# Editorial

Texas constitution

# The stage is set and that money ain't everything, but you wouldn't know it by analyzing Texas' current

The stage is set. It's been on radio and television and in the newspapers. It's been billed as the biggest thing to happen to the state of Texas in 100 years and rest assured, it will be, one way or the other.

I am of course talking about the constitutional election next week. Tuesday, Nov. 4 to be exact. And what I meant when I say it will be the biggest thing to happen to the state of Texas in 100 years one way or the other is that if we don't adopt the proposed Constitution we're not going to be in any better shape than we were 100 years ago. If however we do adopt it, our fine state will have taken a step closer to the reality of the present.

What we as consumers of higher education in Texas (students that is) should see as the reality of the present is that our state's system of higher education needs more money. More money to improve both the quality and quantity of higher education

in Texas. We as students obviously realize the value of higher education. If we didn't, we wouldn't be in school. We should also see it as our responsibility to help higher education now and provide for its future growth and improvement. We can do this by voting for the proposed Constitution next Tuesday.

To say the least, the proposed Constitution offers the colleges and universities of Texas a greater chance for growth and expansion than they have ever known

If adopted, the Constitution will allow Texas A&M and the University of Texas to issue Permanent University Fund (PUF) bonds and notes at 30 per cent of the total value of the PUF. The present Constitution only allows for bond issues up to 20 per cent of the total. This of course will mean more money for the University of Texas (the state's largest university), and our own Texas A&M (the nation's fastest growing university).

The archaic restrictions on the use of PUF bond proceeds also have been lifted. Whereas the original document restricted the use of bond proceeds to permanent improvements, the proposed Constitution would allow the money to be used for the purchase of capital equipment and the acquisition of library books and materials.

The new Constitution also restablishes a Higher Education Fund for other state colleges and universities. Its provisions would be similar to those set up for the use of the PUF by A&M and the University of Texas.

All in all, the proposed Constitution offers Texas' higher education the best deal it has had in 100 years. Take the time on Nov. 4 to vote for the proposed Texas Constitution. Remember, a better deal for Texas higher education is a better deal for every-

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### Part 6 of 9

# Finance: less tax, limited deb

constitution.

A professor noted in 1957 that slightly less than one-third of the constitution was concerned with government finance, and since then over 50 of the 90 amendments that have been adopted have dealt with finance.

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In trying to curb this obsession with money, constitutional writers prepared for the proposed new constitution a finance article that cuts approximately 9,000 words out of the current article

The main focus is on reforming the property tax system, and the changes apparently will help the homeowner and small property owners more than large property









'Large financial interests, secure in many years of protection from paying their fair share of property taxes, would prefer to avoid the tax equalization provisions of the new constitution," says chairman Robert W. Calvert of the

Common Cause, the self-styled people's lobby, even insists that corporate opposition to annual legislative sessions is a smokesc-reen to hide their fear of property tax reform.

Citizens for a Texas Constitution.

Although chairman Peyton McKnight of the Citizens to Preserve the Texas Constitution has not criticized the property tax proposals in detail, he claims the finance article "would produce unprecedented new taxes... can bankrupt the state and local governments and . . . encourages pub-

The proposed constitution prohibits state property taxes, except for a dime tax on each \$100 of valuation for the Higher Education Fund and a 2-cents-per-\$100 tax for

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DANCE Dress up, wear your spookiest outfit and come to a Halloween dance on Friday, Oct. 31, at the Lakeview Club on Tabor Road from 8-12 p.m. Public is invited to come out and dance to the music of Tom Sutton 'Young Country.'

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state buildings that would - under the present constitution — have been phased out next year.

To overhaul the local property taxes administered by 1,500 assessment and collection offices, the new constitution would require the legislature to establish uniform statewide standards and procedures for appraising property.

It also requires each county to provide for a single appraisal of all property within the county.

Taxing agencies would still set their own assessment ratios and

levy their own tax rate. The new provisions would go

into effect Jan. 1, 1978. A new controversial provision would require the legislature to establish separate formulas for appraising farm and ranch land, which would be a tax break to encourage the production of food and

The proposed constitution provides a new method for taxpayers to cope with taxes they think are too

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under protest and contest them in district court, where judges could order refunds.

Other changes include:

— A prohibition against levying a sales tax on food, except that sold in restaurants, prescription drugs or medicine, and agricultural machinery, fertilizer, feeds and

- A mandatory \$3,000 property tax exemption for homes of persons 65 or older.

- Elimination of the \$80 million public welfare ceiling.

-A requirement that public money be used only for public pur-poses. Some feel, however, that those purposes should have been spelled out.

- A more precise definition of state debt, which may not be incurred until the debt is approved by two-thirds of each house and at a statewide election. "State debt" would include bonds that are supported by college student tuition

Authorization for the legislature to exempt fromproperty taxes property owned by veterans' organizations, non-profit water corpeople. The legislature also exempt Texas' historical, colli and natural resources from suc

xation. The new constitution retains 'pay-as-you-go" principle operating state governmentan serves three-fourths of the \$ million-a-year gasoline tax

It specifically provides, he ever, that if the legislature enac tax on oil refineries, the m

highways and one-fourth for pul

goes to the general revenue Also retained is the legisla authority to exempt church, edutional or charitable property in

and c

And, finally, the new constitu tion is so silent on a state incom that you could hear a penny d

The silence means such a could be levied. "Indeed," remarks George den, a constitutional expert taught law at Yale, "one may

that this article . . . is alone a

worth the revision effort.

Tomorrow: Proposed cha es in the education article.

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