

Michigan **ROUNDUP**

October 8, 1992

Legislative Week in Review

- By a partisan 23-18 vote, a ten-year phaseout of the state's **intangibles tax** passed the Senate this week. SB 981 would reduce by 10 percent annually, beginning in 1994, the current levy on stocks, bonds, annuities, and similar items.
- The Senate passed ten more **anticrime bills** this week, completing action on a list of 21 new measures recommended by Gov. John Engler. Included in this week's batch are measures to stiffen penalties for underage drinking and providing alcohol to minors and SB 1044, which permits local governments to create "pornography free" zones by penalizing the dissemination of sexually explicit material within 1,000 feet of a facility frequented by minors.
- Unanimous votes passed two **teacher tenure** measures in the upper chamber. SBs 637 and 639 extend the probationary period before tenure is granted and expedite the hearing process to discipline or dismiss a tenured teacher. The measures had gained support from Michigan's major education organizations, as well as the governor and state superintendent.
- Stanching the annual flow of 20 billion gallons of raw sewage into Michigan waterways is a six-bill package to finance **combined sewage overflow** improvements for local units of government. Senate passage of HBs 4872, 4873, and 4877 and SBs 374, 1186, and 1187 gives municipalities more state financial assistance in renovating overtaxed storm drains and sewer systems.
- Bipartisan support eased an 18-bill package of **adoption reforms** through the Senate. House passage is expected when the lower chamber returns. Among the bills' provisions are mandates to increase oversight of independent adoption agencies, create an ombudsman to monitor adoption and foster care placements, and regularize adoption fees.
- Among measures signed into law by the governor this week was a 31-bill Senate package updating **public records storage** procedures. Storage protocols for such items as budget documents, survey maps, and state police materials used as evidence are described in the new laws, which are designated Public Acts 183 through 212.
- The Senate concluded its early fall agenda Thursday and joined the House on **pre-election recess** until November 6. *Roundup* will continue publication, summarizing political news and excerpting PSC's *Election Watch*.

Political News

- More than 900 hotel rooms are already reserved and Michigan State University students are signing up for a lottery for limited seating at the upcoming **presidential debate** now scheduled for October 19 on the East Lansing campus. Beyond that, organizers are proceeding cautiously, mindful that their last round of meticulous logistical plans collapsed when the candidates did not agree on dates and format.
- One noted Michiganiaan replaces another on the **National Commission on AIDS**, with President Bush's appointment of Detroit native Mary Fisher to replace Lansing-born Earvin "Magic" Johnson, who resigned.
- The Keweenaw Peninsula town of Calumet was jubilant with the news of its designation as a **new national park** by action of the Congress this week. The park will highlight the region's copper-mining history.
- At the other end of the state, the Lansing **capitol building** was designated an historic landmark by the federal government on Tuesday. With four years of restoration costing nearly \$58 million behind it, the venerable structure received a 1992 Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A formal rededication ceremony is set for November 19, when the exterior and dome will be illuminated once more.
- As of Monday's **voter registration** deadline, Michigan's tally of registered voters appeared likely to top six million for the first time, according to Gongwer News Service. In the last presidential election, statewide registration stood at 5.9 million, with actual voter turnout about a million short of that.
- The pitched political and judicial battle over the fate of Detroit's **Lafayette Clinic** continues, with the Engler administration appealing the Wayne County circuit court order keeping it open through December 15. Department of Mental Health Director James Haveman was threatened with incarceration last week for skipping a court appearance in the matter. The contempt order against Haveman was stayed by the court of appeals under the stipulation that the clinic would be kept open. No operating funds for the clinic were appropriated for the fiscal year beginning October 1, but the circuit court judge issuing the contempt citation contends that \$2.7 million in unexpended budgeted clinic funds are still available for use.