



Legislative Week in Review

- The legislature and Governor Blanchard are pursuing different strategies on **school finance reform**. House and Senate leaders have appointed Edgar Harden, former president of Michigan State University, as a special mediator in an effort to have educators, labor, and business agree to a compromise by April 4, when the legislature returns from Easter recess. The governor is urging a cooling off period of two or three months during which interested parties could reach a compromise on several key issues: whether voters should be presented with a proposal for a one- or two-cent sales tax increase, the timing of a special election, and the extent to which additional funds should be tied to improvements in educational quality. Legislators believe a cooling off period would encourage the circulation of a number of competing petitions and delay a vote until November 1990. More than 100 relatively poor school districts have announced plans to sue the state over funding disparities among districts.
- Over the objections of environmental groups and the United Auto Workers, the House has passed a bill that would establish new disposal standards for **municipal incinerator ash**. The bill would set regulations less strict than for hazardous waste sites and more severe than for household trash landfills. The UAW argues that the legislation would not provide stiff control of fly (airborne) ash and that landfill handling requirements need enforcement penalties. The Michigan Environmental Action Council says the plan needs further study. David Hales, director of the Department of Natural Resources, says that while he has minor concerns, the concept of the bill is sound.
- Several environmental groups have proposed legislation that would allow the state to recover costs of **cleaning up contamination** from persons responsible for the pollution. Public Interest Research Group in Michigan, the Michigan Environmental Action Council, and Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination say their proposal would give the attorney general and the Department of Natural Resources authority to issue cleanup orders and impose treble damages for noncompliance.

Political News

- Former Republican gubernatorial nominee **William Lucas**, who wants to head the U.S. Attorney General's civil rights division, faces strong opposition from civil rights groups. After examining his record as Wayne County executive and sheriff, the NAACP contends that Lucas has had little experience in civil rights litigation and that he was criticized by a U.S. Court of Appeals for failure to investigate the beating of a prisoner in custody of Wayne County deputies. At the time Lucas maintained that he could not investigate the incident because he did not know about it, but the court said he was legally liable as sheriff. Lucas, who held that position from 1969 to 1982, said he had a reputation for taking strong action against anyone who violated department rules, particularly civil rights.
- Gerald Miller, former director of the Michigan Department of Management and Budget and now executive director of the National Association of State Budget Officers, has told Gannett News Service that **Medicaid costs** are growing faster than state spending throughout the country. Miller said Medicaid will account for 10.8 percent of state budgets this year, while overall spending will increase only 6.3 percent, down from the increase of 6.6 percent for the 1987-88 fiscal year. "Medicaid has grown from \$41.2 billion in 1987 to \$49.6 billion in 1988," Miller said. He stated Medicaid spending would reach \$100 billion by 1995 as programs expand and health care costs rise.
- President Bush has appointed **William Rosenberg**, owner of an Ann Arbor investment firm, to head the Air Pollution Control Division, Environmental Protection Agency. Rosenberg was chairman of the state Public Service Commission and then the Michigan State Housing Development Authority under former Governor William Milliken.
- The *Detroit Free Press* reports that **Ronna Romney**, Republican national committeewoman from Michigan, has failed in her attempt to become Treasurer of the United States. The job reportedly will go to Cathi Villalpando, a partner in a Washington, D.C., telecommunications firm.
- **NOTE:** The legislature will return from Easter recess on April 4. *Roundup* will resume publication on April 6.