Free library videos bill faces House fight

A one-sentence amendment to two state library laws has stirred up a state library social.

His position is crucial because said. His position is crucial because state libraries 'exclusibilised under this act shall not charge a fee for the loan of a videocasset te tape to a resident of the city, village or township which stabilised the library.

Cruce contends public libraries are supposed to be free and are unfairly competing with taxpaying stores.

OPPONENTS such as Sen. Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, say the bills interfere with the rights of local interfere with the rights of local interfere with the rights of local interference with local interfe

under city charters — approved 25-11.
Voling yes on both were Sens. Doug Cruce, whose district includes Birmingham; Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield, whose district includes Bloomfield Township, Bloomicled Hills and Southfield Township; and William Faust, D-Westland.
Opposing both were Robert Geake, R-Northville, whose district includes Livonia, Plymout and Canton; Rudy Wichols, whose district includes the Rochester area; and George Hart, D-caborn, whose district include Garden City.



'A library established under this act shall not charge a fee for the loan of a videocassette tape to a resident of the city, village or township which established the library."

-Sen, Doug Cruce's \$B 132

Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington, split his votes, favoring SB 132 but opposing SB 196. His district in-cludes Southfield.

The Senate passed the bills April 9 and adjourned for a nearly two-week Easter break, AN AIDE to Cruce said the spon-

"But libraries are taking on the look of pseudo-businesses. They're charging \$2 a night for videocassette tapes most of which could be found in any store."

The Cruce aide said they covered such commercial favorites as "Star Wars" and "Texas Chainsaw Massa-

Nichols, chairman of the Senate

"In my district, local library boards have made these decisions on whether to rent videocassettes. They debated the issue very thoroughly,"

the said.

To be consistent, Nichols said, the proponents of the bill should prohibit libraries from charging for any service — photocopying, phonograph records, borrowing of best selling books and the rest.

Geake, another opponent, said, "Renting videos is a way for librar-ies to increase their coilections and increase service to the community." The Wayne County seanor said parents can feel more comfortable sending children to the library than to video stores.

to video stores.

THE BILLS reopened a long-standing argument from businesses that see government as competing against them.

Public libraries generally opposed the bill, arguing that they supply educational videocasseties that commercial stores don't handle. They said that for them to provide tapes iree, they would have to dip into their budgets for book acquisitions.

Libraries also saw legal problems where they are part of a cooperative, multi-town service such as the Wayne-Oakland Library System. For example, a taxpaying resident of town A would be able to borrow a tape free from Library A, but could be charged by Library B even though it is part of the same system.

hold '88 caucuses March 26 State Dems to

AP — Four years ago, leaders of the Michigan Democratic Party de-vised a system for selecting national convention delegates that drew bit-ter complaints and court challenges. This time around, fewer fireworks

are depected.
The pow presidential delegate selection plan of the Democratic State
Central Committee backs away from
the controversies of 1884, when candidate Jesse Jackson condemned
Michigan's process as "official backroom polities" and unsuccessfully
challenged it in court.
"If don't see any hot controversy"

"I don't see any hot controversy," said state Party chair Rick Wiener.

PARTY LEADERS plicked March
26 as the date for Michigan's 1988
pridential preference caucity
produced a system for turning caucies votes into 151 delegates
and 46 alternates at the Democration
National Convention in Atlanta.
Wiener is enthusiastic about the
March 26 date.
"My goal is to make sure Michigan plays a pivotal role," he said. "I
believe Michigan has achieved that."
Michigan thus secures a niche in
the Democratic presidential sweep-

stakes right behind Illinois but be-fore many other large states.
"That's important, with (U.S. Sen.) Paul Simon entering the race," Wiener said. "We can't really impact on Illinois with a candidate from Illinois, but we certainly can impact on the rest of the process."

THE STATE party chief said few Democrats took advantage of a 30-day comment period to offer opin-ions about the proposal for picking Michigan's national convention dele-

gation.

