

Michigan ROUNDUP

July 9, 1993

Legislative Week in Review

- **Abortion** foes claimed a major victory Wednesday after the House passed by a 61-41 vote a bill (SB 384) that imposes a 24-hour waiting period on women seeking an abortion, requires them to receive counseling and receive a pamphlet on abortion procedures and risks, and requires that they be given drawings of fetuses at various stages of development. Only one amendment to the Senate-passed bill was adopted; it states that the patient or the judicial process must consent to the release of records on the identity of a woman seeking information on or obtaining an abortion and that the records must be destroyed after 30 days. The Senate is expected to support the amendment, thus sending the bill to the governor, who supports the measure.
- The fate of **auto insurance reform** legislation remained unclear this week after the House failed to concur in a controversial Senate amendment that opponents believe effectively blocks the Michigan Citizens Lobby (MCL) plans to put the measure on the November 1994 ballot via the referendum process. Last week the Senate adopted an amendment appropriating \$50,000 for an insurance rate study and sent the bill to the House. The constitution prohibits referenda on appropriations bills. The MCL could pursue the right of initiative to put the measure on the ballot, but about 77,000 more signatures would be required. A possible compromise plan proposed Wednesday would give the bill immediate effect but guarantee its placement on the November 1994 ballot. Further House action was postponed until next week.
- A package of bills that revise the **health professional licensing and discipline** laws has been sent to the governor. Major provisions include: (1) a nondisciplinary, treatment-oriented program for health professionals; (2) a nurse professional fund; (3) a disciplinary subcommittee within each health professional board of licensure or registration and task force; (4) a certain amount of protection for people and health professionals against civil or criminal liability when, in good faith, they make a report against a health professional, assist in a board investigation, or act as a witness in a malpractice lawsuit; (5) the exemption of records and information related to an investigation or a compliance conference conducted by the Michigan Department of Commerce (MDC) from the Freedom of Information Act, and the exemption of a compliance conference between health professionals and the MDC from the Open Meetings Act.

Political News

- Another Ingham County resident may join the **Democratic race for governor**, according to *Detroit Free Press* political writer Hugh McDiarmid. In his July 8 column, McDiarmid said Joel Ferguson, chairman of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees and a prominent Lansing businessman, is inclined "to go forward if polls indicate he won't bomb or damage the party's ticket in a general election." Washington political consultant Ron Lester is quoted as saying "I think he's leaning toward running."
- A controversial package of bills to overhaul the **pension system** for state, school, and municipal employees will be introduced next week. The plan, put forward by the Engler administration, would apply to employees hired after 1993 and is expected to save the state an estimated \$60 million in FY 1993-94. It would replace a system of paying pension benefits monthly for an employee's life based on salary and years of service with one that puts 5 percent of an employee's salary into a retirement account and gives the employee options on how to invest it. The plan also would eliminate state-paid health insurance for retirees. Some observers believe the proposed pension plan will be a major issue in the 1994 gubernatorial campaign.
- Speaking of the **gubernatorial campaign**, Governor Engler announced Wednesday the opening of his campaign headquarters and the appointment of Chief of Staff Dan Pero as his campaign manager effective this fall. Several other campaign advisors also were announced.
- A WDIV-TV Channel 4 poll conducted Tuesday and reported in the *Detroit News* shows Dennis Archer in the lead among **Detroit mayoral candidates** with 39 percent in favor. The poll shows Sharon McPhail's support increased from 11 percent two weeks ago to 16 percent. U.S. Rep. John Conyers is supported by 11 percent, Arthur Blackwell by 7 percent, Charles Costa by 3 percent, and Paul Hubbard by one percent. Of the 549 likely voters surveyed, one out of five are undecided.

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