



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

....Two Flint-area legislators with close ties to organized labor have introduced identical bills to raise the hourly **minimum wage** from \$3.35 to \$5 by 1992. The bills, sponsored by state Sen. John Cherry (D-Clio) and Rep. Robert Emerson (D-Flint), call for an increase of one dollar in 1989, then smaller increases each year until the maximum is reached. Emerson, a former organizer for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, said he hopes that the House will pass his bill before the summer recess. Cherry's bill faces strong opposition in the Republican-controlled Senate.

....A three-bill **education quality package** tied to a plan to change public school financing has passed the state Senate. The bills would require all school districts to offer courses in career education, communications, computer science, foreign languages, health and physical education, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, and vocational education. Sen. Dan DeGrow (R-Port Huron) said the proposed constitutional amendment--already passed by the Senate--to reduce property taxes and increase the rate of the state sales tax from 4 percent to 6 percent would produce enough additional education revenue (\$300 million) to pay for the new requirements. The education quality bills would also require school districts to report annually enrollment and dropout data and test scores and to develop plans for education improvement.

....Sen. Jack Faxon (D-Farmington Hills) has proposed that the **public school funding formula** be weighted to reward districts that hire experienced teachers with advanced degrees and have comparatively large enrollments in kindergarten through third grade. Faxon said his new formula would provide \$3,044 per pupil for the 1988-89 school year if the school finance reform package is approved by voters.

Political News

....The *Detroit Free Press* Thursday endorsed Massachusetts Governor **Michael Dukakis** as "the best choice for Michigan" as Democrats prepared to vote in the party's statewide caucuses Saturday. The paper, praising the field of candidates as "better than we assumed," said Dukakis is "attuned to the importance of economic growth, committed to balancing compassion with judgment and pragmatism....we are looking for competence more than flair."

....An Associated Press poll reveals that **endorsements by state Democratic legislators** have been split fairly evenly among four presidential candidates: Michael Dukakis (17), Richard Gephardt (16), Albert Gore (16), and Rev. Jesse Jackson (11). Paul Simon has received only four endorsements from the Democrats, who hold 63 of the 100 House seats and 18 of 38 Senate seats. Dukakis and Jackson are running about even in polls of Michigan voters, with Gephardt and Gore trailing. Simon is a distant fifth.

....The state Senate has passed its version of a House bill establishing petition requirements for **independent candidates** seeking placement on election ballots and setting new criteria for qualification of **minor or new political parties**. An independent candidate for statewide office would need a minimum number of signatures equal to one percent of the votes cast for all gubernatorial candidates in the most recent gubernatorial election and two percent of gubernatorial votes in his or her district if running for U.S. House, state Senate, or state House. Minor and new parties would need a minimum number of signatures equal to one percent of the votes cast for all candidates for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election.

....**State Treasurer Robert Bowman** is in the running to be chief executive officer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan. The post has been vacant since John McCabe resigned in September. Richard Whitmer, acting CEO, is also among seven finalists.