

# Many absent

# Metro Detroit, Midwest lead pack

## Attendance in House fell during campaign

By Richard G. Thomas  
special writer

Turnout for House roll calls dropped sharply in the final two weeks of the 100th Congress. Dozens of normally attentive members chose to return home for politicking rather than stay in Washington for the less exciting task of casting yeas and nays.

Voting participation on the House floor had approached 93 percent during the first nine months of 1988.

But when Congress failed to close shop as scheduled in early October, a ministampede from the House chambers to the campaign trail was set in motion, causing increased absenteeism.

ATTENDANCE AT House votes slipped to about 84 percent in the two weeks leading up to Congress' Oct. 22 adjournment, a period in which the House and Senate stayed in session as they struggled toward eventual agreement on a \$2.8 billion anti-drug bill.

Altogether, 24 House roll calls were conducted during the two-weeking last gap of the 100th Congress, with several major bills receiving final congressional approval in the face of the high absenteeism.

For all of 1988, voting attendance in both the House and Senate averaged about 92 percent, according to a survey by Roll Call Report Syndicate.

Michigan representatives had a collective 94 percent rate. Here are 1988 attendance records on 446 roll calls of Observer & Eccentricity area members:

• Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth — 96 percent. His 2nd District also includes northern Livonia.

• Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods — 97. His 14th District includes eastern Troy.

• William Ford, D-Taylor — 87. His 18th District includes southern Livonia, Garden City, Westland and Canton.

• Sander Levin, D-Southfield — 95. His 17th District includes Redford Township.

• William Broomfield, R-Birmingham — 89. His 18th District includes the Rochester area, most of Troy, Birmingham-Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and the Farmington area.

Michigan's two Democratic senators, Donald Riegle and Carl Levin, scored identical 97s. Riegle is facing re-election.

ON CONGRESS' last legislative day, 75 of the 431 House members failed to vote on the politically popular drug bill, 72 were absent on a bill substantially changing the tax code, 74 missed a roll call that resulted in tougher regulation of lawn darts, and 75 failed to cast a ye or nay on a bill restricting lobbying by former members of Congress and other ex-government officials.

Meanwhile, senators seeking reelection were spared a choice between voting and campaigning. Because scores of senators had fled Washington, Senate leaders were unable to schedule roll calls after Oct. 18.

This resulted in the Senate using voice, or non-record, votes to approve a mixture of major and minor bills in the final days of the session.

The writer operates a syndicated service to which this newspaper subscribes.

(AP) — Metropolitan Detroit's economy is growing faster than all but one of the nation's 34 largest cities, and the Midwest leads the nation in business expansion, according to an accounting firm's study.

In the past three years, by contrast, economic growth has been strongest in Eastern cities, the New York-based accounting firm Grant Thornton said.

The Grant Thornton index showed that, in the second quarter, the average rate of economic growth for

Midwestern cities rose more than the comparable rates for cities in the East, West and South.

The index is a quarterly composite of seven economic indicators collected for 24 major U.S. cities.

IN THE SECOND quarter, the firm said, the seven fastest-growing metropolitan economies were those of Minneapolis, Detroit, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Mo., St. Louis, Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

The index for three cities — Dallas, Phoenix and Los Angeles — was unchanged in the second quarter from the first, Grant Thornton said. Three other cities showed an economic decline: Miami, Seattle and Atlanta.

The economic indicators used to rank the cities include commercial and residential construction permits, average weekly hours worked by manufacturing employees, business starts and failures and retail sales.

AFTER THE SEVEN cities with the fastest-growing economies, the others in descending order of magnitude are Boston, Milwaukee, Denver, San Diego, Chicago, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Houston, San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, Dallas, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Seattle and Miami.

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## Business index slips in September

In September, the Michigan Business Activity Index slipped four points to a level of 141 compared with 145 in August, according to Manufacturers National Bank. But the index is still 1.5 percent above the same period in 1987.

David L. Littmann, first vice president and senior economist at the bank, "The slippage between August and September is understandable because the August index figure represented a 31-year historical high for the state's economy and may have been boosted by energy consumption."

"Moreover, analyzing the entire

third quarter, the average index level of 136 was the highest quarterly figure for the year and equal to index peaks achieved in the final quarter of 1986 and the third quarter of last year."

Year to date, the index is 1.5 percent above the first nine months of last year. During September, the principal weaknesses occurred in auto sales and electric power consumption.

The MBAI represents 10 different measures of Michigan economic activity compiled monthly by the economics department of the bank.

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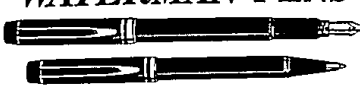
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