the state senate who previously served as a state representative for six years. Faxon is up for re-election in 1992.

Faxon's answer to maintaining a quality level in the state's school systems is Senate Bill 570, introduced on October 1989, which calls for a consolidation of the existing 563 school districts. Under this system, no school district would be smaller than 2,000 students, which would bring the number of districts in the state down to less than 250.

"By redrawing the boundaries, we remove a lot of duplication of ser-

vices and facilities. It's a bill that's provoked considerable comment among the school and business communities in Farmington, the school system has supported it," Faxon said, adding that the bill is also supported by the Oakland County Chamber of Commerce.

"Right now, we have many districts below 500. It creates units that are unable to provide the appropriate skills for work in the 21st century."

Education fits into the particular interest Faxon takes in quality of life issues, including the arts, historic preservation, grants to communities, care of the elderly and the right of an individual to decide in advance if his or her life should be artificially prolonged.

"I've been a strong supporter for state recognition for alternatives for the care of the frail elderly, alternative to independent living and nursing homes," Faxon said, including more at home care of elderly.

"I have a series of bills involved with helping people care for the elderly."

The state senator's mother, who is almost 91, lives with him in his Farmington Hills home.

FAXON SPONSORED Senate Bill 135 in February 1989, which would allow an individual to make choices in advance as to how his or her life will be maintained. If passed, the law would allow someone to write a "living will" stating a wish not to remain hooked-up to life support equipment if death would be otherwise imminent.

"Michigan is one of the few states in the country that doesn't have legislation to determine the extent to which heroes can be used to extend a life," Faxon said. "When your death is imminent, you don't want to be hooked up to machinery and kept maintained for weeks in an unconscious state simply because the technology is available. It's allowing

people to make their own decisions."

"I think it's got a very good chance to go this year. It may not be my bill, it may be another bill."

"I believe in choice for all people. Women should be able to make a choice as to how they want their bodies used."

A strong supporter of the arts, Faxon said he hopes to push through the state budget increases in funding for major cultural institutions such as the Michigan Opera Theater, the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

The governor's recommendations for the last couple years have remained flat. I've been trying to up it," he said.

Faxon serves on the state senate's subcommittee on transportation, an area vital to the interests of Oakland County residents.

"The need to recognize enormous growth in this area requires that we have in place road systems that can handle our traffic so we don't be-



Sen. Jack Faxon

come totally gridlocked," he said.

He supports the development of new roads like the Haggerty Connector, not simply the repair and widening of existing roads.

Series on alcohol and drug abuse under way

The 16 Catholic parishes in the Farmington-Southfield Vicariate are hosting a five-part series called "Alcohol & Drugs: Use and Misuse" at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills. The series began Tuesday.

The informational series is open to people of all ages from throughout the metropolitan area. It is presented by Henry Ford Health System's Maple Grove Chemical Dependency Treatment Centers. Mercy High School is on 11 Mile at Middlefield.

The first program featured Maple Grove Community Education manager Sis Wenger, who spoke on "The Disease of Chemical Dependency: Early indicators, progression and physical complications."

THE SERIES will continue on four successive Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. through Feb. 20 with the following programs:

• Jan. 30 "Impact on the Family," Charles Weddle, residential therapist, Maple Grove.

• Feb. 6 "Alcohol, Drugs and Teens," impact on the adolescent, indicators and progression of the disease. Mary Kay Meier, coordinator, Maple Grove Youth Treatment Center. Recovering teens will take part in the presentation.

• Feb. 13 "Intervention - A way to enable the chemically dependent person to accept help," Barbara Foster, Maple Grove Intervention Program. A recovering family

will take part in the presentation.

• Feb. 20 "Our Christian Community's Response - What can we do?" Southfield Judge Stephen Cooper. 48th District Court, moderator. The panel will include recovering professional, community and youth leaders, treatment professionals and educators.

"ALCOHOL AND drug use is a concern of many families and a problem for many families. We hope those who need answers to their questions about the subject will get them and we also hope that people who need assistance will find out where to turn through this series," said Tom Frommeyer, head of the Christian Service Commission of St.

Michael's Parish in Southfield. Frommeyer has co-chaired the Vicariate organizing committee for the series.

"Are You Concerned" series with Lois Letwin of St. Alexander's Parish in Farmington Hills.

"We also hope that the series will plant the seeds of action among the members of the participating parishes," he said.

Other participating parishes are St. Beatrice, St. Bede, Divine Providence, St. Ives (Southfield), St. Clare of Assisi, St. Columban, St. Fabian, St. Gerardo, Our Lady of Sorrows (Farmington/Farmington Hills), Holy Family, St. James (Novi), St. Joseph (South Lyon). Other participants are Mercy High School and the Duns

Scotus Friary in Southfield. Underwriting for printed material has been provided by Detroit Edison.

The "Are You Concerned" series is organized by Maple Grove Community Education. It has been given in more than 25 communities in southeast Michigan, reaching more than 20,000 people. It has been translated into Arabic, Chaldean and Spanish.

"Though its purpose is primarily ed-

ucational, it has often helped to spur local communities and groups like Families in Action to continue the educational process both for parents and young people," said Nancy S. Smith, coordinator of the series for Maple Grove.

For information on other community education programs, of adult and adolescent treatment services of Maple Grove, call 661-6100.

Commissioner outlines county's goals

Oakland County Commissioner Don Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, spoke to the Farmington Rotary Club about the duties and problems of a county commission. "The mystery government."

Wolf explained the everyday workings of the commission and outlined four major areas of concern that Oakland County will face in the next decade: solid waste, law enforcement, roads and a code of ethics.

"These areas stem from our rapid growth in the county and must be addressed on both a short and long term basis," Wolf said.

He pointed out that needed increased government services will not mean a tax increase. "The millage rate will remain the same, 4.6 mills, and I'm proud of that," Wolf said.

Wolf said addressing groups and organizations, along with a quarterly

meeting and a bi-weekly briefing, are another step to keeping its programs to make county government more visible.

and under available to the public. Wolf has office hours the first Saturday of each month at the Farmington City Hall (810 a.m.) and at the Farmington Hills City Hall (10:15 a.m. to Noon).

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