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THE FINAL WORD

Editorial: Vote No on Prop 2, worst of the bunch

Measure would put government workers in charge of the state and cost taxpayers \$1.6 billion

Of the long list of absolutely awful ballot measures facing Michigan voters on Nov. 6, Proposal 2 is the worst. It would end any hope of the state regaining its prosperity and seal its fate as an economic backwater.

The initiative has been given the shorthand name of the “collective bargaining proposal,” but it has almost nothing to do with collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining is not at risk in Michigan, either in the public or private sectors. Gov. Rick Snyder has taken no step toward restricting collective bargaining, and in fact continues to bargain in good faith with the state’s public employee unions.

Proposal 2 doesn’t protect collective bargaining.

Rather, it enshrines in the state Constitution the government waste and inefficiency that led to 10 straight years of budget shortfalls during the 2000s. It also restores the anti-business climate that left Michigan at the very bottom of every list ranking states’ job-creating climate during that decade.

If voters pass this proposal, they will be making a conscious decision to keep Michigan as a state where schools underperform the rest of the world, where high taxes reap poor services and where motorists drive on rotting roads and over decaying bridges.

Worse, they will set in stone its status as a place their children have to leave to find jobs and opportunity.

It’s that bad. Nearly every single reform passed by Snyder and the Legislature over the past two years will be gone. And the hard-fought reforms passed by previous governors and Legislatures will be scuttled, as well.

Teachers and public safety officers will be allowed to

again strike without fear of penalty. School districts will lose the ability to quickly get rid of teachers who are convicted felons or sexual deviants, or who show up in classrooms drunk or on drugs. Reforms aimed at improving student performance and holding teachers accountable for their work will have to get the stamp of approval from labor unions.

Local communities will find it harder to share, consolidate or outsource services, driving up the cost of government.

Public employees will be excused from having to help pay the cost of their health insurance and pensions.

Emergency managers would be limited in their authority to restructure local governments.

Newly hired state employees would go into the overburdened pension system, instead of 401(k)-style accounts.

In short, Michigan will be run by and for the benefit of public employee labor unions.

Does that sound like a place where job creators would want to invest their money?

No other state has taken such a radical step to make untouchable the special privileges enjoyed by government workers.

The cost of the lost reforms to Michigan taxpayers would be \$1.6 billion, according to a study by the [Mackinac Center](#). That money would have to be made up by either raising taxes or by cutting services, increasing class size and laying off teachers and other workers.

Vote NO on this job-killing and opportunity-squelching amendment.