

Open LETTER

March 1994

"A" is for Absurd

To The Lansing State Journal:

Your Sunday editorial touted how "fair" both the Proposal A school tax plan and its alternative are. Fair? Explain to me how. In one situation I can choose to have my sales tax raised to six cents on the dollar-- so every time I go to the store I can buy less for the money I earn. If I don't vote for this plan, I will be forced to have my income tax raised to six percent-- so I have less money to take to the store in the first place. And what do I get for either of these added expenses? Absolutely nothing.

Your opinion glows about "fairness to schools and school children," and "fairness to property owners." Well, what about fairness to those who are none of the above? I am not a school. I am not a school child, or the parent of a school child. I am not a property owner. So, please show me how this plan is "fair" to me? It most certainly is not fair at all. All that it does is take of the money I work hard for, without giving me any benefit in return.

Your subjective "tests of fairness" are also way off. Stabilizing school funding through these taxes instead of millages is not a positive outcome of these plans. Turning down millage increases was the best way the public had to tell the schools they need to control their costs. Either of the situations we will have after the March decision remove the voice of the voter in school budgeting-- ensuring the costs will now go wildly out of control. In the next few years, we will see whichever tax increase does not get approved this time brought up again-- to satisfy the next "emergency" lack of school funds.

The limiting of school taxes on

property would be a positive outcome, if it were not countered by corresponding raises in the other taxes that will result in a net tax increase for many, many citizens of Michigan. When residents "loudly and repeatedly clamored for reform," as you correctly noted, they did not mean they wanted smoke-and-mirror tax shifts. They wanted honest-to-goodness school finance and taxation reform, something that neither the tax plan nor the backup legislation achieve.

I will never, ever vote to increase my own sales tax, income tax, property tax, or the taxes placed on those who sell their homes or smoke cigarettes, as this proposal is trying to get me to do. If the State wants to punish my "No" vote by forcing a different tax hike on me because I don't agree with the tax shift of their choice-- so be it. I will get even with the Governor, my Senator and my Representative in the coming November election by voting out of office any of them who supported such tax increases.

But I will not, under any circumstances, vote "Yes" on Proposal A, or agree to any scheme that is so blatantly UNfair in the way it takes more of my money, while giving me absolutely nothing in return.

:Michael Emhart, 0294.

"Residents wanted honest-to-goodness school and tax reform not a smoke-and-mirrors tax shift like Prop A."

Sing Along!

To Whom It May Concern:

(and it should concern everyone)

In honor of the momentous day at the end of February, I have composed what I believe to be an appropriate eulogy to our Second Amendment rights.

"The Brady Bill"

(Sung to the theme of the sitcom, "The Brady Bunch")

Here's the story
Of a man named Brady
Who was struck with
Reagan's bullet in the head
And although he had been shot
By John Hinkley
He blamed the gun instead

Here's the story
Of a man named Clinton
Who was certain
The government knew all
All our health care
Our jobs and taxes
He wanted to control

'Til the one day when
The Bradys met the Clintons
And they vowed to
Get it over Capitol Hill
That this law
Would somehow stop all
violence
And that's the way it became
The Brady Bill
The Brady Bill/The Brady Bill
That's the way it became
The Brady Bill

:Michael Emhart, 0294.

State Interference by the Book

To Senator Koivisto:

I saw brief mention in the Sunday Lansing State Journal that you have asked for an investigation into the sale and resale of college textbooks. Please accept my input into this matter.

I received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Central Michigan University in 1988, and am currently one-third of the way through a Masters in Administration through the extended degree program of CMU. Prior to beginning these Masters classes I satisfied some prerequisites at Lansing Community College. In my academic pursuits I have been required to purchase textbooks, sometimes approaching \$100 per class! And when I have gone to sell them back, I have frequently been told there is a new edition coming out, the store is overstocked, or the professor is changing the text the next semester. I have spent many thousands of dollars on books, and gotten very little in return.

I mention my experience in this area to let you know that I am not an outsider who is writing to you with no knowledge. But, even as an "insider," I am not writing you to encourage your crusade against the bookstores!

