



*Legislative Week in Review*

....The Senate approved a \$1.9 billion Department of Social Services budget bill, but did not approve a 3 percent increase in welfare grants supported by Governor Blanchard. The bill, which now goes to the House, would also eliminate \$13.2 million for heating allowances for welfare recipients, but would add \$4.8 million for prenatal care, day-care, and adoption programs.

....The House Appropriations Committee approved a higher education budget totaling nearly \$1.1 billion, a 7.7 percent increase over the 1986-87 budget and \$19 million above the governor's recommendation.

....Governor Blanchard offered a new workers' disability compensation plan to replace the current system. His plan, introduced as a House substitute for SB 67, would more strictly define disability; prohibit workers from suing their employers for damages in addition to receiving workers' compensation benefits, unless the injury was intentional; and prohibit coordination of benefits by insurers for workers injured before 1982, the year coordination took effect. The House promptly passed the bill.

....Representative Nelson Saunders has requested an opinion from the attorney general on the constitutionality of a proposed ban on radar detectors.

....A bill limiting use of officeholder expense funds to only business expenses allowed by the Internal Revenue Service was unanimously approved by the House Oversight Committee.

....Two bills requiring the divestiture of state investments in companies doing business in South Africa were approved by the House Committee on Civil Rights.

*Political News*

....Subject to Senate confirmation, Governor Blanchard appointed Ritchie Davis to succeed retiring Gerald Hough as director of the Michigan State Police. Davis, a 24-year veteran of the force, will assume the \$64,000-a-year post immediately.

....Disagreeing with the Michigan Supreme Court task force report released last week, the governor sees no need for a separate state department to address child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency. He prefers that children's services now divided among the departments of Social Services and Mental Health and the county probate courts be merged in an independent agency within an existing state department.

....Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, proposes expanding health care benefits for the elderly by basing Medicare premiums on income. His proposal would increase monthly premiums \$4 for an elderly couple with an annual income under \$17,500, \$14 for a couple earning \$35,000, and \$70 for a couple earning \$100,000 or more a year. The additional premiums would pay for expanded coverage of hospitalization, home care, and skilled nursing and hospice care.

....Following news reports of his alleged infidelity, Senator Gary Hart announced Friday that he is withdrawing from the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

....Private contributions to American colleges and universities from all sources reached an estimated \$7.4 billion in 1985-86, a 17.1 percent gain over the previous year, according to a Council for Financial Aid to Education survey. Donations from private individuals rose over 25 percent; corporate donations were up 8 percent.