



## Michigan ROUNDUP

June 25, 1993

### *Legislative Week in Review*

- Senate Republicans this week passed seven parts of an eight-bill package permitting the state's **sale of the Accident Fund**. On party-line votes, the measures okayed by the GOP-controlled upper chamber would allow the assets and liabilities of the workers' compensation insurance fund to be privatized through a competitive bidding process. Supporters' claims that government has no proper place in the insurance industry brought howls of protest from Democrats, who say that the value of the Fund has not been properly appraised and that its sale would not be in the public interest. Sen. William Faust (D-Westland), ranking Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee, has charged the administration with withholding financial information about the Accident Fund and has cited correspondence from the state insurance commissioner predicting that the state would make more money by keeping the Fund than by selling it.
- In the lower chamber, the House passed the **State Police budget, 93-3**. SB 533 reflects an increase in the size of the police force for the first time in several years and contains \$2.5 million more in its \$206.5 million general fund appropriation than was recommended by the governor.
- Without debate the Senate approved creation of a **pornography-free zone** 1,000 feet around places frequented by minors, such as parks, schools, churches, or residential neighborhoods. SB 500 drew concern from video rental outlets and music stores that fear prosecution from local jurisdictions for selling materials deemed sexually explicit. The bill would allow local governments to define sexual explicitness.
- State-financed replacement of **leaking underground storage tanks** would dry up under provisions of SBs 644 and 645, passed overwhelmingly by the Senate. Costs of replacing the estimated 9,000 leaking Michigan tanks is far outstripping the revenues collected to pay for them from a petroleum products tax, and the new legislation would phase out the program, known by its acronym MUSTFA, in six years.
- Under SB 631, passed by the Senate this week, Michigan police will be able to arrest motorists for **drunk driving** whether or not their vehicle is moving. Drivers who pull off the road to nap off their cocktails' effects will be subject to arrest under the measure. Currently, a vehicle must be moving on the highway for its operator to be charged with drunk driving. The bill is one of several in a package giving government broader powers to arrest and prosecute drunken driving charges.

### *Political News*

- Detroit's two major dailies disagreed Wednesday about the size of the political vacuum created by **Mayor Coleman Young's retirement**. The morning after Young announced he would not seek reelection, the *Detroit Free Press* credited former Supreme Court Justice Dennis Archer with having a "virtual lock" on a primary election slot based on a poll giving him 37 percent support with 22 percent undecided. Not so at the *Detroit News*, where analysts predicted a "free-for-all" race based on their polls showing 40 percent of voters undecided and only 29 percent backing frontrunner Archer.
- The Michigan Court of Appeals stayed a lower court ruling on **assisted suicide** this week, making the practice a felony once again while the appellate panel reviews the matter. A Wayne County circuit court had earlier struck down the new state statute as unconstitutional; Attorney General Frank Kelley appealed that ruling and asked for the ban to remain in effect pending judicial review.
- Michigan State University's **presidential search** may lag behind schedule, according to board chairman Joel Ferguson. Ferguson told the *Lansing State Journal* that the school is unlikely to have a new campus executive on board by September 1, although the search panel is still trying to arrange for public, on-campus interviews for finalists this summer.
- State Rep. David Jaye (R-Shelby) was **sentenced this week** to three weekends in jail and a restricted license following his second conviction on drunken driving charges.

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**Public Sector Consultants, Inc.**  
Knapp's Centre • 300 S. Washington Sq. • Suite 401  
Lansing, MI 48933-2134 • (517) 484-4954