It is true that it is a proper role of the government to investigate and settle allegations of fraud perpetrated against consumers by unscrupulous businesses. But it is not the duty of our State Senators, or an Education Committee, or any portion of the legislature to do so. If there are, as you are quoted as saying, "parents and students who are upset about what is happening," let them file a claim with the governmental branch that has been set up to specifically address such matters-- the Judicial system. Let the students or their parents take the bookstores to court, and let them prove that the owners are engaged in some sort of unfair business practices, and let them sue to recover the damages that have been done to them. I do not know how such a court case would be decided, and that is irrelevant, as far as my

interest in the matter is concerned.

I do not work at a bookstore, I don't know anyone who does or who profits from the sale or resale of textbooks. I am not a "special interest" with any stake in this except that I have been made an Interested Party by your call to get involved. Senator Koivisto, in addition to pursuing a Masters Degree through night school, I also work 50+ odd hours on a 40 hour salary so I can continue to receive promotions and raises, so I can pay my rent and bills and save for a soon-to-be-needed new car and the dream of a future house. The government removes a full one-quarter of what I earn

"Do you really think our lawmakers understand industry enough to begin meddling like that?"

from each paycheck, and to pay for what?

Police forces, roadways, and military defense I will accept. But the majority of my money goes to fund welfare, "social security," government schools, and silly endeavors such as this legislative investigation into a legitimate and necessary capitalist venture.

Colleges require students to buy textbooks. Bookstores exist to serve that need. Stores do not **have** to buy back books, and students and parents should be grateful for any money these stores are willing to give them to facilitate the recycling of their no-longer-needed property. What do you expect to be the result of the investigation? To force bookstores to take back titles they can no longer use? To mandate a minimum percentage a store

must pay back when a student returns books? Senator, do you really think our lawmakers understand the textbook industry enough to begin meddling like that?

You are quoted as saying your reason for getting involved is because the situation "smacks of a legalized rip-off." Well, Senator Koivisto, why don't you let the proper authority-- the courts-- decide that? You should concentrate instead on the legalized and **government run** rip-offs that are directly in the control of the legislature, and that are perpetrated on all Michigan citizens daily-- the exorbitant tax burden that has been placed on us, and the spending of our hard earned money on the food, housing, health, and education needs of others.

Please, Senator, save some of my tax dollars, and abandon the folly of an investigation on textbook trade-ins. Please, instead, spend your time and energy, and our money, working on real solutions to real problems. Our representatives are elected by the constituents to represent their interests when government actions touch the lives of the citizens, not to begin touching more and more. Please help limit such government interference, instead of proposing more.

:Michael Emhart, 0294.

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**"The gallows
wonderfully
concentrate
the mind."**

**: Representative
David Jaye**

Representatives Limited Government Message Causes a Commotion

The guest at the February MMLA dinner meeting was State Representative David Jaye, Republican from Shelby Township. Jaye has become infamous recently for breaking the terms of the probation he is serving for a drunk driving conviction, and for carrying a handgun to lawmaking sessions. All of the sensationalism surrounding Jaye serves only to detract from the important work he has been trying to do to limit the scope of the state government.

Representative Jaye first discussed what he terms the "Dirty Dozen" government abuses of taxpayer money. Symbolized by a cartoon character called "Perky the Pig," Jaye noted some pork-barrel programs that amount to \$3.5 billion of waste. Revealed in these is that public employees do not currently pay state income tax on their pensions, while private sector employees do; that state employees do not now pay any portion of their health care costs or primary pension contributions; and that state employees get a minimum of 40 paid days off a year, while employees of private companies typically get 15-20 days off a year.

Many of the other abuses singled out by Jaye were in the school system; such as taxpayer-funded cars, car phones, and travel expenses for administrators; millions of dollars in school district overburden subsidies that continue 6 months after the tax overburdens end; and a teacher "double-dip rip-off," where

teachers collect both their paychecks and an unemployment check in the summer.

