



## Michigan ROUNDUP

August 22, 1991

### *Legislative Week in Review*

- New budget targets released Thursday may provide impetus for resolving the **FY 1991-92 budget**, which has been languishing in a partisan stalemate over the State Administrative Board's (SAB) future function. Democrats' insistence that each conference committee report be tie-barred to legislative guarantees that the SAB would not be used to transfer budgeted funds within departments has had the effect of keeping conferees from meeting. New targets total \$7.94 billion, more than \$108 million below the governor's recommended budget. Meanwhile, legislative compromise early in the summer on the FY 1990-91 budget prompted the national bond rating agency, Standard & Poor, to reaffirm Michigan's AA general obligation bond rating and remove the state from its "credit watch" list.
- Thursday's legislative agenda was relatively light, coming on the heels of the four-day **mandated furlough** for many state employees on August 15, 16, 19, and 20. A hotline offered assistance to citizens calling temporarily closed state departments. At a press conference earlier this month, Governor Engler and Lieutenant Governor Connie Binsfeld presented checks to the state treasurer totalling about \$2,900 in voluntary pay cuts equal to four days of work.
- The House and Senate are not scheduled to meet again until September 11; *Roundup* will resume weekly publication on September 19.

### *Political News*

- The **Committee to Recall Governor Engler** failed to collect enough valid petition signatures for presentation to state elections officials by the group's August 20 target date. The committee is extending its signature drive through Labor Day. A special recall election will require 641,141 valid signatures collected within a 90-day period, so signatures added through Labor Day will replace those collected at the start of the drive, which have become invalid.
- The unexpected and unsuccessful **Soviet coup** this week drew comments from Michigan's congressmen on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Representative William Broomfield, ranking Republican member, told the *Detroit News* that the attempted coup "shows once again that hard-line Communists are not only the worst enemies of the people of the West but also of the people they purport to govern." Long-time Democratic committee member Howard Wolpe told the *Lansing State Journal* that the coup's collapse is "a marvelous testament to the democratic ideal and the determination of the Soviet people."
- At meetings of the **National Governors' Association** this week, freshman John Engler was named to the group's executive committee and was appointed vice-chair of the association's Committee on International Trade and Foreign Relations.
- Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General Robert Peterson was appointed director of the state **Office of Drug Control Policy** by Governor Engler earlier this month. The new office, created by executive order, is expected to have duties comparable to those of the "drug czar" position created by former Governor Blanchard as the first such state office in the country.
- In meetings tagged by one headline writer as "**strategic arts reduction talks**," Governor Engler sat earlier this month with a dozen arts supporters and philanthropists to discuss his controversial proposal to strip all state funding from Michigan arts programs. After the talks, those involved predicted a phased withdrawal of state support under the direction of a new 11-member Council for Art and Cultural Affairs. This new panel of gubernatorial appointees will be named to replace the existing Michigan Council for the Arts on September 1.
- Thirteen Republicans and one Democrat have filed for the late Representative Sidney Ouwinga's **Eighteenth District** House seat. October 15 has been scheduled for the primary, with the special general election set for November 26.
- Michigan's longest-serving governor decried this summer the "very political, **excessively partisan**" atmosphere in the state capitol. Republican William Milliken, who served from 1969 to 1982, told the Associated Press that "when you get outside the capitol, people just look askance at what they see going on there. The people of Michigan don't want hot political partisanship to prevail in their capitol," Milliken said, adding that he hopes "as time moves on everyone will see the advantages of playing down the partisanship and the one-upmanship."
- One measure of partisan wrangling is the lawsuits filed this summer by both parties seeking court intervention in **legislative reapportionment**, which constitutionally is required prior to the 1992 elections. Democrats filed suit in late July in U.S. District Court in Flint asking that a judge take jurisdiction over congressional redistricting, assuming an eventual impasse on the issue in the state legislature. Republicans subsequently filed two suits, essentially staking the same claim for the state House and Senate and additionally seeking to have jurisdiction vested with state rather than federal courts. Republicans also have contested the Democrats' congressional redistricting request with U.S. District Court in Marquette. These actions come in the wake of federal officials' release of final 1990 census tallies confirming that Michigan needs to cut two members from its congressional delegation.

