



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- The Senate Appropriations Committee amended and approved a House-passed supplemental appropriations bill (HB 5278) for the current fiscal year. The Senate version contains \$55.3 million in general fund spending, \$17 million less than recommended by the House. The committee cut funding for Youth Corps, "Yes Michigan," and Michigan Opportunity Card programs, restored funding for community college and higher education special maintenance funds, eliminated a pay cut for judges, and prohibited the Lottery from hiring sports figures for promotion purposes. The committee left intact a 2 percent increase for social services recipients and provider payments. The Senate will take up the bill next week; it will then be referred to a conference committee.
- A House Democratic Task Force on Solid Waste is recommending legislation that would further regulate Michigan's solid waste industry. The task force calls for the creation of a Solid Waste Oversight Commission to monitor landfill locations, capacities, and fees; disclosure by landfill owners of previous environmental violations; advance notice by landfills of fee increases; and registration of waste haulers.
- The House Judiciary Committee approved legislation that would require divorced parents to continue supporting their children until they graduate from high school or reach age 19 1/2; current law requires parental support until age 18. The legislation is designed to address the fact that many students do not graduate from high school until age 19. An amendment was adopted to link the House bill to a Senate version requiring all parents to support their children until age 19 if they have not yet graduated from high school.
- Gubernatorial candidates who accept public financing would be required to attest to the truthfulness of their campaign advertisements under a bill (SB 747) adopted by the Senate. The bill, sponsored by gubernatorial candidate and Senate Majority Leader John Engler (R-Mt. Pleasant), allows other candidates for public office voluntarily to sign an affidavit declaring that their advertising is true. For gubernatorial candidates, a fine of up to \$1,000 could be assessed each time an untruthful ad airs.

Political News

- State Representative Francis "Bus" Spaniola (D-Corunna) will not seek a ninth term in the 87th District seat he has held since 1974. His decision to retire boosts Republican hopes of capturing the marginally Democratic seat and thereby narrowing the 60-50 Democratic majority in the House. According to the *Lansing State Journal*, contenders for Spaniola's seat include insurance agent Jim Civile, an Owosso Republican, and the Shiawassee Board of Commissioners chair, Democrat Barbara Clatterbaugh.
- The U.S. Department of Education annual student achievement survey shows Michigan high school students graduating at a rate of 73.6 percent—29th among states and the District of Columbia. That is a slight decrease in the 74 percent reported for the state in 1987. Nationally, the graduation rate of 71.1 is also down slightly from the 1987 figure of 71.7. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Donald Bemis told the *Detroit Free Press* that the imposition of tougher graduation standards is likely to drive the statistics even lower in the short run, until results of elementary school reforms yielding better student performance are seen in the state's secondary schools.
- Two legislative veterans have announced reelection plans: Sen. Jack Faxon (D-Farmington Hills) will run for a sixth term in the 15th District. Rep. James O'Neill (D-Saginaw) has represented the City of Saginaw's 85th District for 24 years and will seek another term.
- Lt. Col. Oliver North (USMCRet) will campaign in Michigan this weekend for W. Clark Durant III, who hopes to unseat U.S. Rep. Bill Schuette for the Republican nomination in the 10th congressional district. In another celebrity appearance, filmmaker Michael Moore stumped in Lansing last weekend, supporting Zolton Ferency's candidacy for the 24th District Democratic primary nomination for the state Senate.
- Delegates to the State Bar of Michigan's representative assembly have voted to ask its 25,000 members to provide at least three poor people a year with pro bono legal services in noncriminal matters. The *Detroit Free Press* reported that the organization approved the measure with the additional options of (1) offering 30 hours of free or reduced-rate service to poor clients or (2) contributing \$300 to nonprofit organizations benefiting the poor.