Representative Jaye and other fiscally conservative legislators recommended putting an end to these tax breaks and perks in December, and all but one of their suggestions were rejected in a "secret" vote that was not reported to constituents in a way that citizens could see how their elected representatives voted. The one suggestion that was accepted was the prohibition of corporations taking advantage of tax breaks due to "poverty hardship."

The other topic of the evening was the one Jaye has gotten so much press over lately-- his dissemination of information pertaining to concealed weapons permits. Florida has handgun laws that are much more liberal than Michigan. For \$166, an FBI background check, a photograph, and a complete set of fingerprints sent through the mail, Florida will provide a qualifying gun owner with a permit to carry a concealed weapon. These permits are next to impossible to obtain in Michigan, but because Michigan has a reciprocal firearm agreement with Florida, a permit granted in Florida is valid here.

Gun control advocates in Michigan are outraged at this agreement, and at the State Representative who is making this fact known. But Jaye and other Second Amendment supporters point to the success Florida has had with its policy-- out of 140,069 permits granted, only 6 (that's right, six!) permits have ever been revoked because a violent crime was committed with the gun in question. Jaye believes Michigan's law is unreasonable, and is doing his part to make a change.

When asked about how constituents can fix what is wrong with the government, Jaye explained that "the gallows wonderfully concentrate the mind." He said that so few citizens care enough to vote or to contact their legislators, that when representatives get 10 letters on a subject, they start to worry. Jaye explained the fear of losing re-election is so strong, that citizen pressure on lawmakers can work wonders when applied properly. Jaye advised citizens to stay ac-

tive in politics, and to force the elected public servants to do as we want them to.

If you would like to contact Representative Jaye about the "Dirty Dozen," or to obtain more information on the Florida handgun laws, he can be reached by mail at Post Office Box 30014, Lansing 48909-7514; or by phone at 517/373-0843.



NO MORE PERKS

The Libertarian Alliance of Mid-Michigan was founded in 1981 to promote ideas that support and enhance personal freedom and political liberty. The LAMM is not responsible to any other group that calls itself "libertarian." The LAMM is run without officers for the benefit of those who attend its meetings. For information about the LAMM, call Jon Addiss at 517/394-0122.

**The next LAMM meeting
will be held:
Thursday, March 10 1994
at Sneekers Restaurant in
the Frandor Shopping
Plaza, off US-127, Lansing.
People begin showing
up at 6:00 pm, dinner
is served beginning at
6:30, and the meeting
begins at 7:00.**

**The guest speaker will be
Robert Glenn, host of
"Absolutely Right," a local
conservative cable TV show.
He will be showing a video
of news footage of the Waco
debacle that was intercepted
before being edited by the
government. The video re-
veals what really happened
to the Branch Davidians, and
sheds a lot of light on the
workings of the BATF.**

An Open INVITATION...

Would you like to see your views or news in print here? We certainly would! You are invited to send in your thoughts, comments, and **Open LETTERS** on any topic pertaining to public policy, individual liberty, personal responsibility, or economic opportunity. Your ideas will be printed with little or no editing, based on relevance (and space permitting), and shared with hundreds of people in the mid-Michigan area. If you are a member of a group working towards increasing liberty or shaping political policy, send in updates about what you are doing... there are many others who may like to join you.

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The Libertarian National Committee will be holding **Candidate Orientation Seminars** in nine states this spring, and Lansing has been selected to host the Michigan seminar. The intensive Saturday program includes advice on Community Organizing, Political Action, and Campaign Strategy, Campaign Financing, and Campaign Management. The seminar will be conducted by Libertarian Party Field Organizer Joseph Knight, a member of the American Association of Political Consultants. The seminar will take place on **Saturday, April 30, 1994** at the Holiday Inn West, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. The cost for the seminar is \$50, \$25 for students. Anyone interested in becoming a candidate for public office, and everyone who is serious about developing winning campaigns has something to gain from these sessions. For registration or more information contact the LP Headquarters at 1528 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Washington D.C. 20003, or call 202/543-1988.

Waco videotape you were never supposed to see-- at the Thursday, March 10 LAMM meeting. (Details inside...)

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