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Legislators debate merits of child laws

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Two Farmington area legislators are at odds over a fingerprinting provision in a package of bills designed to protect children.

The "voluntary fingerprinting" bill would, if passed, help law enforcement agencies, according to state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington.

"We think from a policy point of view, it would be wise to permit this," Under the proposed legislation, fingerprint cards would be turned over to the parents, and could not be recorded with a police agency.

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, however, has doubts about voluntary fingerprinting.

"I have some concerns with fingerprinting," he said. "I do not feel supportive of fingerprinting of people in our society. I believe people should have some level of privacy in this world."

Farmington's public safety department has a voluntary fingerprinting program, which began in 1983.

"There was an overwhelming response," said department director Frank Lauboff.

The program, which was first offered in the city's administration building, was taken into the elementary schools in the fall of 1984. Approximately 95 percent of families chose to participate.

"Again, we were very pleased with that," Lauboff said. The public safety department returns all materials to the family.

"Everything goes back. We keep nothing."

The child protection legislative package recently was unveiled by Michigan House Speaker Gary Owen, D-Ypsilanti.

THE NINE-BILL Democratic plan also includes provisions to:

- Amend the law to make all parental kidnapping of children a felony.

- Require criminal records checks for employees of licensed day care centers.

- Require reporting of criminal histories and compilation of a statewide computerized criminal history system.

- Redefine child cruelty and child torture in the state's criminal code and provide stiffer penalties.

- Increase penalties for child solicitation.

- Allow videotaping of child witnesses who are victims of abuse.

- Require the state's Department of Social Services to provide information on preventing child abuse to parents of children in licensed day care centers.

"I think generally, they represent a good solid effort to deal with these problems," said Brotherton.

"They basically deal with some problems that have been a matter of concern and do need to be addressed."

"Chances are some will move faster than others," he said. "Some may be passed, and others may not be."

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Ills plague Mercy plan

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Although plans are still up in the air, the Sisters of Mercy would like to build apartments and single-family homes for senior citizens and a skilled nursing home on their property at 11 Mile and Middlebelt.

But the Sisters of Mercy have some hurdles to leap before construction on the proposed facilities can begin.

Plagued over the years by flooding, homeowners in the Lincolnshire Subdivision, on 11 Mile, across the street from Mercy Center, have protested further expansion of the Sisters of Mercy complex until improvements are made to the area's sanitary and storm drain.

Rezonning the approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land at the Mercy Center is another obstacle.

"What they want to do there is not covered by any one zone in our ordinances," said Hal Rowe, Farmington Hills zoning supervisor.

DESPITE THESE problems, Roma Permuter, community development coordinator for the Sisters of Mercy's Services for the Aged, believes construction can begin on the facilities in 1985.

"We've been trying very, very hard to work with the community," Permuter said, adding that some residents are also concerned about increased traffic.

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Old campaigner faces a youthful press corps

By Julie Brown
staff writer

The media spotlight on Farmington Hills insurance executive Richard Headlee has faded since his days as 1982's Republican nominee for Michigan governor. Nevertheless, he faced some tough questioners Thursday.

The questioners weren't political reporters, however; rather, they were students at Detroit Country Day School in Birmingham. Headlee spoke to the upper school students as part of an ongoing program on economics.

Abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment and President Reagan's State of the Union's address were some of the areas Headlee covered in his meeting with the student body and with editors of the school newspaper.

"I think many of the things the president is doing are precisely what the country needs," he told the student editors.

Headlee, author of the tax limitation amendment to the state constitution, expressed approval of Reagan's emphasis on the work ethic and on decreased dependence on government.

The federal budget deficit, however, is too large, he said.

Early retirement programs, which allow government workers to become "double dippers" at a relatively young age, concern Headlee. He did not, however, blame those who participate in such programs.

"YOU TAKE the program that's

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... and tells them how to succeed

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Getting involved, doing your best, serving others and setting a good example — together, these make up Richard Headlee's four-point plan for success.

That plan is one he brought to the upper school student body at the Detroit Country Day School in Birmingham Thursday.

"People say, 'Why should I get involved in my community, why should I get involved in the world?' Involvement — in school, in the community, in the nation and the world — is crucial if things are to get better," Headlee told the students.

Headlee, who was the Republican Party's nominee for Michigan governor in 1982, used an example from his younger days to make his point. He was dissatisfied with the way his school was being run. When he complained to his father, however, he was told it was up to him to change things.

"You can't sit and whine and carp and bellyache. You can't afford to be on the sidelines. Take your skills and your talents and get involved."

The varied skills and talents of young people are much needed today, Headlee said.

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Richard Headlee, president of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co., reveals his four-point plan for success to Detroit Country Day high school students.

Housing funds on the wane

what's inside

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

For the first time in its three-year history, the Farmington Hills housing rehabilitation program is running short of money — at least temporarily.

The approximately \$7,000 left in the program's coffers has been set aside for emergency home improvements, said Cheryl Carter, housing rehabilitation specialist.

Despite the dwindling funds, applications for the home improvement program are still being accepted although improvements will not be started until the next round of federal funding in June, Carter said.

"Everything is put on hold until June," she said.

FUNDED THROUGH the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the rehabilitation program allows the city to provide low-interest and deferred loans, and outright grants to homeowners for housing improvements.

"This program is to benefit people who would otherwise not be able to afford the market rate for home improvements," said Rick Lampl, Farmington Hills community development manager.

If Carter and Lampl get their wish and receive a requested \$150,000 share of the city's 1985-86 Community Development Block Grant money, the rehabilitation program should be back on track. With the anticipated \$150,000 for the next funding year, the program will

have received total funding over the years of \$500,000, Lampl said.

Since its inception in 1982, the city's program has helped 68 homeowners, who qualified under the program's income guidelines, to improve and upgrade their houses, Carter said. The bill for those improvements came to more than \$335,000.

Most of the improvements include roof work, insulation, new furnaces, aluminum siding, or new electrical, heating or plumbing installations. Aesthetic improvements, such as a sun deck, are not covered under the program, Carter said.

"Basically, it's anything that brings your house up to (building) code," Lampl said, including energy conservation.

CARTER AND Lampl "try to draw the line" on a maximum of \$8,500 worth of improvements to a single house.

But if extensive work amounting to more than the maximum allowed is needed, Carter and Lampl also refer the applicant to other agencies such as Consumers Power Co., the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHA) and Detroit Edison. These organizations also provide low-interest home improvement loans.

"I try to tap into as many other resources as possible for these people," Carter said.

To qualify for the program, an applicant must be the owner of a single-

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