



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- The House and Senate reached agreement early Friday morning on a \$7.2 billion FY 1989-90 state budget and then adjourned for summer recess; the Senate will return September 27, the House on September 20. Highlights of the budget follow.
- **Higher education** institutions would receive \$1.2 billion from the general fund, a 5.2 percent increase over the current year. Individual institutions were allotted increases ranging from 4.5 percent to 8.9 percent. Tuition grants would total \$46.7 million, an increase of 4.9 percent.
- **Community and junior colleges** would receive \$212.5 million, a 5.5 percent increase over the current year. The increase for individual colleges ranges from 4.2 percent to 7.6 percent.
- The Department of Social Services (DSS) was appropriated \$2.285 billion. With the exception of nursing homes, all social services providers and recipients would receive economic increases of 2 percent for six months; nursing homes would receive a full-year increase of 4 percent. To improve access to health care, \$2.3 million would be used to augment reimbursement for certain physicians, dentists, and home health care workers. The governor's Job Start program, originally intended to be implemented statewide, would be instituted as a pilot program in six counties. According to DSS Director C. Patrick Babcock, the budget is still underfunded by \$61 million. This may lead the governor to veto portions of the budget. Because of the underfunding, a supplemental appropriation during the fiscal year may be necessary.
- The Department of Mental Health would receive \$878.1 million, an increase of \$10 million over the governor's recommendation. Community mental health programs were allocated \$330.3 million. The budget includes language that allows the department to continue phasing out the Traverse City Regional Psychiatric Hospital.
- The **school aid** budget was appropriated \$600 million from the general fund and \$2.9 billion in total state aid. The FY 1989-90 budget would provide a total spending increase of 7.3 percent and a general fund increase of 26 percent.
- Legislation was introduced that would require the state or federal government to notify residents of **nursing homes** and their families when action has been taken to decertify or delicense a nursing home. Information to assist in relocating residents also would have to be provided.

Political News

- U.S. Representative John Conyers announced Monday his entry into the **Detroit mayoral race**. Conyers, a Democrat, has been a member of Congress since 1965. He is a well-known black leader, and his candidacy is seen as the biggest challenge Mayor Coleman Young has yet faced at the ballot box. The *Detroit Free Press* quoted political consultant Jack Casey as saying: "Coleman Young is an excellent campaigner, an excellent vote getter, but he's never had an established black candidate running against him." According to a recent *Detroit News* poll, Young will receive the most votes in the September 12 primary, followed closely by Conyers. Accountant Tom Barrow ranks third in the poll, with the other candidates trailing behind.
- **William Lucas's nomination** for the federal government's top civil rights position still awaits Senate approval. U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania), one of two swing votes in the Senate Judiciary Committee, announced his endorsement of Lucas this week. The other swing vote is U.S. Senator Howell Heflin (D-Alabama), who tends to withhold his position on an issue until just before casting his vote. Should Heflin decide in Lucas's favor, the nomination would win committee approval and be sent to the Senate floor for confirmation. A "no" vote from Heflin could create a tie in the committee, sending the nomination to the floor without recommendation. Heflin asked for a postponement on the vote, saying he needed more time to explore new allegations about Lucas but gave no specifics. President Bush has been lobbying for Lucas but has not yet called Heflin.
- The **Michigan Hospital Association (MHA)** has filed suit in U.S. District Court in Lansing, arguing that the state Department of Social Services is not paying Michigan hospitals enough to cover the costs of care for Medicaid patients. MHA President Spencer Johnson reports that hospitals only receive 79 cents for every dollar of Medicaid care they provide, adding that this disparity affects the ability of some Michigan hospitals to remain in business.
- The **Detroit Automobile Dealers Association** has called off its fund-raising efforts to aid music and athletic programs for Detroit schools. Initially the group had pledged to raise \$5 million. Dan Hayes, executive vice president of the auto association, said the campaign was cancelled because school officials feared it would jeopardize the success of the September 12 millage vote.
- Zoltan Ferency, a political activist and Michigan State University faculty member, has proposed a plan to create a **part-time unicameral legislature**. Ferency, who asserts that such a system would encourage greater participation by both voters and minor parties in the political process, has pledged to support a petition drive to put the issue on the ballot.
- The next issue of the *Michigan Roundup* will be September 29.

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