Businesses hit state costs, competition

sindly writer

Small-business owners — known
as "job providers" to Republican
legislators — fear state-mandated
legislators — fear state-mandated
paid leaves for childlyfith and state
competition as arisong the top
treats to their success.
Michigan's product liability laws
and the difficulty of raising capital
were next of the list of eight Oaklangit Codify men and women who
taked Friday to a House GOP tasforce on jobs and competition.

We're taking time to get out of
Lansing and hear from the job providers," said Rep. Gordon Sparks, InTroy, who chaired the 90-minute
hear in the Troy public library.
Troy, who chaired the 90-minute
hear in the Troy public library
committee structure, to morely Republicans hope to have a stronger intunere on the House agenda, he said.

SMALL-BUSINESS owners partic-

SMALL-BUSINESS owners particularly blistered House Bill 4504 to require employers to provide paid leave to parents for childbirth or election.

leave to parents for canadam...
adoption.
"I can't replace anyone for 18
weeks," said Patricia Lewis, chief
executive of the family-run Berkley
Screw Machine Products in Rochesture than 38 employes are al-

most all technical men.

"What do I say to my customer who asks 'Where are my parts?' Do I say 'They're off on parental leave'? I don't know how long I can stay in

Rep. Gordon Sparks task force chief

business if they have mandated parental leave, "Lewis said.
Rep. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfleld, asked if there weren't a Kelly Services for industrial workers. "No — not for screw-machine men." Lewis replied.
Ed Powers, K mart's manager of governmental relations in its Troy world headquarters, said parental leave would set "a dangerous precedent."

mant are Republicans in their oppo-sition that the task force's written report said, "The mere introduction of bills perceived as anti-business can have negative consequences."

JAY SWEENEY, owner of Mark-etechnics in Bloomfield Hills, sald a poll of the National Federation of In-dependent Businesses in Michigan, showed their number-one concern was 'no mandated benefits'' by gov-

ernment. NFIB's second concern was com-

NFIB's second concern was com-petition from government.

That was underlined by Bethanne
Simpson, owner of Avon Art &
Graphics in Rochester. Her firm
owns a \$200 000 computer for making slides and visual presentations.
Nost of her clients are businesses,
but she deals with one unidentified
state department. That department told her it's hopping for an identical
computer to do the work in-house.

"I paid for my equipment. I provide excellent service," Simpson said. "I don't want to pay for that again through my tax dollar — and lose business."

lose business."

The GOP task force sald in six earlier hearings business people had compilated about competition from state prisons, schools and colleges in such areas as manufacture of furniture, travel agency services, wholesale purchse and sale of personal computers, prison remodeling work and highway maintenance.

K MART'S Powers called for reform of product-liability laws.
"Retailers have had punitive damages awarded aginst them and been found jointly and severally liabile in certain situations where they did not know there was anything wrong with a product and did not participate in its design or manufacture. Retailers would favor abolition of joint and several liability." he said.
Under that doctrine, a defendant in a product liability suit could wind up paying 100 percent of the cost even if the defendant were only 10 percent liabile.

Even where the retailer is eligible for reimbursement from the manufacturer, Powers said, "our problems the payoff to get out of the suit."

RAISING CAPITAL is tough for

RAISING CAPITAL is tough for small firms lacking physical assets, said Jack Yeaton, president of Merit Systems in Troy. The 250-employee firm provides custom software to businesses.

businesses.
"The linancial infrastructure (lenders) finds it difficult to understand the service industry," said Yeaton. "They count trinkets in warehouses. They can't see people as sasets."
Mark Davis, owner of Punchinelio's restaurant in Birmingham, said he approached five banks for a load when he had to move and found their loan officers had virtually no ex-



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quired an enormous amount of paperwork.

MIKE MORTON of Ludot Personnel Services in Southfield said a recent governor's conference on small business identified access to capital as a major problem, along with competition from government.

Morton said BIDCO's (business and industrial development companies) are capitalized at 33 million but should instead by capitalized at new type of lending institution between a bank and a venture capital firm.

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Survey starts on adult ed

their opinion's about adult and con-tinuing education programs.

The sampling will be done in ever-ycommunity, said Dr. Robert Rodgers, coordinator of adult and continuing education for the Oakland Intermediate School District.

Results will be used to assess pro-

grams and services already offered and for planning future programs, he

said.

Local directors of continuing edu-cation programs will assess the re-sults from their areas and compare them to countywide results for plan-ning nurroses. ning purposes.
"We monitor the views of those



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Volunteers today will begin surveying Oakland County residents for
education," said Rodgers. "We hope
their opinion's about adult and contheir opinion's about adult and conthis survey will help us reach even
this survey will help us reach even
the results."

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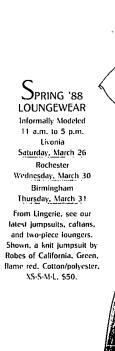
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