

City Pulse - Ingham County Voters Guide

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Ingham proposal: Tax levy for juvenile detention plan

By Daniel Sturm

Ingham County voters will cast ballots on a 0.6-million dollar tax levy that, if passed, would fund juvenile detention efforts. The proposal is set to raise property taxes for the next five years and would finance 48 additional low-security beds for juveniles sentenced by the Family Court of Justice. Ingham County's high-security facility has 24 beds and is reported chronically overcrowded.

INGHAM COUNTY

JUVENILE MILLAGE AUTHORIZATION QUESTION

For the purpose of funding an increase to Ingham County's capacity to detain and house juveniles who are delinquent or disturbed, and to operate new and existing programs for the treatment of such juveniles, shall the constitutional limitation upon the total amount of taxes which may be assessed in one (1) year upon all property within the County of Ingham, Michigan, be increased by 60/100 (.60) of one mill, \$.60 per thousand dollars of state taxable valuation, for a period of five years (2002- 2006) inclusive. If approved and levied in full, this millage will raise an estimated \$3,720,396 for juvenile housing and programs during the first calendar year of the levy based on taxable value.

YES _____

NO _____

The Ingham County Board of Commissioner's Chairman Mark Grebner says that the tax would also be used to create additional county foster care housing. Anna Macielinski, Manager of the Children Services Division in the Family Independence Agency (FIA), stated that increased costs were due primarily to a dramatic influx of children entering family foster care. Projects such as Angel House, a 12-bed shelter and assessment center for abused children, would benefit from the proposed juvenile millage. Angel House will cost up to \$500,000 per year, and will serve between 500 and 1,000 children each year once doors for the new facility open in the

spring of 2003.

Critics of programs such as Angel House say that children will be removed from their current homes and placed in the FIA system for irrational reasons. They argue that only extreme cases should be referred to the agency's programs.

If approved and levied in full, the new property tax will raise an estimated \$3,720,396 for juvenile housing and program in its first year. County commissioners have said they will offset part of the new millage with a 0.1-mill reduction from the general fund. That would mean an actual property tax increase of 0.5 mills, or about \$25 on a \$100,000 home with a taxable value of \$50,000.

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