

# A young Republican in state power structure

By MIKE SCANLON

Three years of travel in the slow-moving horse latitudes of legislation have taught Robert Law to take his comfort where he may.

Sometimes that means in small success.

Framed on the wall of his Capitol office are copies of the first two Law-sponsored bills to pass through house subcommittees, house committees, the house floor, senate subcommittees, senate committees, the senate floor and finally wind up with the governor's signature and a place in Michigan's law books. For good measure, the governor's pen is also framed.

The bills deal with transcript preparation in basic court proceedings. This kind of thing never makes headlines.

"Before I was elected I saw these transcripts in the Circuit Court, Recorder's Court," said Law, a Livonia attorney, who represents Livonia and Westland. "They cost a couple of million dollars a year, and they were automatically prepared. But a lot of the cases ended up being plea bargained, and the transcripts weren't needed."

"It wasn't anything earth-shattering, but a couple million dollars is a couple million dollars. Anyway, those were the first (with Law as prime sponsor), and I wasn't sure if there would be anymore."

"So I figured I'd better have them framed."

LAW HAS sponsored a lot of bills since — three times the legislative average last year, he says. Given his newly acquired seat on the powerful appropriations committee, it seems likely he'll sponsor a lot more bills.

But he still faces many of the problems that nearly always confront new legislators.



State Rep. Robert Law, R-Livonia, comes from a political family. A brother, Tom, is a West Bloomfield Township trustee, and brother Gerald is a Canton Township trustee. (Staff photo by Gary Caskey)

"Probably the major frustration is to try to deal, really, with the power structure that exists. And it's a combination of people who have seniority and special interest (groups). It all blends together and it makes it difficult to im-

nation of people who have seniority and special interest (groups). It all blends together and it makes it difficult to im-

pect in a major way," said Law.

Most representatives have one secretary as staff.

"One secretary limits you in competing with bureaucracies that have much greater resources than we have. That's probably the hardest thing to deal with — you really have a competitive disadvantage."

Law is a Republican in a Democratic-dominated legislature. So his success with legislation, he says, "has been, I think, probably the most pleasing thing that might surprise somebody coming up — that you gain bipartisan support."

MEMBERSHIP on the appropriations committee, political wisdom has it, leaves time for nothing else, so it is the only committee appointment for those assigned to it. Law belongs to appropriations subcommittees on retirement, transportation, general government and higher education. The transportation subcommittee has been taking a lot of time lately.

"There was a major problem on funding the subway," said Law. At issue are huge state contributions to public transportation in southeast Michigan. When matched with federal aid and other funding sources, the total budget for that transit plan may reach \$1.3 billion.

The problem was that last year the legislature decided that action on building a proposed Woodward Corridor subway as part of that plan should only take place if the legislature voted on it.

But included on the next to last page in this year's highway department budget is more than \$800,000 for the subway.

Law wants to amend the transportation budget so the subway earmarked money could only be spent on a feasibility study.

Law says he is willing to wait for the results of the subway study before making a final decision on the issue, but he talks like a man with his mind just about made up.

HE TENDS TO oppose the subway, he says, because he doesn't think there is a guarantee it will provide development along its route, nor that the temporary jobs it will provide are enough to justify it, and perhaps most importantly:

"I can see between the subway and people mover at least \$1 billion and . . . If you start spending \$1 billion for a subway and a people mover, there wouldn't be enough to go around to the (other suburban) areas."

## Paramedic training eyed

It's a matter of life or death, and there isn't a doctor or hospital within miles. An ambulance is called, but the victim still needs attention from a specialist.

That specialist is a paramedic.

Michigan, unlike other states, lacks proper paramedic training according to Patricia Warner, Emergency Service administrator, University of Michigan Hospital.

This is why University Hospital, St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, and McPherson Hospital in Howell have joined with

Washtenaw Community College in a cooperative effort to develop a paramedic training protocol for state-wide use.

A paramedic is a licensed professional emergency medical technician. EMT's are qualified to recognize and assess medical emergencies and render certain care at the scene of an emergency. But with advanced training, the EMT can be certified as a paramedic, capable of understanding the medical implications of an emergency and competent to render additional care under

the radio direction of a hospital-based physician.

Sixteen EMTs, with at least one year's field work or related patient care, entered the local pilot program in January and expect to complete their training in August. All are from Livingston County which is funding the project. With McPherson as its only major hospital, the program officials noted, Livingston County's interest is to enlarge its limited health resources with paramedic expertise.

## WSU registers for summer

Registration is now going on for Wayne State University's summer quarter credit courses. Registration is continuous until classes start June 25.

Most classes are scheduled at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education, 746 Purdy, or at the Angling Center, 27800 Franklin Road, Southfield. Some will be offered at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, Grosse Pointe Farms, and at the Northwest Activities Center, Detroit.

Courses will be offered for the School of Business Administration, the College of Education, the College of Engineering, the College of Liberal Arts, the Division of Health and Physical Education, the College of Lifelong Learning, the College of Nursing, and the School of Social Work.

Most classes are scheduled for the late afternoon or the evening.

Registration may be made at any of the centers, or at the College of Lifelong Learning, 6001 Cass, Detroit. For course information, registration materials or counseling, call 358-2104.

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