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Benton Harbor's vote to eliminate Personal Property Tax on local businesses draws near

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By Mario Gonzalez, Multimedia Journalist - [email](#)



The vote for PROP 1 in Benton Harbor, Michigan is just around the corner. On August 5th voters will decide to keep or eliminate the Personal Property Tax on local businesses. It is a tax businesses must pay annually on the equipment they own. This includes items such as computers, printers and machinery.

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Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower is in support of PROP 1. He says the current tax not only hurts the city, but the entire state as a whole so he wants to see the proposition go through.

"It ends the unfair double tax of the personal property tax on small businesses and it delivers the stable funding source for local communities for vital services," Hightower said.

It's an opinion shared by a number of business owners including Cheryl Miller. She is the President and CEO of New Products Corporation. She says her company has operated in Benton Harbor

for 93 years. She is voting for PROP 1 to ensure she can continue to not only stay, but grow the business as well.

"To stay competitive, to stay competitive with other states that do not have this tax, it's really important for us to have this tax that's so punitive to small businesses eliminated," Miller said.

Those for PROP 1 say it will attract future businesses to Benton Harbor which will in turn lead to more jobs. Those against the proposition are concerned that city departments may lose funding.

"There's no guarantee that the municipalities and the people who were receiving the PPT (Personal Property Tax) funds would get a one hundred percent match for what they have lost," Cindy Duran who is against PROP 1 said.

The proposition plans to provide the funding for the municipalities of the city by eliminating special corporate tax breaks and making a statewide Essential Services Assessment paid by manufacturers.

One thing both sides did agree on was the lack of awareness about the upcoming vote.

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estate

"I would hope that people would be informed, but I'm not sure there has been enough press or attention on the subject that people know that it's coming up to vote," Miller said.

Again, the election is set for August 5th. Neighboring states including Illinois and Ohio do not have a Personal Property Tax.



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