



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- The House adjourned for **spring recess** this Wednesday, following the Senate's adjournment last Thursday. The Senate will reconvene on April 9, while the House is set to return a week later, on April 16.
- The two chambers headed for spring break with no **budget compromise** on the horizon. The \$7.6 billion current-year spending package remains roughly \$800 million in deficit. Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus (R-Alto) told the Associated Press as the Senate adjourned last week that no further talks with House Democrats were planned. Democrats earlier said they were willing to continue negotiations but would not agree to Republican-proposed cuts without knowing what budget categories they would affect.
- The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) will receive a **six-month extension** under legislation sent to Governor Engler for signature this week. HB 4484, passed with amendments last week by the Senate, was approved 92-10 by the House on Tuesday. If the bill had not passed, MIOSHA would have been terminated April 1 under previously approved budget cuts.
- Representatives from the state's public universities predicted **single-digit tuition increases** in testimony this week before the House Subcommittee on Higher Education. At Michigan's two largest schools, the University of Michigan Board of Regents will be "very, very reluctant" to consider a double-digit increase, according to President James Duderstadt; Michigan State University would need to hike tuition by 6 to 8 percent to maintain current programs, according to President John DiBiaggio. All the university representatives stressed that their projections were based on Governor Engler's recommended 4 percent increase for higher education in FY 1992.
- A House proposal to meet a federal court order to establish a **psychiatric prison hospital** by converting an existing facility was sent to the Senate on an 89-10 vote. HB 4589 permits the Department of Corrections to convert for its use the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital, which is scheduled to close in mid-April due to budget cuts. The state is not yet in compliance with a U.S. District Court ruling requiring Michigan to provide such a facility to its inmate population.
- A three-bill package affecting **adopted children's health insurance** has passed the House unanimously. The provisions of HBs 4119-4121 would allow insurance coverage from the first day adoptees are placed in a home, rather than when the adoption becomes final—which may be many months later.

Political News

- Governor John Engler and his bride Michelle slipped off to a **belated honeymoon** this week at an undisclosed location. The governor's political honeymoon may be briefer, as evidenced by the Democratic Party's release of poll results this week suggesting that 33 percent of voters rate Engler's overall performance favorably. Later in the week, Republicans released their own poll figures that reported a 38 percent favorable rating for the governor and showed a 54 percent unfavorable rating for Democratic U.S. Senator Donald Riegle.
- The Michigan Supreme Court has declined to hear a case on state cuts in **foster care payments**, thus enabling the state to implement its planned cutback in provider payments of at least 25 percent. A temporary injunction in circuit court halting the reductions was overturned last week by the Court of Appeals, whose ruling stands now that the state high court has refused to review it.
- The state's new **gun control law** that replaces all local ordinances with 23 statewide provisions becomes effective today absent its most distinctive and controversial requirement. The written safety quiz to be administered to all prospective gun owners has not yet been devised. Gubernatorial press secretary John Truscott told the *Lansing State Journal* that a committee to construct the exam will be appointed and the document will be available to local jurisdictions within six months.
- Citing concern that proposed budget cuts in the Civil Rights Department may compromise the unit's constitutional mandate, members of the **Legislative Black Caucus** are reportedly considering suing Governor Engler. A *Detroit News* article on Tuesday quotes Sen. David Holmes (D-Detroit) stating that lawmakers are "having discussions about" a suit but had not reached a decision. Holmes told the *News* that the governor's proposed 1992 budget would "put the Civil Rights Department out of business."
- U.S. Representative Bob Davis has issued an **apology for jokes** about Iraqis he told earlier this month at an Upper Peninsula political roast. The Gaylord Republican explained through an aide that ethnic humor is common at U.P. political dinners, and such remarks are made in fun.

Roundup will not be published during the legislative recess. The next issue will appear on April 11.