

Rep. Bankes may be key to abortion vote

By Tim Richard
Staff Writer

Lyn Bankes may be the key. The freshman Republican state representative from Livonia will be the target of both pro-choice and right-to-life groups as the state House of Representatives moves toward a vote on cutting off funds for Medicaid abortions.

"Lyn Bankes is under tremendous pressure," Maxine Swanson, a pro-choice Republican leader, told the Michigan Women's Campaign Fund meeting in Southfield Monday. The group is pro-choice.

"SWANSON, 10TH Congressional District Republican chairwoman and chair of the Grand Valley State College board, agreed with state Sen. Lane Peltz, D-Ann Arbor, that Moral Majority and anti-abortion groups are 'flick' 'professional' and 'intense' about the issue."

"At this point in time, we are losing

the debate," Pollack added. "We are being out-organized and out-spent. When a few people feel very intensely on an issue."

The Senate this month passed a bill cutting off funds for Medicaid abortions for welfare recipients by a 25-8 vote. The yes vote would be enough to override an expected veto by Gov. James J. Blanchard.

The bill now goes to the House. Last year the House was a vote or two short of the 74 needed for a two-thirds override. At least four pro-choice representatives lost their 1984 re-election bids. State right-to-life chairwoman Barbara Listing predicts victory in 1985.

"I don't think it's lost in the House," said Pollack, a first-term senator. "It's right. Barbara Listing wants you to think it's all over."

BANKES REPLACED Rep. Jack Kirksey, a Livonia Republican who didn't seek re-election. Kirksey had

voted on both sides of the issue over the years.

Republican Gov. William G. Milliken vetoed similar measures 11 times and Democrat Blanchard has vetoed them twice. The House never has been able to override a veto.

Bankes has indicated she would support a veto, at least until some other program is in place to aid low-income women who can't afford to pay for abortions.

Bankes was endorsed and aided by the Michigan Women's Campaign Fund, which bills itself as a non-partisan political action committee that helps elect "progressive and feminist women" to local and state office.

WHILE BOTH political parties will support their women candidates, Pollack and Swanson agreed, neither party will actively recruit women to run.

"The Democratic Party will not go out and look for women candidates," said Pollack, an active Democrat since 1965. "Women need to look for women candidates. We need to look at which districts are open."

"We need to get Democratic candidates to run in Democratic districts, not in Republican districts. Waiting to see who files — then it's too late."

Of the 1984 Democratic vice presidential candidate, she said, "Geraldine Ferraro had two handicaps — both men. One was her running mate (Walter Mondale). The other was her house mate (husband John Zaccaro, who is in legal trouble over his real estate transactions)."

Swanson described herself as being from the "progressive, middle-of-the-road, Milliken moderate" wing of the

Abortion cut goes to House

"The issue is so familiar that there was no debate."

That's how state Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville, summed up a committee vote to halt state-funded Medicaid abortions.

During the first week of the legislative session, the Senior Citizens and Social Services Committee which he chairs voted 4-0 to report out the bill to the full Senate.

THE FULL Senate last week passed the bill 25-8, a two-thirds margin that will be sufficient to override any gubernatorial veto.

Among area senators, only Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, voted against the funding cut-off.

Supporting it were Geake, whose district includes Redford, Livonia, Plymouth and Canton; Doug Cruce, R-Troy; Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield; and Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford.

The bill goes to the House of Representatives, which has passed such bills in the past but could never provide two-thirds support for a veto.

Geake is more confident this year because Republicans picked up six House seats, and another pro-choice Democrat was defeated in his primary. Last fall, the anti-abortion bloc believed it was about two votes short.

GOV. JAMES J. BLANCHARD and,

before him, Gov. William G. Milliken vetoed such bills a total of 13 times in the last decade.

The state spent \$5.2 million on 19,500 Medicaid abortions in 1981-82. That grew to \$5.7 million on 18,700 abortions in 1982-83, the last full fiscal year for which figures are available. The total cost was up nearly 10 percent.

Bonnie Kolk, legislative vice president for Right to Life of Michigan, an anti-abortion group, said only 15 states (including Michigan) and the District of Columbia pay for welfare abortions, while 35 states either never have paid for them or have discontinued the policy.

Republican Party. Since Milliken retired as governor, she said, some moderates have been "sitting back, others have been hanging tough."

"Ultra-conservatives have taken over some of my party," added the Grosse Pointe resident. "I suggest you Democratic women watch your gates. Your party is in a state of flux."

MWCF'S LITERATURE most often mentions Medicaid abortions as an important issue. House Democrats supported MWCF's position by more than 3-1 over Republicans.

Other favorite issues are union insurance, equal pay for "equivalent" work and the U.S. Equal Rights

Amendment (all pro) and the balanced budget amendment (against).

Located in an office building at 9100 E. Jefferson in Detroit, MWCF last year considered 33 candidates and endorsed 22 — four Republicans, 16 Democrats and two non-partisan.

Republicans had a 3-1 won-lost record at the polls; Democrats, a 6-10 record; and nonpartisan, 1-1.

Among Republicans it supported were Reps. Bankes of Livonia and Judith Miller of Birmingham. Among Democrats were Rep. Maxine Berman of Southfield and loser Vickie Barnett of Farmington.

It supported Democrat Patricia Boyle for the state Supreme Court but

not Republican Dorothy Comstock, Riley. Both women were elected.

It gave Republican candidates a total of \$12,500 and Democrats \$20,950.

MWCF HAS members from both parties. Last year it had hospitality suites at both major parties' conventions, drawing 300 at the Democratic convention and 35 at the Republican.

President Elaine Frost of Detroit suggested a 1985 fund-raising goal of \$100,000, more than double 1984 revenue. Besides selling memberships, the group holds fund-raising parties, particularly in Oakland County.

State membership co-chair is Janet Cooper of Livonia.



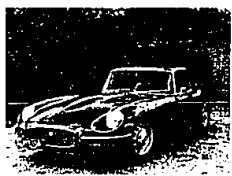
State Rep. Lyn Bankes (left) will be 'under tremendous pressure' from both sides, one Republican leader said, in casting what is seen by some as the decisive vote in the House on abortion.

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