



Michigan ROUNDUP

....The legislative stalemate over the insurance premiums tax and how to restore vetoed funds in the DSS and K-12 education budgets continues. This week the Senate Appropriations Committee and the governor acted independently to try to reassure education and human resources providers that they would not be left high and dry in the interim. The committee approved a transfer of \$209 million from the AFDC grant account to cover payments to hospitals, pharmacists, and foster care homes. The governor created by executive order a \$920 million Education and Human Needs Reserve Fund, collateral that could be used in borrowings by schools, hospitals, and others until the budget impasse is resolved. The House Appropriations Committee is expected to meet next Tuesday to discuss various budget options, including an overall budget reduction of about \$280 million.

....The Michigan Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that legislation banning Medicaid-funded abortions cannot take effect until 90 days after the legislature ends this year's session, delaying the ban until March if the session ends in December. The court said that the ban would have needed a two-thirds vote of both the House and Senate to take effect immediately. However, if a petition campaign by People's Campaign for Choice is successful, abortion funding would continue until the issue is decided by voters in November 1988. The organization claims to have collected 110,000 signatures of the 120,000 needed to trigger a referendum.

....Ferris State, Grand Valley State, Lake Superior State, and Saginaw Valley State colleges were renamed universities under legislation signed into law by the governor.

....House and Senate Republicans have offered a pair of proposals to reform state public school financing. The first requires only legislative approval and would eliminate local school taxes, which now average 32 mills, and replace them with a 20-mill statewide school tax beginning January 1, 1989. The second plan, which would require voter approval, would reduce most school levies to 16 mills and increase the state sales tax from 4 percent to 6 percent. Both plans are intended to reduce funding inequities between wealthy and poor school districts.

....The Senate approved the appointment of Steven Fetter to the Public Service Commission by a vote of 31-1. The one vote against was cast in error but could not be changed. Fetter, a Republican and former U.S. Department of Labor official, will serve a six-year term, that will expire July 2, 1993.

....Infant mortality rates in Michigan increased for blacks and decreased for whites in 1986, according to a Michigan Department of Public Health (MDPH) report. The mortality rate for black infants rose from 22.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1985 to 23 per 1,000 in 1986; the white infant mortality rate fell from 9.3 per 1,000 births in 1985 to 9 per 1,000 for 1986. Overall, the state infant mortality rate remained at 11.4 per 1,000 live births, one of the worst rates in the nation. In implementing recommendations of an MDPH task force to reduce infant mortality rates in Michigan, the state will spend \$17 million during the current fiscal year to increase health care access for pregnant women through Medicaid and begin education programs to encourage healthy pregnancies.