



Public Sector Reports

Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- All FY 1990-91 state **budget bills** are expected to be through both houses by May 25, with conference committees meeting the following week. Legislative and administration leaders have not yet agreed on target spending levels. The legislature plans to wrap up the budget before it adjourns June 14 for the summer recess.
- The House Appropriations Committee agreed to a total general fund **higher education** budget of \$1.25 billion, 5 percent higher than the current year level, \$4 million less than passed by the Senate, and equal to the governor's recommendation. Meanwhile, the Senate Subcommittee on Social Services Appropriations is expected to make its recommendation on May 22.
- Michigan's 16th annual **Senior Power Day** drew several thousand people to the capitol Tuesday and saw passage in the House by 97-7 of controversial legislation that lets patients designate someone to make their medical decisions should they become incapacitated. HB 4016, providing for a durable power of attorney, has been called by some the "right-to-die" bill, and its approval has been stymied since 1975, when it was introduced by Rep. David Hollister (D-Lansing). A second measure of special importance to senior citizens, a restriction on the amount physicians can bill against Medicare, was defeated in the House on Tuesday, but a substitute motion gained favorable reconsideration and passed the next day. The substitute encourages—but does not mandate—physicians voluntarily to restrict their Medicare billings.
- The Senate plans to consider next week a 17-bill package creating an agency for child and family services that would become the **20th state department** by 1995. Because of the fiscal implications, Senate Republicans decided to consider the package conterminously with budget bills that likely will be reported out of committee next week.
- The House has approved Senate changes in a bill making it a secondary offense to drive a car in which children ages 4 to 16 are not wearing seat belts. HB 4220 requires children to wear seat belts whether riding in front or back seats, except when there are more children than belts. The bill will be sent to the governor for signature.

Political News

- Governor James Blanchard's first reelection **campaign commercials** have sparked sharply negative reactions from black lawmakers in his own party, who claim the ads are racist or at the least insensitive. The 30-second anticrime spots, which include footage of a white guard shouting at a black inmate, were first televised Tuesday night on some channels, not including Detroit. Members of the Legislative Black Caucus quoted in the *Detroit News* criticized the ads for "appealing to white emotionalism about urban crime and playing on stereotypes of minorities as subservients and whites as masters." Blanchard campaign director Gary Bachula says that the ads are not racist and realistically portray a prison boot camp.
- Tuesday was the campaign filing deadline for candidates in the August primaries and November general elections. Two more **Senate incumbents withdrew**: Mitch Irwin (D-Sault Ste. Marie) and Richard Fessler (R-Union Lake) surprised colleagues on both sides of the aisle by deciding not to seek reelection. Their unexpected decisions bring to eight the number of senate vacancies to be filled next fall.
- There are now thirteen Michigan **House seats open**, the latest being Rep. Bart Stupak's Upper Peninsula 109th District. The Menominee Democrat announced that he will run for retiring Sen. Joe Mack's 38th District seat.
- When the petition-filing dust settled, nine state lawmakers found themselves **running unopposed** in both the August and November elections. Sen. Jackie Vaughn III (D-Detroit) and reps. Floyd Clack (D-Flint), Robert Emerson (D-Flint), Michael Griffin (D-Jackson), Philip Hoffman (R-Horton), Teola Hunter (D-Detroit), Kirk Profit (D-Ypsilanti), Nelson Saunders (D-Detroit), and Stanley Stopczynski (D-Detroit) are unchallenged in their bids for subsequent terms.
- Among the major county government posts, Democrat Edward McNamara is running unopposed for a second term as **Wayne County executive**.
- Former Republican state senator Richard Allen resigned his Blanchard administration post as Michigan Business Ombudsman this week to join the crowded field of **10th District** candidates for Congress. Allen will vie with state Rep. David Camp (R-Midland), former state Sen. Alan Cropsey, and former U.S. Rep. James Dunn for the seat being vacated by U.S. Rep. Bill Schuette, who hopes to unseat U.S. Sen. Carl Levin.
- Dearborn attorney Frank Guido will challenge Sen. George Hart (D-Dearborn) in his bid for a third term in Michigan's **10th Senate District**.

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