



## Legislative Week in Review

# Michigan ROUNDUP

- Legislative sessions were not held this week, but conference committees on the FY 1989-90 budget met to resolve differences about how the revised budget will be spent. Last week legislative leaders and Governor Blanchard reached agreement on the targets, which exceed the governor's revised recommendation by about \$295 million. Conference agreements have been reached on the budgets for the departments of Agriculture, State Police, and Public Health. Budgets for the departments of Military Affairs and Transportation have been signed into law. Decisions are still pending on all others.
- The general fund target for higher education is \$1.2 billion, 5 percent higher than the current year. At Wednesday's conference committee, chairs Sen. William Sederburg (R-East Lansing) and Rep. Morris Hood (D-Detroit) tentatively agreed to spend \$175,000 to establish a Race Relations Institute at Wayne State University. The first of its kind in the country, the institute would research and analyze issues affecting the quality of life of blacks and minorities as well as develop educational programs to improve understanding of racial issues. Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, which is creating a similar program, will work closely with Wayne State on the project. Also at the conference committee, several universities reported their plans to increase tuition by 7-10 percent in 1990. Department of Management and Budget Director Shelby Solomon stated Wednesday that the increases may not be as steep once the budget is decided; he said mid-single-digit figures would be the appropriate level. The committee will meet again July 25.
- The conference committee on the social services budget made progress on several funding items Wednesday but still has considerable work to do. The conferees considered the governor's proposals for \$58 million in Medicaid cost-containment measures, but none received support. The committee meets again next week.
- Governor Blanchard has asked the legislature for a \$1 million emergency appropriation for the financially troubled Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO). The funds would be diverted from a \$6 million appropriation for the fall ballot proposal on school finance reform, which now is expected to cost only \$5 million. Legislative appropriations leaders generally support the governor's request. The DSO has developed a five-year financial plan to resolve its difficulties.

## Political News

- On Tuesday Mayor Coleman Young announced his candidacy for a fifth term to a crowd at a downtown community center. Others seeking the Detroit mayoral post are Thomas Barrow, who lost to Young in 1985, James Williams, a self-styled "candidate of God," Detroit City Council President Erma Henderson, and Cecelia Henderson, a former city attorney. U.S. Representative John Conyers, a long-time critic of Young, has been mentioned as a possible candidate, but he refuses to comment about his interest in the post at this time.
- George Bush's nominee for the nation's chief civil rights enforcement position, William Lucas, says he disagrees with allegations that Supreme Court rulings erode the rights of minorities. His first day of confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee focused on his opinion of the Court's rulings, his overall legal views, and questions about his character. In a recent trip to the Orient, Lucas and his family were detained by U.S. Customs officials for hiding receipts and failing to declare items worth several thousand dollars. Lucas, an attorney, also was questioned about the validity of information on his New York State Bar application. U.S. Representative John Conyers withdrew his endorsement of Lucas, citing his lack of concern for Supreme Court civil rights decisions. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph Biden also indicated a lack of support for Lucas. Conyers's withdrawal of support threatens Lucas's confirmation.
- President Bush plans to nominate former Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe of Houghton, Michigan, as ambassador to Norway. In 1981, when Ruppe became director, the organization had a smaller budget than in 1967, and she is credited with revitalizing the Peace Corps both financially and in human resources.
- The *Detroit News* reports that three Oak Park special education students are no longer entitled to vocational training because they are 26 years old. An Oakland County circuit court upheld the state law stipulating that as the cut-off age. Attorney Justin Ravitz was attempting to gain permission for the three to remain in school. Ravitz says he may file suits on behalf of several other students because this ruling does not address the issue of quality, arguing that Oak Park's special education classes are "day care programs, rather than schooling." He asserts that the district fails to provide adequate vocational training.
- Phillip Runkel, president of Northwestern Michigan College, said he will retire August 15.