Whether that signals harmony remains to be seen. Last time, objections weren't lodged until after the system was irreversibly in place.

In 1984, former vice president Walter Mondale had almost all of Michigan's political muscle in his corner. The other camps complained the state's system was designed to put challengers at a disadvantage.

Critics in 1984 griped that 337 caucus sites weren't enough. At some Detroit locations, Democrats stood in line for two hours.

The party's 1986 plan calls for no fewer than 500 sites.

JACKSON AND then-Sen. Gary
Hart of Colorado complained in 1984
that many Democrats would be intimidated by a system that required
them to sign their names on their
residential preference ballots.
Some critics predicted the lack of
privacy would keep partisans away
from the caucuses.
That didn't turn out to be the case.
That didn't turn out to be the case.

whether caucus votes get translated into pledged delegates at the nation-al convention.

IN 1984, candidates had to pull at least 20 percent of the caucus vote in a congressional district to win a pledged convention delegate. For 1988, the proposed threshold is 15

Wiener backs the changes for 1988 while continuing to brush off complaints about the system he supervised in 1984.

"I thought four years ago was a very good process," he sald. "It brought 135,000 people into the process. It was a tremendous party-building tool for us and I think that's at times lost on people."

Utility workers to watch out for elderly, infirm

Consumers Power Co. employees are being trained to be "Gate-keepers" who keep a watchful eye on elderly and handicapped Michigan residents.

on elderly and handicapped MichiSome 672 of the utility's employsee in the region serving western
Wayne, Oakland can Macomo
countles have received or will complete this training program.
The format includes a 15-minute
videotape and a brochure describing the signs of a potential crisis.
"All company employees who
have daily or frequent contact with
the jubilic are being trained to be
aware of symptomy owarning
signs that can indicate crisis situations which elderly persons may
experience," said Edgar L. Doss,
Metro region general manager.

SYMPTOMS include overgrown

SYMPTOMS include overgrown lawns, mail piling up, physical coordination problems, confusion or extreme anxiety.

Utility employees will report their observations to the company's consumer affairs department. It will be responsible for notification of the appropriate local agency, usually the area Agency on Aging, for followup.

Gatekeeper was developed by Tuget Sound Power and Light and the Washington State Bureau of

Aging and Adult Services under a grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging. Consumer Power's metro region serves two million residents in Western Wayne, Oakland and Ma-comb counties.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT was made by Lucille McCullough, commissioner of the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, Doss.
Consumers Power will be Michigan's first utility — and one of a few nationwide — to participate in an innovative program to add the elderly.

elderly.

"By stepping forward to participate in the 'gatekeeper' program,' Consumers Power is showing in concern for Michigan's elderly citizens," said Gov. James J. Blanchard, "I urge other Michigan's companies to demonstrate their commitment by becoming 'Gatekeepers' as well."

keepers' as well."

McCullough praised the utility's
involvement, saying "Many of
Michigan's elderly live alone which
increases the potential for crisis
situations going unnoticed. Gate-keepers will increase this number
of irlendly eyes and ears in our
neighborhoods and reduce the possibility from happening." she said.

State business index choppy in fall, winter

In February, the Michigan business activity index (MBAI) fell to 513, a less of five points from January, according to economist David L. Litymann of Manufacturers Bank. Gompared with the first two modible of 1986, however, the MBAI has shown neither a net gain nor a

net loss.
Economic activity in the state has been uncharacteristically choppy since September, principally refelecting spurts and retrenchments in production and sales stemming from sales or financing programs

undertaken by the automakers.

Also, Littmann said, abnormally volatile investment-related activity is attributed in part to changes accompanying the federal tax reform.

During February, a plunge in auto sales and steel output accounted for the bulk of the decline in Michigan business activity.

The MBAI, compiled monthly from 10 measures of Michigan economic activity by the bank, is seasonally adjusted and corrected for inflation.

