



Michigan ROUNDUP

July 17, 1992

Legislative Week in Review

■ State senators finally put the **1992-93 budget** to bed Wednesday night, but not without a considerable tussle. A second reconsideration vote finally mustered sufficient support to pass HB 5520, the general government appropriations bill. The bill includes the budgets for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as well as several other executive departments. Keys to this year's wrangling in the upper chamber were:

The Harbor Development Fund—a \$9.6-million pool of dedicated user fees that the administration and the House agreed could be tapped as a one-time transfer to balance the budget. The Senate persistently disagreed, calling the proposed transfer a breach of faith and passing a bill (HB 5513) mandating repayment of the funds by August 1993.

Federal summer job funds—resolution of the general government budget authorized release of \$24 million in funds intended to draw youths into the job market. Legislators opposed to the use of harbor funds as a budget balancer were induced into compromise by the specter of further delay in releasing these needed federal funds.

■ The Senate unanimously passed HB 5855, extending the life of the state's **Auto Theft Prevention Authority**, whose funding otherwise would have lapsed Wednesday. Earlier, the House had unanimously backed the measure, marking the only instance this session of complete bipartisan agreement on an issue even related to automobile insurance reform.

■ Legislation permitting additional **adult foster care** inspectors to be hired by the Department of Social Services passed the Senate this week. HB 4743 permits the DSS to raise licensing fees to augment the department's current licensing staff of 62.

■ With Wednesday's Senate action, the legislature inches closer to **summer recess**. The Senate is scheduled to reconvene on Tuesday, September 15. The House is scheduled to return for a one-day session next Wednesday to deal with technicalities; its return date from summer recess has not yet been determined. The next edition of *Roundup* is scheduled for Thursday, September 17.

■ Two additional **anti-stalking bills** will be introduced in this legislative session, bringing to four the number of bills pending on the topic. Sen. R. Robert Geake (R-Northville) introduced SB 1095, allowing victims to file suit against stalkers to recover attorneys fees and court costs as well as damages. Rep. Dianne Byrum (D-Onondaga) will introduce a bill next week permitting police to arrest without a warrant anyone suspected of violating an anti-stalking order. Two bills already introduced define stalking as a crime.

■ Thirty-one state cities can designate **enterprise zones** to encourage rehabilitation of depressed neighborhoods under a bill signed into law this week by Governor John Engler.

Political News

■ In the here-today-gone-tomorrow department, undeclared **presidential candidate** H. Ross Perot scrapped his populist campaign just five days after a Lansing rally celebrated the collection of sufficient signatures to place his name on the state ballot. Supporters claimed to have amassed over 300,000 signers, well over the 25,646 valid signatures required by state law.

■ AAA of Michigan wants legislative review of its **no-fault auto rate rollback** initiative petition and has sought legal action guaranteeing it. Michigan's constitution requires initiative proposals to be considered by the legislature within forty days, after which, in the absence of legislative action, the proposal is to appear on a statewide ballot. The schedule currently set by the Board of State Canvassers to meet and certify the validity of the petition signatures will leave barely enough time to meet this constitutional schedule and a state law requiring ballot proposals to be ready by September 4. AAA is asking the Michigan Court of Appeals to bypass the canvassing board's certification by sending the petitions directly to the legislature.

■ Saying that he wants the **Detroit Tigers** to stay in Michigan, Governor John Engler told the Associated Press this week, "There's no way there's going to be a regional tax to pay for a [new] stadium. I've made it clear the state doesn't have any money." Reports of talks between Engler and the Tigers' owner Tom Monaghan fuelled speculation over potential state-assisted new stadium deals to help keep the team—which Monaghan is trying to sell—in the state.

■ State Treasurer Douglas Roberts announced the sale of nearly \$20 million in **college savings bonds** last month. Sold in \$1,000 and \$5,000 denominations, 70 percent of the state-backed bonds were purchased to finance college expenses by middle-to-upper income buyers. According to Treasury officials, 57 percent of the buyers had incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000; 35 percent had incomes above \$75,000.

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