



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- The legislature approved the FY 1989-90 **supplemental appropriations** bill, which increases net state spending by \$28.6 million (general fund). The measure provides for \$211.5 million in additional spending but \$193.4 million in cuts. The departments of Corrections, Social Services, State Police, and Public Health received additional funds. The Michigan Youth Corps program was cut by \$4 million but replacement with federal monies is anticipated. Capital outlay appropriations were reduced by \$83.6 million. State departments must make across-the-board cuts of 2.5 percent, excluding revenue sharing and education, community college, and higher education programs. Rep. Dominic Jacobetti, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, commented on the supplemental: "We're not overspending, the budget is underfunded." He warned that taxes may need to be increased to correct the problem.
- With the supplemental budget approved, targets for the **FY 1990-91 budget** now can be set. The Senate adjourned until June 28, but conference committee members will meet next week. The House has not yet decided if it will adjourn next week while conferees meet. The outside date for completion of the budget and summer adjournment is now July 3.
- A heavily amended SB 375, aimed at making **polluters pay** for environmental damage they cause, failed passage twice this week. The compromise measure's 19-15 defeat on Wednesday followed a 22-16 rejection a day earlier. Sen. Lana Pollack (D-Ann Arbor), sponsor of the original bill, called the revised version "a bad joke" and asked to have her name removed from it.
- A proposed constitutional amendment to boost **K-12 funding** and cap property tax increases was rejected twice by the Senate on Wednesday. SJR O would have required the state and local school districts to share equally the costs of school funding and would have limited property tax increases to the rate of inflation, up to a maximum of 5 percent. Support for the measure was short of the necessary 26 votes each time it was considered. The first vote fell 25-9; the second was 24-9.
- Governor Blanchard signed into law Wednesday legislation permitting the City of Detroit to continue collecting a 5 percent **utility tax**. Although litigation is still pending on the issue, the measure permits the city to forestall the massive police layoffs that were contemplated.

Political News

- Acting on a Michigan case, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that constitutional rights are not infringed if police stop motorists at **sobriety checklanes**. These were used in the state only once in 1986, were ruled unconstitutional by the Michigan Supreme Court, and have been on hold pending the U.S. high court's ruling. Litigation is not over. The issue will be returned to state courts to determine whether the checklanes violate privacy provisions of the Michigan constitution. Meanwhile, Rep. Morris Hood (D-Detroit) will sponsor a bill outlawing checklanes. Since 1986, lawmakers have added restrictions to the Michigan State Police budget prohibiting use of state funds for this purpose.
- The **Accident Fund** would gain autonomous agency status within the Department of Commerce and an executive director appointed to four-year terms by the governor under a Senate bill approved Wednesday by the House Appropriations Committee.
- Michigan State University Trustee Malcolm Dade has decided not to seek another term. The Detroit Democrat and former aide to Mayor Coleman Young was one of five **MSU trustees** who voted earlier this year to appoint football coach George Perles to the post of athletic director as well, against President John DiBiaggio's recommendation. Dade told the *Lansing State Journal* that the ensuing furor and unsuccessful recall petition drive against the five trustees played only a small part in his decision to retire. Dade, a Detroit Edison vice-president, was chairman of the MSU search committee that hired DiBiaggio and has served as Board of Trustees chairman. His successor in that post, East Lansing attorney Larry Owen, is also up for reelection this year and is expected to be nominated for a second term at the Democratic state convention. Democratic Party chairman Tom Lewand says that no one has yet expressed interest publicly in running for Dade's seat.
- In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's action striking down a law prohibiting **flag burning**, adoption of a constitutional amendment protecting Old Glory from desecration has become a campaign issue. U.S. Rep. Bill Schuette, a primary candidate hoping to oppose U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, says Levin has flip-flopped on the matter. According to the Associated Press, Levin released a statement this week that he would support a constitutional amendment on the issue, although he voted against a proposed ban last October. A Levin aide explains that the Detroit Democrat originally favored a legislative remedy. Since that has been ruled out by the Court, Levin is ready to consider a constitutional approach. "It never ceases to amaze me that Betsy Ross ever finished making the first flag before some politician managed to wrap him or herself in it," the aide quipped.