

Wayne County Issue

League Analyzes Home Rule

COUNTY HOME RULE

"Shall the County of Wayne elect a charter commission for the purpose of framing and submitting to the electorate of the County a county home rule charter under the constitution and laws of Michigan?"

All registered voters in Wayne County may vote "YES" or "NO" on this proposal.

EXPLANATION:

Although counties vary tremendously in population, complexity of problems and whether they are urban or rural, state law prescribes the same form of government for all standard counties. However, the 1963 constitution allows voters of a county to adopt a home rule charter providing for changes from the standard form to adapt the government to their needs.

ACT 293 implementing this right, passed by the Legislature in 1966, provides that:

- (1) There must be a salaried county executive elected on a partisan basis.
- (2) Sheriff, prosecuting attorney, county clerk, treasurer, and register of deeds to be elected on a partisan basis; drain commissioner and road commissioners may be elected or appointed. Any offices may be combined into one office as authorized by law.
- (3) Nothing in the charter shall be in derogation of the powers and duties of county road commissioners in the exercise of their statutory duties concerning the preservation of a county road system.
- (4) There shall be a legislative body known as county commissioners elected on a partisan basis from single member districts. There shall be no less than five nor more than 35 commissioners.
- (5) Existing offices, boards, commissions and departments may be reorganized and new ones added.
- (6) The charter may authorize the performance at the county level of any function or service not prohibited by law.
- (7) Taxing power is limited to 10 mills property tax, five of which must come within the 15-18 mill property tax limitation.

To write the charter, charter commissioners are to be elected. At the November 5 general election one will be nominated for each party from each of the 35 equal-population election districts. If the ballot proposition calling for a charter commission is passed, the final election of charter commissioners will be held February 17, 1969. If it is defeated, the nominations are null and void.

Charter commissioners will begin meeting soon after the February election and will have 180 days to complete their work. Their compensation will be \$15.00 per meeting for not more than 40 meetings during the 180-day period in which the charter must be written.

When the charter commission has completed its work, the charter will be submitted to the voters. It must be approved by a majority before it can take effect.

Whether the proposition passes or not, a 26-man Board of Supervisors will be elected in November to take office January 1, 1969. They are to be elected from 26 equal population districts as required by the one-man one-vote decision of the U. S. Supreme Court. There is no relationship between the election of candidates for the Board of Supervisors and the election of a charter commission.

Those Favoring This Proposal Say:

The most needed change in county government is to provide leadership. The charter would provide for an executive elected by and responsible to the people. There might also be an appointed administrator.

Greater efficiency and economy would be possible under a charter because there could be a streamlining of and reorganization of the numerous semi-autonomous agencies, offices, boards and commissions which make up the present county government and share in its administration.

The people of the county, through the charter and their directly elected county commissioners, will determine the types and levels of services that the county should provide.

The charter might provide an opportunity for increased county revenue to finance more adequately county services.

Those Opposing This Proposal Say:

ACT 293 is so restrictive and rigid that little real improvement in county government is possible. It cannot be readily changed. The charter commission is limited in

deciding what government structure best suits county needs.

Under other state legislation voters of Wayne County will be directly electing a small legislative body of 26 members so that there is no need for a change.

ACT 293 limits county taxing power to a property tax. The county would have no other source of revenue without appealing to the state legislature.

Enlarging the power and authority of county government could result in conflicts between cities and county over functions and which should provide various services.



'The pollution we are pouring into our air & lakes & streams is poisoning our environment and our lives. Each year the waste increases and the cost of treatment rises. While in Congress, I worked for federal funds for treatment facilities in every city & town. Now the pace has slowed. We must not waste any more vital years. Time is running out. Let's get action!'

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