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SWISS voters have overwhelmingly rejected a controversial move to introduce community welfare work for conscientious objectors who refuse to do military service.

In a nationwide poll, the idea of an alternative "civilian service" – strongly supported by civil rights and church groups – was rejected by 1,360,960 votes to 770,891 (64 to 36 per cent).

Seven years ago a similar "initiative" was rejected by a majority of 86 to 14 per cent.

Military service is compulsory in Switzerland for all able-bodied males between the ages of 20 and 50, with four months' basic military training followed by annual refresher courses.

Switzerland is one of the very few west European countries which does not recognise conscientious objection (the others are Greece, Turkey and Cyprus). Swiss men who refuse to do military service face imprisonment.

The Swiss government and military authorities recommended voters to reject the idea of a civilian alternative, although the Defence Ministry has announced the setting up of a special commission to study the problem of conscientious objection.

In another nationwide poll, the Swiss electorate narrowly approved a government-

Army wins battle at the ballot box...

...but motorists lose fee fight

proposed motorway tax.

From next year, drivers using Swiss motorways will have to pay an annual tax of Sfr 30.

Visiting motorists will also be charged the new fee, payable in advance at tourist offices abroad or at the frontier on entering Switzerland.

The government proposal – opposed by

motoring organisations and the Swiss tourism industry – was approved by 1,132,431 votes to 1,005,115 (53 to 47 per cent).

In a separate vote, the electorate also approved another government proposal for a weight-tax on heavy vehicles registered in or entering Switzerland.

This proposal was approved by 1,254,522 votes to 882,696 (59 to 41 per cent).

How the cantons voted

	Civilian service		Motorway tax		Heavy vehicle tax		Voter turnout percentage
	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	
Zurich	162,249	235,167	232,810	166,020	269,734	129,586	56.0
Berne	107,877	220,619	109,662	139,891	197,307	133,007	52.8
Lucerne	32,260	74,653	62,359	44,858	63,744	43,461	55.6
Uri	3,310	8,630	8,160	3,805	8,466	3,525	53.7
Schwyz	8,226	24,312	14,962	17,658	14,490	18,120	51.5
Obwalden	2,258	6,818	4,993	4,108	4,294	4,792	52.5
Nidwalden	2,906	9,005	7,137	4,835	6,792	5,165	58.8
Glarus	3,106	9,618	7,326	5,420	7,264	5,478	55.5
Zug	9,462	20,261	15,670	14,224	16,943	13,137	62.5
Fribourg	20,904	43,724	28,377	36,339	31,869	32,732	52.9
Solothurn	28,884	54,921	47,516	36,605	51,163	32,939	58.4
Basle-City	37,610	33,249	45,148	25,798	50,870	20,086	52.3
Basle-Land	35,901	41,987	42,209	36,005	48,314	29,832	54.5
Schaffhausen	11,641	22,583	19,047	15,079	20,398	13,699	78.0
Appenzell AR	4,237	13,644	10,041	7,847	9,594	8,284	57.5
Appenzell IR	694	3,959	2,641	2,014	2,474	2,173	49.0
St. Gall	34,294	91,717	73,164	52,942	74,725	51,294	51.0
Grisons	14,206	34,082	32,170	16,427	34,144	14,513	46.5
Aargau	48,146	100,803	76,584	72,714	81,975	67,317	52.0
Thurgau	17,348	47,449	34,490	30,507	35,567	29,392	57.7
Ticino	33,070	47,414	55,334	25,436	64,043	16,820	51.3
Vaud	60,154	91,844	51,379	100,491	70,056	81,675	46.9
Valais	17,764	44,994	21,668	41,208	22,225	40,543	43.6
Neuchâtel	21,730	28,828	16,913	33,675	22,783	27,770	52.6
Geneva	42,534	40,446	25,360	57,217	36,748	45,561	44.7
Jura	10,120	10,223	6,311	13,992	8,540	11,795	48.5
Total	770,891	1,360,960	1,132,431	1,005,115	1,254,522	882,696	52.1