

Remember this tax hike come next election year

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There's no doubt that our legislators in Lansing, while battling over how to remedy the budget crisis, did not exactly set a good example for educators teaching Civics 101.

If anything, the lawmakers reminded us of Keystone Cops, running around from caucus to caucus meeting with little, if any, plan of attack.

And to make matters worse, some legislators still aren't sure which services will face an additional state tax or which will not.

Men's barber shops seem to be exempted, while beauticians who work primarily on women are included.

In a hasty compromise to balance the budget, lawmakers temporarily raised the state income tax from 3.9 percent to 4.35 percent until 2011, when it will gradually begin to decrease again. They also extended the 6-percent sales tax to some services.

While we can criticize our elected officials for their lack of planning and their decision-making that actually came within hours of a government shutdown, we cannot condone those supporting a recall of a handful of lawmakers who voted in favor of either or both tax proposals.

Conservative Republican Tom McMillin certainly has a right to start a recall effort and we can sympathize, to some extent, with the frustration that he and others are feeling over the lack of innovation and budget bumbling in Lansing.

McMillin wants to recall the lawmakers who voted for an income tax increase, as well as Gov. Jennifer Granholm, whom he calls the architect of the tax hike.

McMillin is setting up a committee called "Stop Hurting Michigan's Kids" to run the recall campaign, arguing that an income tax increase takes money from parents who need to support their families and drives businesses out of the state.

He is chairman of the issues committee for the Michigan Republican Party, former county commissioner and former Auburn Hills mayor.

McMillin specifically singles out state Reps. Marie Donigan, D-Royal Oak, and Chris Ward, R-Brighton. Ward's district includes the Oakland County communities of Milford Township and Milford Village. Donigan represents in Royal Oak and Madison Heights a large number of people affected by the downturn of the automotive industry.

However, despite the strong emotions, recall elections are a waste of tax dollars.

Under our representative form of government, we elect those who we think best agree with us and, at least in most cases, will vote accordingly. If we think an official we elected has voted against our beliefs, the proper retaliation is to vote against that individual in the next scheduled election. We can sympathize with angry citizens who would like a change in direction. But we'd also like to point out that the state's 110 representatives - except those term limited - are all up for reelection in 2008. The earliest a recall election

could be scheduled is next May. The statewide primary is in August, 2008 and the general election follows in November. Voters need to save their anger over the taxes - and save taxpayers the burden of costly elections - until then.