

School bus crowding a local problem—Geake

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

State Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, isn't in favor of bus overcrowding, he just thinks it is a problem that should be solved by local school boards, not by the state Legislature.

Last week, Geake voted against SB 361, which stipulates that a school bus cannot transport more than 110 percent of its listed capacity. The bill

passed in the Senate, 26-8, and is now in a House committee awaiting further action.

"I think it's a dumb bill," said Geake, who spoke against it on the floor. "It's a local-control issue in the first place. The state shouldn't be telling local authorities how to transport their children."

GEAKE ALSO said that while buses

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— Sen. Robert Geake
Northville Republican

another bus so someone doesn't have to stand?" asked Geake.

HE SAID that depending on the number of absences, a bus that is normally not overcrowded may be overcrowded on a particular day.

"Do you tell a child at the last stop that he can't get on? Do you send him home? Do you tell him to walk or hitchhike? I think that presents a bigger problem than the one you're trying to correct," he said.

Sen. Patrick McCullough, D-Deerborn and Garden City, who sponsored the bill, said, "This is clearly a bill in the public interest. It's intent is to provide a safe seat for every child. In some areas, the buses are seriously overcrowded, thereby increasing the possibility that children will be hurt if they are pushed or if the bus had to

make a sudden stop.

"BESIDES SAVING kids from serious injury, a safe seat for every child will actually lower costs by reducing a school district's liability-insurance costs."

According to state police, there were 1,478 school bus accidents in the 1983-84 school year. There were no figures on fatalities, if any.

The bill is now in House committee for scheduling. It must be enacted upon before the end of 1985 or it dies. Voting in favor of the bill were Doug Cruce (R-Troy), William Faust (D-Westland), Jack Faxon (D-Farmington Hills), Richard Fessler (R-W. Bloomfield) and Rudy Nichols (R-Waterford). The bill is supported by the state Department of Education and the Michigan Federation of Teachers.

Panelists to take look at Rouge in year 2005

The Rouge River Watershed Council will hold a panel discussion of "2005: The Next Twenty years in the Rouge Basin" on Thursday, October 24, beginning at 11 a.m. on 1150 E. Canton Center Road, just south of Cherry Hill, in the auditorium.

Panelists are: James Murray, Water Resources Commission; Frank Baldwin and Roy Schramke, Department of Natural Resources; Patrick Brunett, SEMCOG; and Glenn Brown, Wayne County Health Department.

Each panel member will give a brief overview of his concerns, roles, and responsibilities in the development and implementation of the Rouge Basin Remedial Action Plan over the next 20 years.

A question and answer period will follow.

Coffee and doughnuts will be served from 9 a.m. on, with an executive committee meeting at 9:30 a.m. and general membership meeting at 10 a.m.

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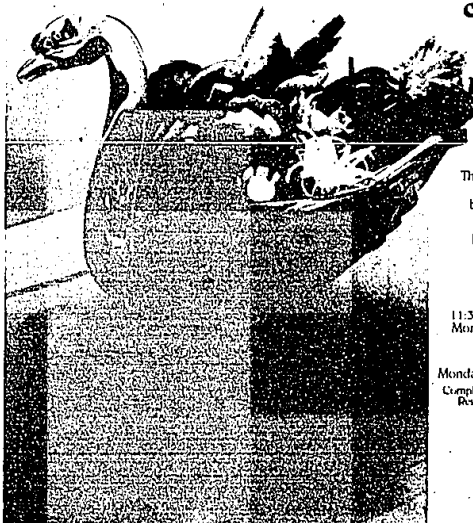
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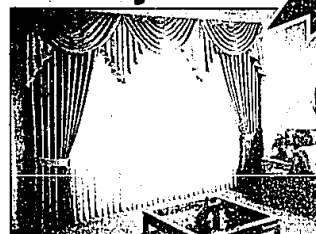
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