



*Public Sector Reports*

## Michigan ROUNDUP

### *Legislative Week in Review*

- Governor Blanchard is expected to announce a new **K-12 finance plan** today that could be placed on the November ballot, reports the *Detroit News*. The plan is similar to the governor's original proposal in that it would limit property tax assessment increases to the rate of inflation. New provisions call for a constitutional amendment stating that lottery profits go to education; a requirement that the state pay 50 percent of total school funding; and quality education guarantees, such as school performance measures and raising the mandatory school attendance age to 18. Senate Republicans will be introducing a similar proposal within two weeks. Both plans are modeled after one suggested last month by Detroit School Board member David Olmstead and University of Michigan professor C. Philip Kearney.
- The annual **Senior Power Day** will be held next Tuesday, and as usual the legislature is expected to vote on a key bill or two of interest to seniors. One will be HB 4016, which allows people to designate a "patient advocate" to make care, custody, and medical decisions on their behalf should they become unable to do so. Another bill likely to be debated (HB 5448) would prohibit physicians from charging Medicare patients more than the amount Medicare will pay.
- Divorced parents would be required to support their children until they graduate from high school or reach age 19-1/2 under a bill approved by the House. Current law requires parental support until age 18. The bill now goes to the Senate.
- Speaker Lewis Dodak (D-Birch Run) wants to establish a **House Ethics Committee** to advise legislators on conflicts of interest and make recommendations on censorship or expulsion of legislators when they violate a code of ethics.
- Governor Blanchard, Department of Public Health Director Raj Wiener, and General Motors executive Debbie Dingell announced Wednesday a public information campaign called "**Baby Your Baby.**" The two-year campaign, supported by public and private funds, will use television, radio, and print to inform pregnant women about the importance of healthy behavior before and during pregnancy as well as how, where, and when to get prenatal care. Michigan's infant mortality rate is 11th highest in the nation.

### *Political News*

- Settling months of speculation with a surprise announcement, **Lieutenant Governor Martha Griffiths** says she is ready and willing to run for a third term if "the Governor and the Democrats believe I can be of help and strengthen the ticket." In the past, Governor Blanchard has given unwavering public assurance that Griffiths is welcome to stay on the ticket for as long as she chooses. Griffiths, 78, told a Thursday press conference that she had not given Blanchard advance notice of her decision and that she had earlier favored retirement upon completion of her current term. But, she said, pressure from supporters—"senior citizens, women, minorities, and good, old-fashioned Democrats who appreciate a public official unafraid to speak candidly and tell it like it is"—persuaded her to change her mind. Meantime, Blanchard's campaign manager has said that the state's chief executive will delay announcement of his own candidacy until June. Although Blanchard will file documents declaring his candidacy by next week, Gary Bachula says the governor is concerned that a formal announcement of his third-term bid now might retard legislative action on the state budget.
- U.S. Rep. Bob Carr has announced his hopes to win an eighth term in the **6th District** seat he lost in 1980 and regained from Republican Jim Dunn in 1982. Carr's likely Republican opponent in one of the country's most politically volatile congressional districts is Fowlerville attorney Joseph Cox.
- Both Michigan senators will serve on the 13-member Task Force on the U.S. Economy in the 1990s. Sen. Donald Riegle will chair the task force, and Sen. Carl Levin also will be on the panel, which will examine ways to redirect funds formerly spent on defense.
- Nearly 200 artists and arts advocates rallied at the capitol on Wednesday for Michigan's first **Art Attack Day**, which organizers say will be an annual legislative lobbying effort. State spending on the arts is an investment in the quality of life, according to the group's members, who say they want the state's appropriation increased to \$12 million.
- "We've got an expensive prison system that's about as big as it's going to get," Governor Blanchard told 500 community corrections representatives at the first conference of the new state **Office of Community Corrections**. Quoted in the *Detroit News*, Blanchard said he supports completion of the current \$900 million expansion program, which when finished in 1992 will have boosted the number of state prisons from 12 to 39, and he pledged that there would be no additional construction. Instead, the state will look to local communities to develop detention and rehabilitation programs for nonviolent criminals.



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