



Public Sector Reports

Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- Wednesday's adjournment concluded the 85th session of the Michigan legislature in a flurry of compromises on gun control and budget-cutting measures. Both chambers will convene in a new session on January 9, 1991. The next issue of *Roundup* will appear on Friday, January 11, 1991.
- At the top of lawmakers' eleventh-hour agenda was a package of spending cuts totaling \$536 million in the FY 1990-91 General Fund budget. Excluded from the 9.2 percent cutback are school aid, school employees' retirement, debt service, state building authority rent, judicial salaries, and unclassified state employee salaries. Funding for two- and four-year higher education institutions will be pared by only one percent.
- Other adjustments in the budget compromise include \$340 million in supplemental appropriations to the departments of Social Services, Mental Health, and Public Health, plus restoration of \$845.2 million to the social services and school employees' retirement budgets previously vetoed by the governor. The bill did not replace \$30.5 million, vetoed by Blanchard, for the Department of Corrections; that budget will be renegotiated early in the 86th legislative session.
- As expected, the House passed without dissent and sent to the governor a "right-to-die" bill that has survived 16 years of legislative debate. Much of the past opposition came from those who felt that the bill, which allows patients to give another person durable power of attorney to make medical decisions on their behalf, could raise issues of euthanasia.
- A uniform gun control law will supplant a welter of more restrictive local ordinances under provisions of a four-bill package adopted this week by both houses and sent to the governor. Viewed by opponents as a lobbying victory for the National Rifle Association, the compromise measure requires customers to review a safety quiz before their gun purchase may be completed.
- The boyhood home of Frank Murphy, governor from 1937-38, will be purchased, moved, and turned into a museum on the tip of Michigan's Thumb as a result of last-minute legislative action. A private foundation will have to raise matching funds for the \$125,000 appropriated in the bill.

Political News

- Governor-elect John Engler continued his progress on staff appointments this week with the following announcements: Legislative Liaison, Jeff McAlvey; Senior Policy Advisor, Dennis Schomack; Legal Counsel, Lucille Taylor; and Appointments Director, Anne Mervenne. Meanwhile, Engler's two top aides, spouses Dan and Colleen Pero, respectively chief of staff and state affairs director, will have the additional titles of best man and matron of honor Saturday when the incoming governor weds Texas attorney Michelle DeMunbrun in San Antonio.
- When Doug Roberts becomes State Treasurer on January 1, his directorship at the Senate Fiscal Agency will be filled by Deputy Director Gary Olson; the deputy post will be taken by veteran agency analyst Ellen Jeffries.
- In congressional committee contests, Michigan's delegation won four out of five this week. U.S. Rep. Guy Vander Jagt (R-Luther) handily won a ninth term as head of the National Republican Congressional Committee, while Rep. William Ford (R-Taylor) took the chairmanship of the House Education and Labor Committee. Michigan's two Democratic chairs of full house committees were reelected: Rep. John Dingell, of Trenton, was returned to head the Energy and Commerce Committee, and Rep. John Conyers, of Detroit, will lead the Government Operations Committee. U.S. Rep. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) failed in his bid for the chairmanship of the House Republican Conference.
- The chairman of the State Officers Compensation Commission (SOCC) met this week with legislative leaders to discuss pay raises for elected officials. According to the Associated Press, House and Senate chiefs do not want the panel to recommend salary levels that the legislature would not approve. Under state law, SOCC compensation proposals automatically take effect February 1 unless both chambers vote to reject them. In the face of the state's need for belt-tightening, one idea on the table is a one-year pay freeze for lawmakers, followed by a \$10,000 (22 percent) increase.
- Governor Blanchard's failure to renew appointments to many state boards will help his successor reshape their composition. The Detroit *Free Press* reports that Blanchard aides deferred naming several commissioners during the election battle with Engler, then Senate Majority Leader, to deny him a role in the confirmation hearings. As a result, Governor-elect Engler can appoint four of the five members of the Corrections Commission, four of the five members of the Agriculture Commission, four of the six members of the Transportation Commission, and eight of the nine members of the Michigan Education Trust (MET) Board.



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