

State Electioneering Expense Laws Still Weak

In 1967, the Michigan Legislature made 50 revisions in the state's election laws, but none dealt with the growing problems of campaign expenditures and accounting.

In the state and in the nation, laws adopted through the years have sought to control money spent to gain political office, but with little tangible result.

In a continuing effort to remedy the situation in Michigan, Secretary of State James M. Hare has proposed a wide revision of the law to tighten up on what Time Magazine has called "green power"—the money spent to assure the election of favored candidates.

HARE, WHO HAS termed the present law "impotent," says he is particularly concerned with several things:

1. Some political committees in Michigan have spent large amounts of money and failed to report the full amounts.
2. Because contributions received at testimonial dinners in non-campaign years presently have no place to be reported, this raises a question of interest to the Internal Revenue Service.
3. The Bowles Grand Jury of last year found that there was no clear requirement for identification of campaign expenditures.
4. There were no requirements to show the payment of debts following an election to be reported.
5. There was no requirement that office holders or office seekers report their income or assets.
6. There was no present enforceable limit on the spending for any office.
7. Reports from some committees gave no true indication as to what candidates were being supported in that report.

HARE SAYS the present law appears unenforceable, noting: "We've never had a case in which the attorney general thought we had a legal leg to stand on."

Hare's aides therefore have drafted and redrafted legislation to come up with some "better ideas."

Hare notes that Michigan has been relatively free of major political spending scandals. "But the facts make it clear that Michigan must act to close the loopholes and bring greater clarity, reason, and responsibility to political finance," he says.

HE CITED THESE major loopholes in the current law:

1. Despite the limit on a candidate's spending, he may set up any number of committees, each of which under legal interpretations may likewise collect funds within the specified limit—which in effect means no limit at all.
2. Some of these committees report their contributions and expenditures in states other than Michigan, making it impossible to get a true picture of the total amount spent.
3. But perhaps the biggest loophole of all is the general reluctance of legislators here and elsewhere to demand a full accounting of campaign spending.

Hare insists that a more stringent law is needed "to protect the public."

"WE MUST CLEAR any suspicion of taint from the many honest and sincere people who take part in political activity," he said.

Under the proposed law, the limit on a candidate's expenditures would be raised from \$40 to \$100 per 1,000 votes cast for president in the last national election. But the law also would make this sum the limit for any candidate and his campaign committees combined.

It would also make the candidate personally responsible for all spending, including the spending of funds collected by sources outside the state.

There would be no solicitation of funds or spending, except by the candidate himself, his own committees or the state central and county committees. And each of a candidate's committees would be authorized to function only by the candidate.

STRICTLY FRESH

Dining by candlelight is romantic, unless you're doing it because the utility company is getting snippy about your electric bill.

The translation for "vodka" is "little water," unless you happen to patronize the spa near our office.

Fellow we know who is the self-made-man type boasts of 20-20 vision, but WE know he has trouble with his "I's."

himself, who also would be responsible for their accounting.

The candidate and the authorized treasurers of his committees would be required to make sworn statements as to

disbursements before and after each primary or general election and to make annual reports even in non-election years.

IN A FURTHER major change, candidates would be

required to make annual disclosures of his net worth and all income—a step designed to prevent candidates from using political funds collected in their behalf for personal use. This would forestall scandals such

as that in which Sen. Thomas Dodd, D-Connecticut, was censured by the United States Senate.

The new law also would prevent corporations from contributing money for campaign

purposes, but a limit of \$5,000 (as in the federal Hatch Act) on contributions of any individual, prohibit anonymous contributions of more than \$5 (with excessive amounts going to the state general fund) and give

the Secretary of State subpoena power to determine the validity of campaign spending reports.

"We need all these things in this day of big spending—or we need more Abraham Lincoln," Hare observed.

"When Lincoln ran for Congress in 1846, friends collected a campaign fund of \$200. Lincoln spent 75 cents for a barrel of cider to treat farm constituents and returned \$199.25."

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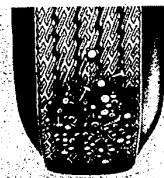
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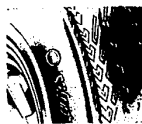
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7.75x14	\$42	\$21	2.66	\$21
8.25x14	\$44	\$22	2.82	\$22
8.55x14	\$47	23.50	3.04	23.50
8.85x14	\$50	\$25	3.25	\$25
8.15x15	\$44	\$22	2.87	\$22
8.45x15	\$47	23.50	3.04	23.50
8.85x15	\$50	\$25	3.43	\$25
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