

Michigan lawmakers rated as spenders

By Richard G. Thomas
special writer

IN THE U.S. Senate, William Proxmire, D-Wis., had the most upfaded voting record in 1988. In the U.S. House, Republican Philip Crane of Illinois led in austerity voting during the legislative year, according to a survey by Roll Call Report Syndicate.

On the other side of the ledger, Sen. Lawrence Chiles, D-Fla., was the senator voting most often to raise spending on roll calls that presented a clear choice between higher or

lower outlays. Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Texas, was the House member whose voting showed least concern about the annual deficit.

The newspaper syndicate's second annual Spending Index, a study of nearly 100 key roll calls conducted in 1988, shows how often lawmakers cast austerity votes to back up their political boasting on the deficit issue. It is the only national study of its kind by a news organization.

THE SURVEY found the average senator voting for austerity on only

19 percent of the year's roll calls posing a choice of more or less spending in 22 roll calls. Michigan's Carl Levin scored 14 percent and Donald Riegle 18 percent. Both are Democrats.

The average House member supported the less-spending alternative only 22 percent of the time in 76 roll calls. The higher the score, the more austere the record.

Carl Furse, R-Plymouth, scored 33 percent, second highest among Michigan's 18 representatives. William Broomfield, R-Lake Orion, scored 17, second-lowest among Michiganians.

Among Democrats, Dennis Hertel of Harper Woods and William Ford of Taylor scored 17; and Sander Levin of Southfield, 15.

Lowest-ranked Michigan member was Rep. John Dingell of Trenton, 9. Most austere was Paul Henry, R-Grand Rapids. Detroit congressmen John Conyers and George Crockett rated 20 and 16, respectively, higher than suburban Democrats.

The Spending Index covered nearly all votes in the House and Senate chambers offering a choice between more or less spending, regardless of the amount of money at stake.

It tracked yeas and nays on efforts to establish or eliminate programs, create new agencies and commissions or dismantle existing units of government, hike or trim entitlement benefits, curb increases, increase outlays and inflict direct spending cuts.

THE SURVEY excluded several roll calls on highly charged issues such as Contra aid and abortion, where policy considerations overwhelmed fiscal concerns.

The less-spending alternative prevailed on only 12 percent of those 98 roll calls.

Proxmire, who voted the austerity position 68 percent of the time, was followed by Sens. Gordon Humphrey, R-N.H., who scored 55 percent, and Jesse Helms, R-N.C., 41 percent.

Chiles registered zero percent, and ranking just above him were Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and Albert Gore, D-Tenn., each with pro-austerity scores of 5 percent.

CRANE SCORED 59 percent. Ranking immediately behind him were GOP Reps. Bob Stump of Arizona with 57 percent, Norman Shumway of California with 55 percent, William Dannemeyer of California with 51 percent and James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin with 50 percent. No other House member voted pro-austerity at least half the time.

Wilson recorded the lowest House score by supporting the less-spending alternative less than 1 percent of the time. He was followed by Democratic Reps. Sam Stratton of New York and Dan Mica of Florida, each with 4 percent, Ronald Coleman of Texas with 5 percent and Kika de la Garza of Texas with 7 percent.

The Spending Index weighs all votes equally and is non-partisan and is non-ideological.



William Broomfield, R-Lake Orion, scored 12 percent, second lowest among Michigan's 18 representatives. The higher the score, the more austere the record.

Report says belts reducing injuries

Fewer people have been injured on Michigan roads since the state introduced its mandatory safety belt law in 1985 and their injuries have been less severe, according to a new report.

There has been a 19 percent reduction in the number of car crash victims admitted to state hospitals since the law was introduced, according to a University of Michigan study.

The study also said the number of accident victims requiring hospital

stays of one week or more decreased by 43 percent.

Auto fatalities decreased 19.7 percent in Michigan over the same period, U-M researcher Alexander Wagenaar said. Wagenaar presented his findings at the American Public Health Association annual meeting Nov. 15 in Boston.

Researchers gathered information on 8,661 patients at 14 Michigan hospitals. The study was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

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