



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- Progress was slow this week on the **FY 1990-91 budget**. Targets were set for each budget bill, with total appropriations exceeding the governor's original recommendation by \$31.6 million. The majority of the increase is for education—\$14.3 million to K-12 schools, \$2.3 million to community colleges, and \$5 million for higher education. Most conference committees met, but few reached agreement. The Mental Health and Social Services conference committees have threatened not to meet until the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) releases payment increases to providers scheduled for August 1. DMB says the state cannot afford the increases. The dispute could mean the legislature will not adjourn on June 29 or that the Social Services budget may not be approved until fall.
- While the state budget remains up in the air, so does the fate of the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO)**, which reportedly needs an \$8 million bailout to meet this week's payroll and to stay afloat. Arts patrons received a letter last week from the DSO board chairman urging them to lobby legislators for state funds to match expected corporate contributions. The financially troubled orchestra is slated for \$2.5 million in the FY 1990-91 budget; the \$8 million would be in addition to that funding.
- Governor James Blanchard threatens to veto a Republican-backed bill cutting the **inheritance tax** that he calls a "tax bonus for the rich." Quoted by the *Detroit Free Press* at a midweek news conference, Blanchard said he planned to veto the measure passed earlier this month as part of a compromise to gain approval of a Democrat-backed bill to reinstate the City of Detroit's utility tax. According to early estimates, the state could lose up to \$40 million annually from the inheritance tax break, which would be phased in over three years, beginning in 1991.
- House approval this week of a bill tightening language in the state's **surrogate parenthood** statutes sends the measure to the governor for signature. The Senate-backed bill clarifies Michigan law permitting surrogate parenthood if the birth mother is reimbursed for pregnancy-related costs without any profit.

Political News

- The Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission wants Michigan to loosen its environmental laws, making it easier to find a **hazardous waste disposal site** for the seven states in the Midwest region compact. Meeting this week in Ann Arbor, members of the compact are expected to deny Michigan's request for \$1 million in additional site selection funding. Michigan authorities recently rejected the last of several proposed dump sites, and the funds are being requested to study 78 additional locations to see if they could house the regional waste facility. In addition to storing its own hazardous waste, Michigan is pledged to accept similar refuse from Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
- In an unprecedented break with his longtime political ally Coleman Young, U.S. Rep. George Crockett plans to endorse State Rep. Juanita Watkins (D-Detroit) to succeed him in the **13th Congressional District**, according to published reports. Detroit Mayor Young is backing city councilwoman Barbara Rose Collins, who lost a close race against Crockett two years ago. Crockett's endorsement of Watkins—one of seven Democrats in the crowded primary field—marks the first time the 80-year-old congressman has broken political ranks with Young. The unexpected split has fractured the district's traditionally cohesive black leadership.
- U.S. Representative Bob Carr introduced a bill in Congress this week that would strip **flag burners** of their citizenship. Congress cannot remove an individual's citizenship but can add to the list of actions by which persons are presumed to have renounced it voluntarily, Carr told the Gannett News Service. Carr described his bill as a more reasoned response to the issue of flag desecration than seeking a constitutional amendment.
- Implementation of Michigan's **Home Ownership Savings Trust (HOST)**, the tax-free and guaranteed interest rate savings program for state home-buyers, likely will wait until mid-July, according to a letter mailed to applicants last week by Treasurer Robert Bowman. "Final printing of the official HOST offering statement, which describes enrollment and investment procedures is now awaiting adoption of the budget by the legislature," the letter states. The program was to have begun in March.