



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

....A 14-member special House-Senate committee began work this week on proposals to reform **funding for local public schools**. Most plans call for replacing some local property taxes with revenue from an increase in the state sales tax rate. The panel hopes to reach a compromise by June 1 that would result in lower property taxes and equalize funding among districts.

....**Michigan's combined state-local tax burden** declined in 1987, according to a report by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Our state and local government taxes ranked 6th highest overall in 1986, taking \$12.60 for every \$100 in personal income, but dropped to 10th in 1987, taking \$12.36 per \$100. The reduction resulted from lower state taxes: local levies were \$5.07 per \$100 in personal income for both years, but state taxes declined from \$7.53 to \$7.29 per \$100.

....A House Republican task force has proposed "serious criminal penalties" against **AIDS carriers** who engage in sex without telling their partners that they risk exposure to the deadly virus. According to the Associated Press, the task force also recommended that health clinics and doctors be required to report to the state the names of those diagnosed as AIDS carriers, but that it be a felony to leak such confidential information to outside sources.

....State Senator Vernon Ehlers (R-Grand Rapids) will introduce bills to require all three branches of state government to practice what they preach--buy products made from recycled goods. Governor Blanchard and Gordon Guyer, director of the Department of Natural Resources, joined Ehlers and other legislators in launching a 60-day campaign to develop plans to solve the state's **solid waste problem**.

Political News

....**The Civil Service Commission** has declared that state workers should not be released from their jobs for partisan political activities, even if a union pays their salaries, according to the *Lansing State Journal*. State Sen. William Sederburg (R-East Lansing) and Rep. Frank Fitzgerald (R-Grand Ledge) had complained to the commission that state employees had collected paychecks last year for time spent at a seminar--cosponsored by the UAW and the state Democratic party--designed to promote election of Democrats. Director of State Employment George Matish, a Blanchard appointee, said that the state had been reimbursed by the UAW for the pay of the 40 employees.

....Politicians on both sides of the aisle in Lansing continue to receive heat from parents who have discovered that a bill passed in January to repeal an **unintended tax on the income of children** failed to do what it promised. Legislators thought that they had fully repealed the tax by exempting the first \$1,500 in income, but language in the bill implies that if anyone earns one dollar more than \$1,500, the entire amount becomes subject to the state's 4.6 percent income tax. The unintended tax resulted from a change in state and federal laws that subject even the smallest incomes to taxation. According to the *Detroit News*, the state will reap an extra \$35 million from youngsters who earn more than \$1,500.

....**Dr. Edward Pierce**, former state senator and candidate for governor in 1986, has been interviewed for the post of director of the state Department of Public Health. Pierce, a physician and former mayor of Ann Arbor, is one of at least nine candidates for the \$80,000-a-year job, according to Greg Morris, Governor Blanchard's personnel director.