4-16-1968

Barrett opposed to general sales tax

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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Fred Barrett said Tuesday at the University of Montana that he is opposed to a general sales tax for Montana, but instead favors a restructuring of state income tax to obtain additional revenue.

Barrett, who is a candidate for the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor, told a group of UM law school students that many states using the sales tax as a major source of revenue have found it inadequate and now want to establish state income tax and add to property tax rates.

Speaking to a group of UM law school students in the series entitled "Political Forum 1968," Barrett said he believes that Montana's income tax system has "the greatest revenue potential" of any tax system in the country.

He said state revenue from the income tax could be greatly increased if the state "closed the loop holes" in the tax structure. He said many large corporations in Montana fulfill requirements to do business in Montana just by paying the minimum $10 license fee each year, when they should be paying a share of income tax.

Barrett said Montana already has a sales tax on such items as cigarettes, gas and liquor. He said 40 per cent of operating revenue needed by the state of Montana comes from state tax sources.

Barrett said he favors continuance of the six-mill levy tax for support of the Montana University System.

"I think we cannot afford to let the six-mill levy fail at next fall's election," Barrett emphasized, "because that would mean financial disaster for education in Montana."