



Michigan ROUNDUP

....The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill to fund Medicaid services from March 16 through September 30. Without the bill, Medicaid funding for certain providers will expire March 15 since the special joint legislative committee charged with developing a ballot proposal on the question of funding Medicaid abortions has not reached agreement. The bill also dissolves the special committee and contains a \$1 line item for abortions. The Right to Life petition drive to ban Medicaid-funded abortions, which began February 6 and has the support of the special committee's chairperson, interfered with committee efforts to reach agreement.

....Legislation to help an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 low-income senior citizens with their prescription drug expenses will be introduced soon. The proposal also would create an ombudsman program to protect the rights of seniors in nursing homes and foster care facilities.

....Republican Senator Dan DeGrow is mounting an effort to prohibit the establishment of teenage health clinics at Michigan public schools because of the clinics' role in providing family planning services. Six clinics have already been established and the Department of Public Health is seeking funding for about 100 more. The clinics also provide general medical care, prenatal care, and pediatric care for teens' children. DeGrow has threatened to reduce a school district's state aid if it operates a clinic that provides birth control services. Over 16,000 teenagers gave birth in 1985, the last year for which data are available.

....The Internal Revenue Service has asked the Secretary of State's office for records of government officials' officeholder expense fund (OEF) expenditures to determine whether or not to assess income taxes on certain expenditures. The IRS will look at expenditures for personal purposes, according to Deputy Secretary of State Dennis Neuner, who will meet with IRS officials on March 5 on the matter. The Secretary of State's office has also begun review of some OEF reports to determine which expenses are business-related and which appear to be personal.

....Vice-president George Bush was in Lansing this week to fortify his Michigan support in the contest for the 1988 GOP presidential nomination. Many believe that Bush, who won the Michigan GOP primary in 1980, must carry the state again in 1988 to receive the nomination. Although some observers believe his popularity in the state has decreased over the last year in the face of the Iran-Contra affair and stiff competition from a conservative coalition anchored by supporters of evangelist Pat Robertson, Bush has been ahead of all early GOP contenders in recent national polls.

....Michigan's public and private schools held steady in their performance in 1985-86, according to an annual report from U.S. Department of Education Secretary William Bennett. Average ACT scores remained at 18.9, slightly above the U.S. average of 18.8 (the highest possible score is 35); the high school graduation rate declined slightly from 1984 to 71.9%, with the national average average at 70.6%. Average teacher salaries of \$30,168 ranked Michigan 4th in the nation; the U.S. average is \$25,313. However, state public school students did not do well in a statewide science test taken by 310,000 4th, 7th, and 10th graders. Only 22% of 10th graders passed the test, compared to 27% of 7th graders and 39% of 4th graders.