



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- After several hours of debate Wednesday, the House approved by a vote of 65–39 a bill to require minors under age 18 to obtain parental consent for an abortion. Minors would be allowed to petition a probate court for a waiver of the requirement under certain circumstances. While 30 amendments were proposed to make the requirement less restrictive, only a few succeeded. The bill as amended would permit psychologists and psychiatrists to petition a probate court if they felt a minor's inability to obtain an abortion would lead her to commit suicide. It also would require school districts to provide 6th through 12th grade students with information about the law and how to petition a probate court.
- A bill to roll back auto insurance rates by 30 percent unanimously passed the House Wednesday. HB 5313, introduced by Rep. John Maynard (D-St. Clair Shores), also would allow the insurance commissioner to reduce the rollback in cases in which a company's solvency would be threatened. Rep. Paul Wartner (R-Portage), who has introduced a different rollback bill with provisions for reducing the cost of claims, said HB 5313 "was ramrodded through purely for political benefit." The insurance industry is opposed to any rollback that does not also seek to reduce the costs—auto repair, medical care, legal—that determine premium levels. While an auto insurance rate reduction bill is expected to be passed prior to the November 1990 election, it undoubtedly will be hammered out in a House-Senate conference committee before being sent to the governor.
- Senate Minority Leader Art Miller (D-Warren) said he may introduce legislation to regulate landfills so that costs to businesses who use the landfills can be controlled. He said some local governments in his district have experienced budget problems because of high fee increases. A House Democratic Task Force on Waste Management is working on landfill problems and will issue a report in February; Miller said he will wait for the task force report before introducing his bill.
- An audit of the Michigan Department of Social Services, conducted by the state auditor general, reports that for fiscal years 1985–86, 1986–87, and 1987–88 the department spent \$312 million more than was appropriated by the legislature. The audit states that departments are forbidden by state law from spending more than the legislature authorizes.

Political News

- According to the *Lansing State Journal*, after some confusion it has been determined that former congressman Jim Dunn has U.S. Rep. Robert Davis's endorsement for the 10th Congressional District Republican primary. Dunn is expected to announce his candidacy after the first of the year. State Rep. David Camp (R-Midland) announced his candidacy in October and had received an endorsement from Davis at that time. Now, according to his press secretary, Davis is supporting Dunn, whom Davis has known personally and professionally for many years.
- Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley ruled Tuesday that Governor Blanchard's \$46 million welfare cut, made without the consent of legislators, was unconstitutional. Kelley argued that the executive branch may make budget cuts to the extent that they can be accomplished through efficiencies and economies but may not reduce or eliminate services mandated by the legislature. Rep. Dominic Jacobetti (D-Negaunee), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, indicated support for the decision.
- According to the *Detroit Free Press*, Sen. John Cherry (D-Clio) responded to a resolution by the Genessee County Medical Society to oppose the development of a waste facility in Michigan by saying that doctors and hospitals would "have to deal with the reality" that if they generate waste, a safe disposal site will have to be found. Cherry announced plans to introduce legislation to prohibit the generation of low-level radioactive waste if the medical community resists efforts to build a waste facility in Michigan.
- The November repeal by Congress of the Medicare catastrophic health care plan will increase significantly supplemental health insurance (Medigap) rates for about one million Michigan senior citizens. The catastrophic health care provisions were designed to cover some medical expenses not covered by Medicare and, as a result, helped to keep Medigap costs down. Medigap rate increases will affect senior citizens with fixed incomes and could make the cost of adequate supplemental health insurance prohibitive for many.
- According to the *Detroit Free Press*, poor Detroiters are more likely to be politically active than their suburban counterparts. A study conducted by University of Michigan researchers and released Wednesday refutes the stereotype that poor, urban residents are apathetic toward community problems.