

# Taxpayer amendment moves toward debate

By Ken Sullivan  
Gazette senior editor

A modified version of the Taxpayers Rights Amendment to the Iowa Constitution moved a step closer to debate this week, with the disclosure by House Speaker Ron Corbett, R-Cedar Rapids, that 52 representatives have agreed to support the measure.

He told The Gazette Friday that 50 Republicans and two Democrats declared their support for a measure that will impose constitutional limits on the state's ability to raise and spend tax money. A provision also will require 60 percent approval by the General Assembly for tax increases.

Corbett indicated a draft of the proposed amendment should be available next week, but gave no indication when the measure might be debated.

Neither did Ed Failor, chief of staff of Iowans for Tax Relief, the organization largely responsible for keeping the TRA alive since it was first introduced about 20 years ago. However, Failor said he is

"optimistic the amendment will pass in the House," and prospects for Senate passage appear "very encouraging."

Senate Majority Leader Stewart Iverson, R-Dows, couldn't be reached for comment Friday, but in opening-day remarks on Jan. 12, the amendment was identified as one of the goals he set for the Senate this year. Gov. Terry Branstad also urged passage of the amendment.

If the measure is adopted by both chambers this year, it will have to survive another General Assembly — either the 1999 or 2000 sessions — before it could go to the voters for their ratification.

Anticipating passage of the amendment this year, Failor

said the Taxpayers United political action committee will "make it a big issue" in this fall's legislative races. The Taxpayers United PAC and the Iowa State Education Association PAC traditionally are the largest contributors to legislative races.

Failor said a poll conducted by Iowans for Tax Relief indicates strong support for the amendment, and overwhelming support for giving Iowans a voice in the decision. He said 92 percent of those surveyed said Iowans deserve to vote on the amendment.

The TRA was revived after proponents streamlined the original version, which contained limits on city, county and school districts, as well as state government.



Ron Corbett  
Speaker of Iowa House



Ed Failor  
Iowans for Tax Relief

# Des Moines immigrants fear they're target of motel killer

DES MOINES (AP) — Recent immigrants in low-wage jobs fear there may be a killer targeting them in the wake of recent slayings of two young motel maids.

"I think there is fear in the immigrant community," said Kathleen McQuillen, program coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee in Des Moines.

Mariana Redroban, 15, of Ecuador was stabbed to death Friday in a room at the West Des Moines Walnut Creek Inn, where she worked as a housekeeper.

Zurijeta Sakanovic, a 21-year-old Bosnian refugee, was strangled and stabbed to death Sept. 4 at the Clive Budgetel Inn, where she worked.

Investigators have not said whether Redroban was strangled. While there are similarities in the slayings, police have not been able to confirm they were committed by the same person.

"This (most recent slaying) has added to the fear," said McQuillen, whose agency works with the immigrants and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. "Is this another

## IOWA TODAY

expression of hostility toward immigrants? That is the fear."

Michael Went, deputy director of the INS office in Omaha, Neb., said he, too, was concerned because of the slayings' similarities.

Meanwhile, Went said Redroban was employed illegally at the Walnut Creek Inn because she did not have proper documentation to enter the country and she worked more hours than the law allows for a 15-year-old.

Neal Roth, the hotel's general manager, said Redroban presented a driver's license and a So-

cial Security card with a last name of "Prieto" and an age of 17 when she was hired nine months ago.

Roth said Redroban worked 28 to 32 hours a week for \$6 an hour.

# Homemade bomb explosion leads to arrest of C.R. man

Gazette staff report

A Cedar Rapids man could face a felony arson charge after he told Marion police on Friday that he was responsible for making a bomb out of household chemicals and a plastic, 2-liter soda bottle, police said.

Brian Merrifield, 19, was arrested at about 8:30 last night after a Marion police officer on routine patrol heard an explosion, felt his car windows rattle and decided to investigate, according to Sgt. Doug Slagle.

The officer discovered a crowd of people gathered at Third Avenue and Ninth Street, a residential area of Marion.

## MARION

Lying in the snow near the group was a second homemade device, often called a "McGyver" bomb for the television character who could make gadgets out of almost anything.

The Metro Bomb Squad was called, and members defused the second bomb.

Slagle said he does not believe the group had malicious intent in detonating the device.

"I don't think they had anything else to do on a Friday night," he said.

# Retired Maytag executive to head General Services

From Associated Press and Gazette staff reports  
DES MOINES — Gov. Terry Branstad on Friday named a retired Maytag Corp. executive to head the state's Department of General Services.

Dick Haines, 55, begins his new job Monday and replaces Janet Phipps, who became the head of the Michigan Department of Budget and Management.

Haines was vice president for business development at Maytag before retiring in September.

"I'm delighted to have his knowledge and expertise heading up the Department of General Services at a time the state is making major renovations and improvements in our capitol complex and facilities around the state," Branstad said.

General Services is the state's housekeeping agency, responsible for maintenance and repairs of state buildings and facilities.

Haines will be paid an annual salary of \$94,000, according to the Governor's Office.

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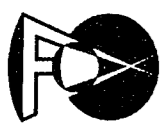
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