

## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- The Senate approved an amended version of a House-passed bill requiring a woman under age 18 to obtain a parent's or a judge's consent prior to having an abortion. The House must vote to approve the Senate's change—removal of the exemption for pregnant women considered suicidal by a mental health professional—which could come next week. Anticipating a veto of the bill by Governor Blanchard, senators Jack Welborn (R-Kalamazoo) and Fred Dillingham (R-Fowlerville) said that, if a vote to override is unsuccessful, they will consider launching a petition drive to put the question on the ballot. To override the governor's veto, 73 votes are needed in the House and 26 in the Senate.
- By April 1993, Michigan's minimum wage would increase from \$3.35 an hour to \$5 under a bill (HB 4294) passed by the House Wednesday. The vote was largely along party lines, with only five Republicans in favor. A Senate version (SB 727) that would increase the minimum to \$4.25 by 1993 was approved in committee and is expected to be voted on next week.
- Mayor Coleman Young continued to lobby legislative leaders and the governor this week, hoping to get legislation passed that would reinstate the 5 percent Detroit utility tax ruled invalid by Wayne County circuit court. Without the tax, which raises about \$58 million a year, Young says 1,000 police officers would have to be laid off. House Minority Leader Paul Hillegonds (R-Holland) said he will "make every effort to develop a long-term, comprehensive plan that deals with both Detroit's fiscal situation and meaningful property tax relief."
- The first of four Senate hearings on Michigan's no-fault auto insurance system was held Tuesday. The Senate Commerce and Technology Committee, which is considering a bill (SB 712) to reduce auto insurance rates through reforms to the no-fault law, heard testimony from Jeffery O'Connell, the author of the no-fault system. O'Connell said the only changes Michigan should make are to reduce the costs of lawsuits through tort reform and a cap on combined medical and wage loss benefits.
- The FY 1990-91 budget bills are being introduced. The most controversial bills will be social services, which will originate in the House, and higher education, school aid, and corrections, which will originate in the Senate.

### Political News

- Calling the release of Nelson Mandela an "historic first step," State Treasurer Robert Bowman pledges that Michigan's policies regarding divestiture in South Africa—which he claims are the most stringent in the nation—will continue until apartheid ends. Since the law's passage last year, Michigan has divested \$1.4 billion in stocks and bonds from companies with South African ties.
- John Lauve, a 49-year-old GM engineer, on Wednesday announced his candidacy for governor, a move that pits the Grosse Pointe Republican in a primary race against Senate Majority Leader John Engler. Lauve led an unsuccessful 1984 recall campaign against Governor James Blanchard. In two other recall attempts that year, Democrats were ousted from the Senate, resulting in Republican control of that chamber which continues to the present.
- As expected, four-term Ingham County Commissioner Dianne Byrum, a Democrat and businesswoman from Onondaga, has announced her candidacy for state Rep. Debbie Stabenow's 58th District House seat. The vacancy created by Stabenow's bid for the state Senate has attracted a crowded field of Democratic contenders, including recently declared candidates Agnes Pettway and Tony Benavides. Pettway is a Lansing foster care recruiter and unsuccessful 1989 candidate for the Lansing City Council. Benavides, an eight-year veteran of the council, is executive director of Cristo Rey Community Center in Lansing. Democratic County Commissioner Dorothy Fredrickson announced her candidacy for the House race last month.
- Michigan Citizens for Capital Punishment has launched a petition drive to restore the death penalty in the state. The group, formed by Sen. Gilbert DiNello (D-East Detroit), has until July 9 to gather the 240,000 signatures needed to place the issue on the November ballot. The group comprises some 300 volunteers and claims support from about 40 state lawmakers.
- Two of the three proposed sites under study for the state's low-level nuclear waste dump will likely be dropped from consideration because of wetlands. Officials for the Michigan Low-Level Radioactive Waste Authority said Thursday that most of the land under consideration in Ontonagon and St. Clair counties is not free of wetlands and streams. The third site, in Lenawee County, also poses environmental problems, including a high water table and periodic flooding. If all three areas are removed from consideration, the next potential sites for review will include a second tract in Ontonagon County and areas in Washtenaw and Gratiot counties.