



Public Sector Reports

## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill that would repeal an 1848 law making it a felony for a physician to perform an **abortion**. The law has not been enforced since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973. Pro-choice forces consider the committee's action a major victory. The Right to Life of Michigan wants the old law to remain on the books because it provides some prohibition to abortions in the latter stages of pregnancy. The bill now goes to the House floor where passage is uncertain.
- Republican members of the Senate Government Operations Committee are requesting the secretary of state to investigate three committees advocating passage of **Proposal A**, a school finance reform measure that would raise the sales tax one-half cent to generate \$400 million for schools. The Republicans charge that the committees, which are said to have received \$35,000 in corporate contributions, distributed political candidate information along with materials on Proposal A. Because corporate contributions to individual candidates are prohibited by law, the Republicans assert the Proposal A committees acted illegally. Democratic committee members object to the request for an investigation, with Senate Minority Leader Art Miller claiming it "is a glorified witch hunt."
- Governor Blanchard signed legislation authorizing the creation of **multicounty grand juries**, which will be allowed to investigate and indict such criminals as drug ring leaders whose operations fall under the jurisdiction of more than one county.
- The controversy over the \$50 million general fund/general purpose cut in the **Department of Social Services (DSS) budget** continues. On Wednesday budget director Shelby Solomon faced the Senate Appropriations Committee members' harsh questions about his authority to make cuts without legislative approval. The attorney general's opinion on the constitutionality of the section in the 1984 act that Solomon cited as his authority is expected in two weeks. In the meantime, the House Appropriations Committee has reported out a bill to repeal the section of the 1984 act. If the attorney general rules that the budget director acted inappropriately, the legislature could be ready to make cuts of its own choosing under a negative supplemental appropriation bill being considered by legislative leaders. If the ruling goes the other way, Solomon's cuts will stand.

### Political News

- **Sen. Rudy Nichols** (R-Waterford), chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, is not sure whether he will seek reelection next year. Nichols is exploring a run for a circuit judge position in Oakland County. If he decides not run again, Republican Reps. Claude Trim of Waterford and Mat Dunaskiss of Lake Orion are possible contenders for the seat.
- As the November 7 election approaches, proponents and opponents of school finance **proposals A and B** are revving up their campaigns. If both proposals pass, the one with the most votes will take effect. Proposal A supporters have increased their TV campaign effort, and Governor Blanchard frequently speaks in its favor. Proponents of Proposal B are targeting specific areas for mailings. The Michigan State Chamber of Commerce is continuing to encourage voters to oppose both. According to the *Detroit News*, voters drawn to the polls for the Detroit mayoral election will have a major influence on the school finance proposal decision; it is likely that one in every five votes counted will have been cast by a Detroiter.
- According to a recent statewide poll by the *Detroit Free Press* and WXYZ-TV, **Proposal A** is supported by 48 percent of Michigan voters, while **Proposal B** holds the support of 34 percent; 9 percent were undecided.
- **State Rep. David Camp** (R-Midland) announced his candidacy for the U.S. House seat being vacated by Congressman Bill Schuette (R-Sanford) to run for the U.S. Senate. Camp was Schuette's administrative assistant from 1984-87 and an assistant attorney general from 1980-84. A heated race is predicted, with the potential for many well-known contenders including ex-congressman Jim Dunn, who, according to the *Detroit News*, announced his candidacy on Wednesday.
- The Michigan State Chamber of Commerce's challenge of the state ban on independent **campaign expenditures** by corporations was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court this week. The Chamber contends that the state ban on money spent by corporations on behalf of candidates without prior knowledge or consent of the candidate is a violation of free speech and equal protection rights. The state argues that limits on corporate spending are necessary to prevent corruption of the election process.
- Michigan Department of Corrections officials announced that in 1992, when a \$900-million **prison construction** project is completed, Michigan prisons still will be 16,000 inmates over capacity. They note that overcrowding estimates have doubled since June. Prison planners originally had anticipated a levelling off in the number of convicts sent to prison during the 1990s but now predict that numbers will continue to climb.

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