Bills would cut time kids spend in foster care

A joint House-Senate legislative package addresses "one of Michigan's worst problems" by reducing the amount of time a child would spend in foster care before either returning home or being adopted, state officials

Some 25 percent of the 11,400 chilas Jome 25 percent of the 11,400 chitdren now in the foster care system
have been in for more man two years,
according to former Jomes and two years,
according to former Jomes and Rep.
Leading the Bankeld, R.Maphe Chi, based on the
e Binsfield, R.Maphe Chi, based on the
recommendations for a commission appointed by Coteman shortly before she
left the Supreme Court in 1932, will attempt to end that kind of delay.
They would create a legislative oversight committee to monitor the slatus
of children in foster care, prohibit placting children in unilecased foster homes
and require more frequent foster care

foster care, prohibit placing children in unlicensed foster homes and require more frequent reviews by the probate court.

reviews by the probate court.

THE PACKAGE would attempt to assure that children are "at home as much as possible. They should only be removed for safety reasons," said Stabenow, sponsor of HB 5171 which would enact much of the package. Once a child is removed, however, "We should move as quickly as possible to get them to a permanent situation, either to go home or to another home," she said.

Foster care is supposed to be a temp.

she said.

Foster care is supposed to be a temporary form of care, Binsfeld said, but it is becoming more permanent for some children. She will introduce the Senate portion of the package.

The three sald the state currently spends some \$75 million on foster care children. Approximately 11,400 children are in the system, \$600 through the Department of Social Services and 1,800 through the probate courts.

INGIAM COUNTY Probate Court Judge Donald Owen said the full magnitude of the problem is not known publicly largely because foster care proceedings are closed to the public.

The package would:

The package would:

• Create a six-member legislative

oversight committee to review the status of children in foster care homes.

• Require more frequent foster
care reviews by the probate court, including an annual hearing on the permanent status of a child.

• Permit probate court judges to
terminate parental rights in descrition,
abuse, violation of court orders, mental
deficiency, felony convictions or chronic abuse of other family members.
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from 17 to its eand neglect matters

• Prohibit housing a child in unli
eccused facilities or in homes where the

A 500-BED expansion Muskegon prison facility is under con-aderation, Corrections Director Robert

sideration, Corrections Director Robert Brown reported.

The state is looking at building a new regional prison directly adjacent of the current 645-bed medium security unit because the area can support a second prison and because the public response to the current facility has been excel-lent, Brown said.

acre site southeast of the current prison for purchase.

If the legislature approves of a new facility in that location, a temporary 480-bed prison will be built immediately for \$4\$ million, Brown said, that could be open by mid-1985.

The state is currently 1,400 prisoners over its rated capacity. The department is currently building or planning facilities in Detroit and Macornh, Oakland, Lapser, Jackson, Ionia and Wayne counties.

Hout is executive director of the

Hoyt is executive director of the Michigan Press Association.





To all of you from all of us... Lour most sincere wish for your health, happiness and good fortune throughout the new year.



27 towns sign pact to dispose of solid waste

Oakland County officials are pleased that so far 27 local units of government have signed up for incineration of solid waste, even though their goal was to sign up 46 by Dec. 13.

"Our minimum goal was to sign up communities which, in total, generate 600 tons of solid waste per day," said George Schutte, supervisor of the executive's solid waste division.

"However, the 27 communities which have signed have brought us over our minimum goal. Presently, those communities generate 1,000 tons of solid waste per day."

TOGETHER, the 46 communities generate 2,250

TOGETHER, the 46 communities generate 2.250 tons per day.

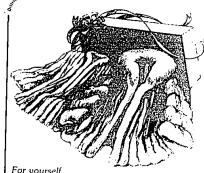
Observer & Eccentric area communities that joined the pact include: the cities of Rochester, Rochester Hills and Orchard Lake and the townships of Bloomtield, Oakland, Southfield and West Bloomtield, Southfield Township includes the villages of Franklin, Bingham Farms and Beverly Hills,

"Now we can proceed ahead and start to detail a finance plan with these community representatives to begin providing incineration facilities," said County Executive Daniel T. Murphy.

EACH COMMUNITY that approves the pact is to send a representative to a Municipal Solid Waste Board.

The board will approve contracts, finance and operating plans and present them to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for final ratifica-

"This is the first major step toward implementa-tion of the Solid Waste Disposal plan," Murphy sald.



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