



Michigan ROUNDUP

....Officeholder expense funds (OEFs) should be regulated by IRS guidelines, according to a special House Democratic caucus appointed by Speaker Gary Owen. Controversial payments from the funds for new cars, golf club fees, and other living expenses would be prohibited under the proposal. Two House bills have been introduced to implement the reforms. Representative William Bryant, chair of the GOP House caucus studying OEFs, said that his groups' recommendations "would go far beyond" the Democratic proposals and would include prohibiting OEF expenditures for foreign travel and political contributions and banning corporate donations to the funds.

....Governor Blanchard announced his support for a 65-mph speed limit on rural interstate freeways if certain traffic safety provisions are enacted; these include a ban on radar detectors, a 55-mph speed limit for trucks weighing over five tons, and tougher enforcement of seat belt laws. A Senate-passed bill raising the speed limit is awaiting action in the House.

....Blanchard stated that he believes the House will approve an income tax rate reduction to 4.4 percent before the summer recess and that his property tax reform plan financed by higher taxes on banks and insurance companies also will be approved. Blanchard said that, although he would not initiate a tie-bar of the two plans, he would support House Speaker Owen's plan to do so if it will get the legislation approved.

NOTE: The House and Senate have recessed for Easter until April 28.

....In a poll conducted by Marketing Resource Group, Inc., a Republican-oriented consulting firm, slightly over one-third of the 800 registered Michigan voters surveyed believe that the country is headed in the right direction. The survey also indicates that President Reagan's popularity has dropped sharply in recent months. Forty-eight percent of those polled approve of the president's job performance, a decline from 68 percent six months ago.

....Former Colorado Senator Gary Hart, who this week formally announced his intention to seek the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination, is the front-runner in his party's race, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents prefer Hart to other Democrats. Jesse Jackson is second with 9 percent. George Bush, with 33 percent, and Robert Dole, with 19 percent, are the favorites among Republican candidates. Senators Albert Gore of Tennessee and Paul Simon of Illinois, who also entered the race for the Democratic nomination, are preferred by 2 percent and less than 1 percent, respectively.

....Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson said he will run again for prosecutor in 1988 instead of challenging Daniel Murphy for county executive.

....The Michigan Democratic party will hold its 1988 presidential caucuses on March 26. Despite opposition from some party members, the Democratic State Central Committee rejected a proposal to select delegates by secret ballot at the caucuses.

....Elderly Americans paid more for federal health programs each time Congress modified the Medicare law between 1980 and 1986, according to a General Accounting Office report released this week. Inpatient and physician services in 1986 cost the elderly \$6.1 billion more than under 1980 Medicare laws.