

## Michigan ROUNDUP

January 30, 1992

### Legislative News

- In a 49-43 party line House vote, Republicans failed Wednesday to discharge from committee an **open primary bill** (SB 469) that had passed the Senate last November. The House vote had been upstaged a half hour earlier by Governor Engler, who announced at a press conference that he will ask the Michigan Republican Party to change its rule to permit voting in the GOP presidential primary without declaring one's party affiliation. The move follows a recent Michigan Democratic Party rules change allowing Democratic primary voters to declare their party preference on election day.
- While the House and Senate will receive detailed **1992-93 spending plans** from the governor on February 7, the general public can get a preview of the executive recommendations from a special budget message which the governor will broadcast over public television on Wednesday, February 5, at 8:00 p.m. Responding to one of the most-discussed budget questions in recent days, Engler told the *Lansing State Journal* that he will support a controversial cigarette tax increase, providing that the revenues are targeted to health care programs.
- A package of bills and a proposed constitutional amendment to fund cleanup of **combined sewage overflow** in Michigan communities passed the House this week. Funds totalling \$200 million over a ten-year period are provided in HBs 4872-77 and House Joint Resolution P to help the state's seventy municipalities that have combined sewer systems and storm drains that overflow into waterways. If the bills are passed, beginning in 1994 the funds will become available as loans to communities.
- It appears that "buy-American" may be urged next on users of **capital parking lots**. Rep. Jerry Bartnik (D-Temperance) has proposed a resolution banning cars assembled outside of North America from parking in legislative lots. According to the *State Journal*, the proposal is cosponsored by nineteen Democrats and twelve Republicans and would affect some eight hundred parking spaces; it has been referred to the House Oversight Committee

### Political News

- Pledging it would turbocharge Michigan's economy, Governor Engler on Monday filed signature petitions supporting his "cut and cap" **property tax relief** plan. More than 410,000 taxpayers signed the Republican initiative, which was a major plank in Engler's gubernatorial campaign. The Board of State Canvassers now must certify the validity of at least 256,467 signatures in order for the proposal to appear on the November ballot. The certification process is underway for the Democratic tax-cut plan, for which signature petitions were presented earlier to the state board.
- The Michigan Department of Education is in a dispute with the U.S. Education Department over \$200,000 in allegedly **misspent school grants**. Michigan officials are appealing the verdict of federal auditors who contend that funds awarded for language training at three state higher education facilities were used instead for missions abroad that did not fulfill grant guidelines.
- Federal prisoner Lyndon LaRouche, currently jailed in Minnesota on a conspiracy conviction, won a spot on the state **Democratic primary ballot** this week in an Ingham County Circuit Court ruling sought by the American Civil Liberties Union. Michigan Secretary of State officials say they will appeal the court's finding that LaRouche is a generally advocated candidate by the national news media, which is the criterion of Michigan's primary law.
- Fellow Detroitier Raymond Murphy has replaced former Rep. Teola Hunter as House **Speaker pro tempore**. James Kosteva (D-Canton) replaces Hunter as chair of the Economic Development and Energy Committee, and Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit) assumes her seat on the Legislative Council. Replacements for her other committee assignments have not yet been announced.
- In its judiciary budget recommendations to the legislature, the state supreme court recommended **adding eighteen judges** to Michigan's trial and appellate courts, pointing out that among appellate courts nationwide, Michigan appeals court judges carry the highest caseload. Citing a decline in case filings in some jurisdictions, the recommendations also support the reduction by attrition of one district court judge each in Flint, Lansing, Muskegon, and Pontiac.

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