

Tax battle

GOP, Dems differ on tuition deductions

By Tim Richard
staff writer

House Democrats won a committee battle over exempting Michigan Education Trust benefits from state taxes. But a Republican who says she has a better idea said the fight isn't over.

Rep. Judith Miller, R-Birmingham, is pushing a broader bill that would allow Michigan income taxpayers to deduct up to \$2,000 a year of college tuition payments from taxable income.

"My bill expands the deduction to persons who are paying as they go and persons who can't afford the \$2,000 cost of getting into MET."

"But the whole thing has gotten involved in the election," said Miller.

THE HOUSE Taxation Committee last week:

Reported out favorably a bill by Rep. Agnes Dobronski, D-Deerborn, to exempt MET benefits from state taxable income.

"This would make our guaranteed tuition program an even more attractive investment for the families of future Michigan college and university students," said Dobronski, whose co-sponsors are mostly Democrats, including Justine Barns of Westland, Maxine Berman of Southfield and James Kosleva of Canton.

Sent to a subcommittee Miller's bill to exempt all tuition from state taxes — whether to a public or private college and whether or not the tuition comes from a MET benefit.

Miller's bill is co-sponsored by Republicans Lynn Bankes of Livonia, W.V. Brotherton of Farmington, Mat Dunaskis of Lake Orion, David Houdman of West Bloomfield, Ger-

ald Law of Plymouth and Gordon Sparks of Troy. It also has two area Democratic co-sponsors: John Bennett of Redford and William Keith of Garden City.

"THE CHAIRMAN (Lynn Jondahl, D-East Lansing) asked the subcommittee chairman (Berman) to give it a hearing but did not send Dobronski's bill to the subcommittee," Miller said.

State Treasurer Robert Bowman, architect of the MET program, told the panel he had no argument against the philosophy of Miller's bill but said it would cost the state \$20 million to \$30 million in revenue, Miller said.

Berman's subcommittee is to study "tax expenditures" — the invisible cost of reducing taxes for certain purposes as opposed to state spending.

Miller said Democrats are trying

to make Dobronski look good politically because she faces a stiff reelection battle from former Rep. Bill Russo in Dearborn.

Miller said Dobronski's bill has yet to reach the House floor and may not be voted on this session.

UNDER MET, a parent or grandparent can prepay a newborn child's tuition by investing \$6,600 now with the guarantee it will cover an estimated \$22,000 worth of state college tuition 18 years later.

The lump-sum payment isn't taxable, but the benefits are taxable under both the federal and state tax codes.

"Since Michigan tax liability is based on the federal system, this (IRS) ruling made MET payments subject to Michigan taxes," said Dobronski. Her bill would make benefits non-taxable under the state code.

Environment worries public — poll

Business should get ready for tougher environmental regulations, says a Southfield public relations man.

Jack Casey, president of Casey Communications Management Inc., said a national survey shows that Americans regard environmental problems as serious health risks and want the federal government — and the state president — to get tough. Casey sponsored the survey.

"Regardless of who the next president is, the people overwhelmingly (94 percent) believe environmental problems are serious and want the federal government to be more strict in enforcement (88 percent)," said Casey.

"With public sentiment running this high, there is no question that government will respond. The message to business is: Get ready now for tougher regulations ahead."

"ENVIRONMENTAL concerns rank with drug and alcohol abuse as the public's top threat to the nation's health in the 1990s, according to survey results, ranking ahead of illnesses such as cancer and AIDS, nuclear war and crime," he said last week in remarks before a workshop on effective risk communications

sponsored by the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association.

"We were surprised by the intensity of the public's mood," Casey said.

More than nine out of 10 American adults believe the nation faces serious environmental problems such as air and water pollution and waste disposal and want stricter enforcement of environmental regulations, he said.

"Sentiment is overwhelmingly for the federal government to spend

more of its overall budget on environmental cleanup, and half of those responding to the survey would be willing to pay increased taxes, if necessary."

"We have found that straightforward approach to be very effective in getting companies and citizens working together on these problems, not simply confronting or blaming one another."

THE SURVEY was conducted for

Casey Communications by Lawrence Research of Santa Ana, Calif.

Disposal of hazardous or toxic waste materials ranked highest on almost everyone's (95 percent) list.

Other environmental problems — including disposal of residential and industrial garbage, landfills and groundwater contamination, water pollution and air pollution — also were rated overwhelmingly as serious concerns.

**SALE STARTS
SEPTEMBER 17**

Sale

30 to 60% OFF
All Wallcoverings

25% OFF
All Fabrics

60% OFF Kirsch
Mini & Micro Mini
Aluminum Blinds

55% OFF All Other
Kirsch Blinds

Stop in and have a cup of coffee. Let our talented staff help give your home that special look and feeling that only wallcoverings can.

Ash
Showroom
2374 Franklin Road
Bloomfield Hills
48304-7010
Hours: 9-5 p.m. Mon.
Thru Fri. • 10-4 p.m. Sat. Visa/MC

We make it easy to
get free checking.



Regular Checking

At Standard Federal, we know the money you usually spend on checking account charges and service fees could be put to far better use. That's why our Regular Checking is so attractive. You only have to maintain a minimum balance of \$250 for us to waive our \$3 monthly service fee. And, there are no per check charges. Plus, when you open a new checking account, we'll also buy back the unused checks from your other bank at 5¢ per check up to \$10.00, and give you 50 free checks with your first order.

For a limited time, get a free GE Clock Radio when you open a new checking account with \$500 or more.*

* This offer is good for a limited time only. Regulations restrict the number of gifts to one per account and an individual may receive only one gift. All gifts are subject to availability and cannot be mailed. Additional gifts are not available for purchase. Gifts are not allowed for funds transferred from one Standard Federal account to another.

We focus on performance.

Standard Federal Bank
Savings/Financial Services

1-800/482-3930



INSULATED VINYL SIDING

Custom Aluminum Trim

• Windows and Doors
• Kitchens • Baths • Masonry
• Rec Rooms • Carpentry

KEN LAKER

THE CONTRACTOR

Deal Direct With Licensed Crew

476-6877

DOLLS TO LOVE

Every Little Girl Should Have A Special Doll.

• Baby & Toddler Dolls

• Doll Clothes & Trunks

• Buggies & Strollers

• Bed & Cradles

EARLY PURCHASE PLAN

Save Up to 25% \$lowdown

2047 W. 12 Mile • Berkley • 483-3115
Mon.-Sat. 10-6, Th. & Fri. 10-7

DOUBLE

TRADE-IN

ALLOWANCE

on a new

Dittrich Fur

This is your opportunity to receive twice the normal trade-in allowance on the purchase of a new Dittrich Fur.

In addition to the Double Trade-In Allowance

SAVE 15%

Off the ticketed price of any fur - with this ad

Bring in any garment, no matter how bad, and we guarantee a minimum trade-in allowance of \$100.

Dittrich
Since 1937

NEW HOURS

MON. - SAT. 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

(Mon.-Sat. Thursday till 8:30 p.m.)

DETROIT 672-8000

7272 Third Avenue

BLOOMFIELD HILLS 483-3000

1316 N. Woodward Avenue

Major Financing Available

Major Credit Cards Accepted