

Senate eases private school rules

AP — An uncertain future in the state House is awaiting a controversial bill to relax regulations on private schools in Michigan, following its approval in the Republican-controlled Senate.

The bill, pushed by fundamentalist Christian churches, was passed, 22-14.

But while one supporter said he believed it passed because some members assume the House will kill it, its sponsor said he thinks it has a chance to win approval in the Democrat-run house.

"I'm just not sure — I think we have a reasonable possibility to pass it in the House," said Sen. Harmon Croysey, R-Decatur, the bill's sponsor.

"I think it's a reasonable bill," he said. "This is a national trend all across the country."

BUT SEN. John Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, said the Senate "spent entirely too much time on the bill. . . . The bill is imperfect, to say the least."

"You could make the argument that the way to kill the bill was to send it to the House," said Schwarz, who voted for the measure.

Here is how area senators voted on the bill:

For: Doug Crace, R-Troy, William Faust, D-Westland, Richard Feaster, R-West Bloomfield, Robert Geake, R-Northville, Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford.

Against — Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills; George Hart, R-Deerborn.

THE BILL was amended to apply to all private schools and not just religious schools. It would permit school officials to declare their institutions free of state supervision.

But children would have to be taught by a state-certified or otherwise qualified teacher, or take periodic tests to demonstrate they were learning. Such schools now have to report such information as the number of children enrolled, who teaches them and the schools' curricula. Teachers must be certified.

Under the bill, parents still would have to furnish certain information, such as the name and address of a school in which the child was enrolled. But since some religious groups oppose reporting to the state, the parents could submit the information to an intermediate school district or a third party which agrees to accept it.

An amendment would designate an ordained minister as a teacher qualified to teach children at the schools.

CHURCH SCHOOLS' objections to reporting the data has led to unsuccessful court challenges and a massive Capitol rally calling for legislation to exempt the schools from the restrictions.

The bill was opposed by Sen. William Sederburg, R-East Lansing,

who said it doesn't require that private-school teachers understand child development, know how to teach, have any training or know how to spot special problems in children.

"We're saying that they can have teachers who have none of these skills," Sederburg said. "That adds up to a giant mistake."

According to Schwarz, chairman of the committee which approved the bill, about 30,000 children in church-based schools in Michigan would be affected by the bill. He said about 205,000 children attend private schools in Michigan.



Challenger

Armand Veldardo, an attorney who lives in East Detroit, announced he will seek the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate in 1988 to challenge Democrat Donald Riegle. Veldardo, who will be 30 next year, has never held office. A tax attorney with the firm of Dykema Gossett in Detroit, Veldardo has three degrees from Wayne State University.

US-24 to be widened

The Michigan Department of Transportation will spend nearly \$3.8 million on US-24 (Dixie Highway) in northern Oakland County.

Dan's Excavating, Inc. of Uxbridge, is apparent low bidder on a project to resurface 2.6 miles of road, add a center turn lane and complete a bicycle path from M-15 to White Lake Road.

Completion date is scheduled for November of 1988. A contract must be approved by the state Transportation Commission and the administrative board.

The project is one of three for the upgrading of nine miles of Dixie Highway.

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