



Legislative Week in Review

- The House approved Thursday by a 65-42 vote legislation requiring teenagers under 18 to obtain a parent's consent, or a waiver from a judge, before having an **abortion**. Governor Blanchard's promised veto came today. The Senate has the necessary votes to override the veto, but the House appears to be several votes shy. Because of the veto, the Right to Life of Michigan, which has made the issue a top legislative priority, is considering launching an initiative petition drive to get the law on the books. Pro-choice forces have indicated they would try to counteract this move by mounting their own petition drive for a parental consent law that would be less restrictive.
- The House passed and sent to the Senate a bill (HB 5495) that would allow the City of Detroit to keep \$100 million in **Detroit utility tax** revenue and to continue collecting the tax in the future. The levy, which was ruled invalid by a Wayne County circuit court, raises about \$58 million a year. Republicans have proposed that any reinstatement of the tax be tied to property and business tax cuts, a plan for which was announced Wednesday by Senate Majority Leader and gubernatorial candidate John Engler (R-Mt. Pleasant). A Senate committee is expected to discuss a package arrangement next week. The Gannett News Service reported that, "according to top House officials, Speaker Lewis Dodak, D-Birch Run, is willing to forgive—in exchange for a favorable vote on the Detroit tax—about \$400 million a year in additional taxes that businesses owe the state under a 1989 Michigan Court of Claims ruling."
- The Senate approved House-passed legislation that would establish penalties for the illegal use, possession, and delivery of **anabolic steroids**. The House must approve the Senate's amendments before the bill can be sent to the governor.
- The Senate adopted legislation that would increase the **minimum wage** to \$4.25 an hour by 1993. The House has passed a bill that would increase the minimum wage to \$5.00 an hour by 1993.

Political News

- Gubernatorial candidate and Senate Majority Leader John Engler (R-Mt. Pleasant) unveiled plans Thursday to cut **property taxes** by 20 percent over three years and to exempt citizens over age 65 from paying them. The Detroit *Free Press* reports that the plan would reduce local tax revenues for schools by \$1.5 billion annually; Engler proposes to make up the loss by reshuffling other budget allotments, paring other budgets, and earmarking future state revenue increases for schools. In launching his gubernatorial campaign last week, Engler vowed to increase state funding for schools and to lower property taxes. Representatives of Gov. Blanchard's administration have called the proposal an irresponsible temporary tax cut.
- **Michigan Democrats'** annual convention will be held in Flint this year, party officials announced Monday. In addition to nominations for governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and two state Supreme Court justices, the party will select its candidates for university governing boards and for two seats on the state Board of Education. Convention activity is expected to generate more than \$.5 million in the Flint area.
- Gov. James Blanchard has added the new position of director of communications to the **executive staff**, resulting in new duties and titles for three current staff members. Thomas Scott, the governor's press secretary for the past three years, has been named to the new post, where he is expected to spend more time with planning and "big picture" issues. Rosemary Freeman, Blanchard's congressional press secretary in 1981-82 and subsequently deputy director of the state's office in Washington, D.C., will replace Scott as the key day-to-day media contact. Meanwhile, former assistant press secretary Julie Munoz has been appointed executive assistant to First Lady Janet Blanchard. Since last November, Munoz has been working with Janet Blanchard at the Cabinet Council for Human Investment.
- Sen. Richard Fessler (R-Union Lake) appears likely to face reelection opposition from two Republican state representatives; their challenge will force them to give up a bid to retain their current House seats. Rep. Judith Miller (R-Birmingham) has not formally announced her candidacy but has said she will do so next month; to run, she must move into the district. Rep. David Honigman (R-West Bloomfield) also has expressed interest—but not made a formal announcement—in running for the wealthy 17th District Senate seat, which encompasses Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, and West Bloomfield Township.