



Michigan ROUNDUP

September 19, 1991

Legislative Week in Review

- House and Senate conferees began negotiations in earnest Tuesday to deliver a compromise **1991-92 budget** by next Monday. That deadline leaves the two chambers with a week to enact the bills before a new fiscal year begins. To date, conference reports have been completed for the capital outlay, community colleges, education, military affairs, and transportation budgets, with additional budget agreements possible by week's end.
- The likeliest and most-publicized casualty of the bipartisan budget paring is elimination of **general assistance welfare**, a cut that would leave close to 90,000 single adults without the \$145 average monthly stipend they currently receive. Notices of the expected cut are due to be mailed to GA recipients Friday. Observers and participants in the Department of Social Services appropriation negotiations are already predicting a partisan stalemate over the final DSS spending package, possibly requiring the replacement of one or more conferees.
- Don't look for new **state troopers** next year. The State Police budget now under consideration would freeze current staff levels and assumes the loss of some 90 department employees through attrition during FY 1991-92.
- The Senate Government Operations Committee let stand three appointments to the **Natural Resources Commission** following a 3-2 party line vote on Tuesday, the last day the chamber had veto power over the three nominations announced in July by the governor. The commissioners made headlines last week in a controversial vote to name a new department head, prior to their own confirmation. Despite media predictions that the hearings would be "one of the spiciest in recent memory," the Senate declined to consider the confirmations individually on the floor.

Political News

- The state's new **Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs** is complete now that the final two appointments have been made. The governor's office announced that Jean Patullo, a Battle Creek civic theater volunteer for twenty-five years, and Peter Stroh, chief executive officer of the Stroh Brewery Co., have been named to two- and three-year terms, respectively, on the fifteen-member panel.
- **Michigan's First Family** now includes Andy, the one-and-a-half-year-old dachshund that John and Michelle Engler selected earlier this month from a local Humane Society shelter.
- Although the White House has not yet confirmed the appearance, local sources report that **President George Bush** will address a newspaper editors' convention in Detroit on October 17. Meantime, Bush's Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, will join Governor Engler as a keynote speaker this weekend at the 19th annual Republican Leadership Conference at Mackinac Island.
- A freshman legislator may have to resign his tenured faculty position under an **attorney general's ruling** released this week. Rep. Stephen Dresch (R-Hancock) has said he is willing to resign his professorship at Michigan Technological University if that is the only means of compliance with the ruling that cites a constitutional ban on holding incompatible state offices. Dresch is currently on unpaid leave from MTU and resigned his MTU deanship before running for his 110th District seat. The ruling specifically prohibits paid leaves, and Dresch has said he will ask for clarification on its applicability to his circumstances.
- While a volunteer board was working to solicit private contributions to **scholarships for needy students**, the legislature already had rescinded the program's matching state funds, it was learned this week. The Michigan Education Trust Challenge Fund had almost \$800,000 set aside in two appropriations to match private contributions to the state's college tuition contract program. Those funds were quietly transferred last spring to help balance the state's gaping FY 1991 deficit. Challenge Fund Board chair Gerald Faverman said he was outraged at the action and called on the governor and the legislature to restore the funds, which would provide a match for nearly 200 college scholarships.
- The Board of State Canvassers will meet next week to review again the **Headlee tax cut petition signatures** in a mandated reconsideration of the issue. The board had earlier deadlocked 2-2 on whether there were sufficient valid signatures to force a 1992 ballot question on a 20-percent property tax cut. The state court of appeals this month ordered the board to revisit the issue by either verifying each of the petition signatures or by using a more precise estimate. The board's staff had reported earlier that the petition drive was roughly 7,000 signatures short of the 191,726 required.
- Former state budget director **Shelby Solomon** has joined an Ann Arbor health care information firm. Solomon will help MEDSTAT expand its public sector clientele.