



MICHIGAN REPORT

DROLET CALLS FOR AMENDMENT TO CAP GOV'T WORKER BENEFITS

Former Rep. Leon Drolet has proposed putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot to cap the cost of government employee benefits, an effort he is calling "Rescue Michigan," and which he claimed could save an estimated \$5.7 billion.

Mr. Drolet made the pitch on behalf of the Michigan Taxpayers' Alliance that he directs in an email sent across the state on Friday that asked for donations to help prepare the proposal.

The proposal is in its very formative stages, with research work on such a proposal still to be done, and legal drafting to make the proposal effectively politician-proof, Mr. Drolet said. Then supporters would have to get sufficient signatures to put the proposal on the ballot, he said. Just collecting the signatures would cost \$1 million.

"This 'Rescue Michigan' initiative would be a bold, unprecedented and sweeping reform - the game-changer our state desperately needs. Never before has such an amendment to the constitution been considered in any state. But then, no state has ever been in the fix that Michigan finds itself in today," Mr. Drolet said in the email.

The proposal is essentially based on a concept discussed by the Midland-based Mackinac Center for Public Policy that suggested capping the cost of all public employee benefits to average cost of

benefits for private-workers.

The proposal would then go beyond the current proposal of Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) that calls for the health care benefits of all public workers to be coordinated. He has said that with time the proposal could save the state, local governments and schools as much as \$900 million.

Mr. Drolet put no timeframe in the email on how long it would take for the state to see savings of \$5.7 billion.

However, Mr. Drolet warns in the email that residents will soon face higher property taxes, and that by cutting the expense of government workers it would save government enough money offset some of the need for increased taxes. The proposal would save twice as much as the Michigan Business Tax would raise, he said.

Two years ago Mr. Drolet threatened to lead recall efforts against lawmakers who voted for any tax increases. The recall effort focused on House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.), but failed.

Elected to the Macomb County Board of Commissioners after he left the House, Mr. Drolet is considered a top contender to run for a Senate seat in 2010.