



Secretary of Education Shirley M. Hufstедler toured the Wayne-Westland school district in western Wayne County Monday, offering little hope to districts suffering from declining enrollment. Accompanying her on the visit was U.S. Rep. William D. Ford (right), D-Taylor, a ranking member of the House education committee. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)

No aid to private schools, says education secretary

By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER

Secretary of Education Shirley M. Hufstедler, speaking in Westland, said there will be no tax credits for private education, a position contrary to the Democratic Party platform which supports some aid to private schools.

"The President and I have taken a firm position (saying) no to tax credits for education.

"We recognize that many do need relief, and that many private school settings are hard pressed," she said. "But we cannot permit the whole public school system to be damaged or torn down."

While affirming a commitment to public schools, Mrs. Hufstедler offered no federal help to districts such as Livonia, Birmingham, Southfield and Wayne-Westland, which are facing declining enrollments and closed schools. "We've done a great deal of looking at declining enrollment. It's a spotty problem," she said. "It's deceptive because there is a sharp decline in some districts while enrollment is rising in others, especially those with our newest immigrants."

"I hope the people in Michigan understand how wise it is to use school sites for multiple purposes other than education. In a number of years there will be a demographic shift, and these schools will have to be re-opened," she added.

During her day-long visit Monday to the western Wayne County school district, Mrs. Hufstедler, who was appointed the first secretary of education when that cabinet position was created May 4, added, however, that her department would "try even harder to provide equal educational access to non-public schools" in such areas as programs for the handicapped.

EQUAL ACCESS to education was repeatedly emphasized by Mrs. Hufstедler. The daughter of a migrant worker, she recalls having attended 12 schools during a period of seven years.

"I hear talk about schools in the good, old days, when skies were blue and school was in a little red building. That was about 1950."

"Well, they weren't blue, it wasn't red and education wasn't much good. Your schools are infinitely better than anything in 1950," she told school administrators and reporters. "The good,

old days weren't really good at all except for the handful of kids who were wealthy."

Mrs. Hufstедler, an associate justice in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals before tackling her new role, said she plans to help achieve "educational equity" by finding "different ways to copy the best programs in the U.S. . . . We need to be cooperative, not confrontational."

Asked by one student during a town meeting at John Glenn High School in Westland if busing students justified the cost of the fuel, Mrs. Hufstедler said, "Whether it is expensive or not is beside the point."

"When we have a guarantee of equal access to education, (the guarantee) is not given on the basis of enforcing it if it's convenient.

"Education is for all, not just some," she said.

ANOTHER STUDENT asked her to comment on economist Milton Friedman's proposed voucher system, in which students would be given a set amount to be used at the school of their choice.

"He's flat wrong," she said. "We'd be using public money to support private schools. How would we rebuild public schools? Who would get left behind and left out?"

"We do need to give some help to private schools. Milton Friedman may know about economics, but he knows nothing about private schools," Mrs. Hufstедler said.

Economic setbacks to education will be brief, Mrs. Hufstедler continued, talking about the importance of making "capital investments in education."

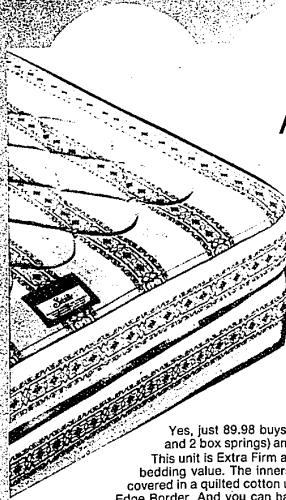
She said that she strongly supports collective bargaining, but that she was unfamiliar with attempts at regional bargaining here.

IMMEDIATE GOALS for the education department include, according to Mrs. Hufstедler, getting the Youth Act of 1980 and a vocational education act through Congress. The youth act, which has passed the House and goes before the Senate this week, would provide \$2 billion a year for junior and senior high school youth as well as those out of school, she said.

Mrs. Hufstедler was also in the area to do some campaigning for President Carter.

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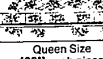
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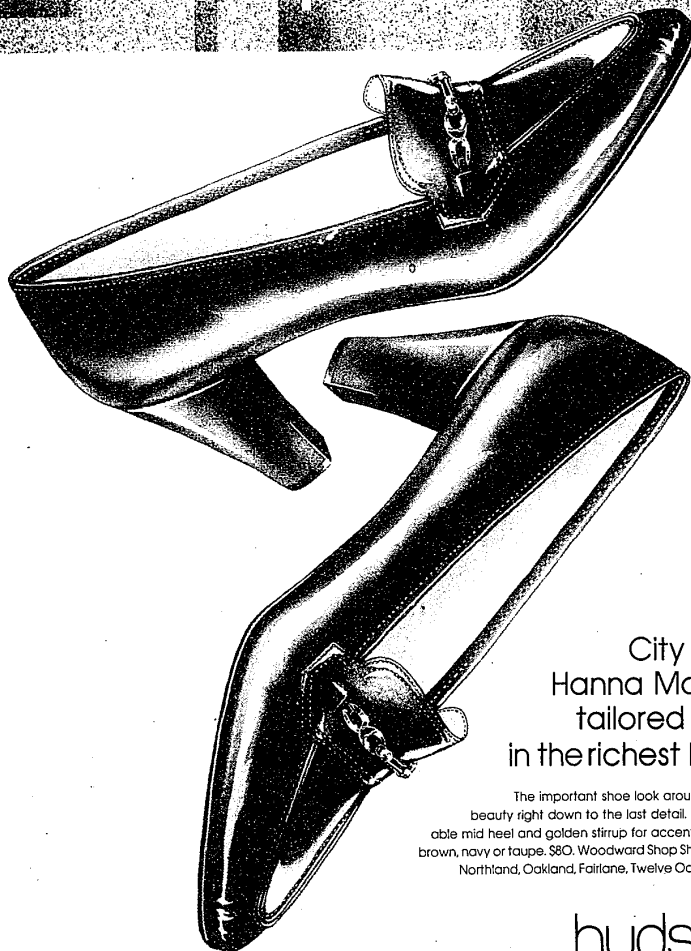
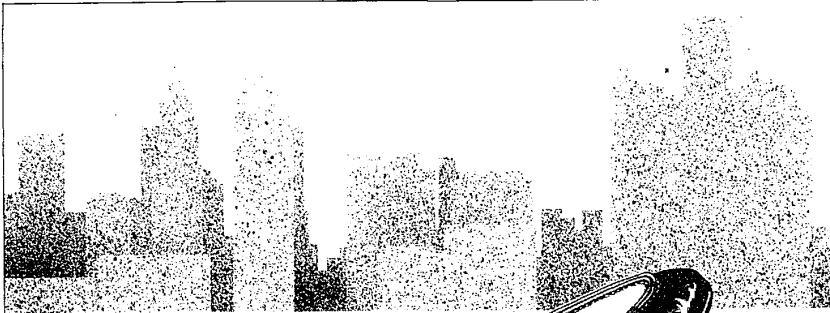
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