

Issue oriented

Knollenberg hears opinions

BY AILEEN WINGBLAD
STAFF WRITER

Voicing concerns on a variety of issues — from health care reform to federal budget plans to the abortion debate — scores of local residents turned out Saturday for a town hall-type meeting in the Farmington Hills City Hall with U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg.

A freshman to Congress, Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, represents the state's 11th Congressional District, which includes Farmington and Farmington Hills as well as several other communities in Oakland County and parts of Livonia and Redford Township.

Following a short opening speech to outline some of his proposals, Knollenberg opened the floor to comments and questions from the audience.

Knollenberg addressed a range of issues introduced by those attending the meeting, which he called an "essential and necessary" method of keeping in touch with the people.

"People have a right to know what is happening, to hear us and talk with us. To have this type of meeting is the best way to get the message across," he said.

Of course, not everyone in the audience shared Knollenberg's stated views on all issues discussed, as evidenced by the varied response he received from his profile stance, for example.

His firm stand against a federally controlled medical insurance program, however, drew resounding applause from the audience.

"We have the best medical care in the world, the highest technology. But rising costs are a problem," said Knollenberg.

He is currently working on a health care plan to present to Congress which calls for strengthening the free market forces and concentrating on internal reform,



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORMEAD

A word with the congressman: Farmington resident Ed Good (left) listens to U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg at the Farmington Hills City Hall.

among other measures.

"The (federal) government can't balance a budget. Don't let them get into this," he said. There is plenty of opportunity within the present system to "clean up" and "fine tune" what is already established, he said. "Let's not amputate the body to save an arm."

Regarding the federal budget, Knollenberg elaborated on his proposed Congressional Resolution 54, which calls for no new taxes without the balanced budget amendment, as well as other aspects of his economic plan focusing on pro-growth tax cuts, spending restraints and other structural reforms.

He was also asked to comment on the current M-102 road improvement plan for which federal funds are being sought. Knollenberg said that the situation is one of priority, with efforts under way to coordinate with the state trans-

portation department and other groups to deal with the project.

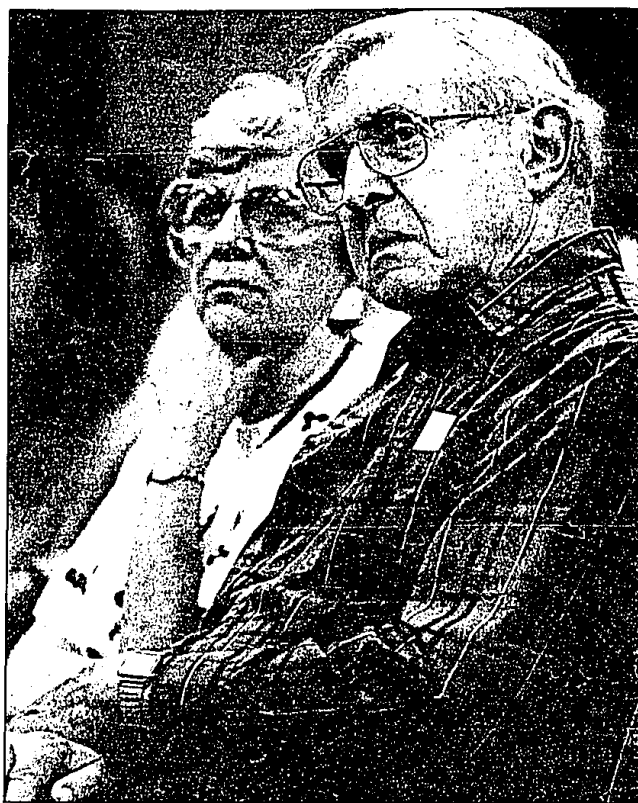
"It is a slow process, but certainly a case can be made. We'll be keeping after it," he said.

Other topics Knollenberg talked about included his support of congressional term limitations, as well as the controversial Brady Bill, which he does not support.

"The Brady Bill is well-intentioned but has no punch to it. I am against it," he said. "If you outlaw guns, outlaws are going to have them."

Plans are in the making to continue these local town hall meetings with Knollenberg, as he vows to keep listening to voters.

"I find that if you don't keep up day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, you can lose your edge. I believe in doing my homework, meeting with the people and focusing on specific issues that concern them," he said.



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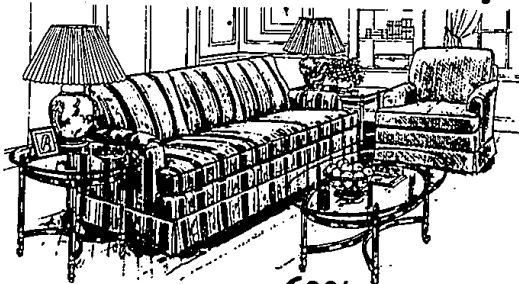
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