



## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- Key House and Senate Republicans have introduced a package of bills designed to limit the influence of **special interest groups**. Sponsored by Senators William Sederburg (R-East Lansing) and Dan DeGrow (R-Port Huron) and House Minority Leader Paul Hillegonds (R-Holland), the legislation would restrict political action committee (PAC) campaign contributions to April 1 through December 31 of an election year, require PACs to inform their contributors about how the money is spent, require lawmakers to disclose honoraria of \$100 or more from speeches or other services, and require candidates to disclose all campaign contributions, not just those exceeding \$20, as is currently required. The bills would not affect the ability of lawmakers to accept individual contributions at any time. Common Cause in Michigan, a major critic of the existing campaign finance system, supports the legislation. Sen. Sederburg said he expects the bills to pass both houses prior to the 1990 elections.
- With the goal of improving operational efficiency and equity in funding, Senators Jack Faxon (D-Farmington Hills) and John Schwarz (R-Battle Creek) have introduced bills to **consolidate school districts** in Michigan, reducing the number from 562 to no more than 250. A nine-member commission would determine consolidation using such criteria as travel time for students, district size, cultural diversity, economic viability, and racial integration. The commission's plan would become law unless rejected by two-thirds of the legislature. Faxon commented: "It's about time to realize the flaw is in the structure itself and that no amount of money is going to make an inherently inefficient and uneconomic operation better." Hearings are expected on the controversial proposal this fall.
- The House Public Health Committee is considering several recommendations made by the House Subcommittee on Nursing Licensure and Shortage. The subcommittee reports a **nursing shortage** of 16 percent in public hospitals, 11 percent in community hospitals, and 10.5 percent in nursing homes. Suggested remedies include improving job responsibilities and corresponding pay raises, allowing nurses more input into clinical decisions, adjusting health care facility staffing standards, urging community colleges to step up their recruitment efforts, and increasing loans to nursing students.

### Political News

- After nearly two years of deliberation, officials from the Michigan Low-Level Waste Authority announced that the location for a new low-level **nuclear waste dump** will be selected from among Lenawee, St. Clair, and Ontonagon counties. The site, scheduled to open in 1995, will store the waste from seven states for 20 years.
- Mayor Coleman Young has broadened his lead over opponent Tom Barrow in the **Detroit mayoral race**. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, Young leads by 51 to 35 percent, with 14 percent undecided. A *Detroit Free Press* poll, conducted by Market Opinion Research, also revealed that Detroit voters reject the idea that the next city council president must be black. Councilman Clyde Cleveland and Rev. Jim Holley recently contended that candidate Maryann Mahaffee, who is white, would threaten black political gains if elected council president. Despite these assertions, Mahaffee holds a first-rank 39 percent in the poll, followed by Gil Hill with 17 percent.
- Governor Blanchard told St. Clair County school officials that he supports **Proposal A**, which would raise the sales tax one-half cent to provide additional funds for education. In a speech in Port Huron this week, Blanchard promoted the consolidation of school districts and reductions in administrative staff as part of his proposal to improve Michigan schools through change instead of solely increasing funding.
- Representative **Dennis Dutko** (D-Warren), serving a one-year jail term for drunken driving, has submitted his resignation to House Speaker Lewis Dodak (D-Birch Run). Governor Blanchard will call a special election, but a date has not been set.
- Debra Townsend, the **Senate Republican spokesperson** for the past seven years, has stepped down to accept a public affairs position at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Albany, New York. Guy Gordon, deputy director of the Senate Republican news office, will replace Townsend.
- **Walter S. Wheeler III** was named chief of the Bureau of Health Facilities in the Department of Public Health. Wheeler has been serving as acting chief since January 1988.