

## Michigan ROUNDUP

December 2, 1993

### *Legislative Week in Review*

- In a burst of bipartisanship, the House mustered a 65-34 majority to pass **charter school legislation** this week. Under the terms of HB 5124, groups of teachers, school districts, community colleges, and universities would be able to form alternative schools. The House version is less sweeping than Engler's proposal—the centerpiece of his school reform plan—but the governor has professed to be very pleased with it, nonetheless. The Senate had earlier passed its version of the legislation on a strict party-line vote.
- By midweek, in contrast to the support for charter schools, hope was fading that **schools of choice** legislation would win House passage this week. Coalition-building attempts were unsuccessful around proposals to allow Michigan students to attend public schools outside their district. Enabling legislation for schools of choice was separated this week from the hefty text of HB 5121—the School Code bill covering such matters as length of the school day and year and grading standards used by teachers.
- Members of a **Senate bipartisan group** meeting on school reform are said to be close to final agreement on all aspects of their package—including both financing and quality improvement. However, the group has agreed to keep mum on any details until the whole package is settled.
- Expressing concern that the legislature's school finance reform measures are too costly, Governor Engler has announced he will submit his **1994-95 budget recommendations** in two weeks. The December 14 release date for the executive budget is 60 days earlier than normal. The governor and his administration contend that the House bipartisan finance reform plan unveiled last month is underfunded by more than \$700 million. The accelerated timetable for unveiling the budget is aimed at reconciling these disparate estimates.
- In all legislative matters except school reform, the Senate has announced **session deadlines**. December 9 is the last day for bills to be reported from committee, while December 16 is the last day for action on bills.

### *Political News*

- Late last month, a New York-based investment rating firm placed two Michigan tax increment financing authorities (TIFAs) on "**credit watch**"—a warning to potential investors. Standard and Poors flagged the \$5.8 million in bonds issued by the Detroit Downtown Development Authority and \$6 million issued by the Lapeer TIFA, noting that the state's repeal of property taxes hasn't yet guaranteed a source of replacement revenues.
- Former U.S. Rep. William Brodhead is expected to become the fifth Democrat running for Donald Riegler's **U.S. Senate seat**. Brodhead says he will formally announce next week, joining Democrats Sens. Lana Pollack (Ann Arbor) and John Kelly (Grosse Point Woods), Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga, and former Port Sanilac teacher Edwin Nopf.
- U.S. Sen. Carl Levin has entertained **thoughts of leaving** the Senate, according to the *Detroit Free Press*. "There's a likelihood I will run," he said, hedging with "there's no certainty at this point." Levin said his final decision will be made closer to the 1996 election.
- Detroit Mayor-elect Dennis Archer has had some **memorable meals** this week. On Monday night he attended a peacemaking dinner with outgoing Mayor Coleman Young in Greektown, where Young, who backed Archer's opponent, wished the new mayor well and urged business leaders to support the new administration. Wednesday night found Archer breaking bread with President and Mrs. Clinton at the White House. It is the first White House visit by a Detroit mayor in more than a decade. Archer is pushing to have Detroit designated to receive tax incentives and grants under a presidential program for 110 impoverished communities.
- In the House of Representatives, **committee memberships** have once again been revised. Rep. Clyde LeTarte (R-Jackson) will serve on the Public Utilities, Economic Development, and Senior Citizens committees, as well as the Higher Education and Corrections committees. Rep. Kirk Profit (D-Ypsilanti) has also been added to the Public Utilities Committee. The House Transportation Committee gains Reps. Beverly Bodem (R-Alpena), David Galloway (R-White Lake), and Mary Lou Parks (D-Detroit). Bodem leaves Economic Development and Galloway leaves the Senior Citizens Committee. Rep. Leon Stille (R-Spring Lake) leaves the Transportation Committee. Rep. Michelle McManus (R-Traverse City) replaced Rep. Susan Grimes Munsell (R-Howell) on the Human Services and Children Committee, while Rep. Deborah Whyman (R-Canton) was named Republican vice-chair of that panel.