

# Lawmakers unmoved by lure of retirement windfall

AP — A decade ago, then-Rep. James Blanchard spared his Democratic colleagues considerable agony by leaving Congress to run for governor.

The 1980 Census had decreed that Michigan would lose one House seat, and Blanchard's departure made it easy for the state Legislature to craft new districts without pitting incumbents against each other.

Now the task is doubly difficult: by 1992 the map must be redrawn to reflect the state's loss of another two seats. And this time none of the 18 House members appears willing to step aside.

"Nobody's volunteering," said an aide to one of the senior Michigan lawmakers. "Whoever leaves will go kicking and screaming."

Ordinarily, members of Congress wanting to keep their jobs would be about as surprising as, say, the sun rising in the morning. These folks try to entrench themselves so firmly that potential opponents will decide it's not worth the trouble to challenge them.

Even so, it had been widely predicted that dozens of veteran lawmakers would head for home before a law-takes-effect, barring House members from pocketing their unspent political funds.

UNDER THE law, any member who was elected before 1980 and quits before 1993 can keep whatever was in his campaign kitty at the end of 1989.

Twelve of Michigan's 18 House members are eligible for this financial windfall. Leading the way is 34-year veteran Rep. William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, who could keep \$655,652 if he retired.

Broomfield's district stretches from Rochester to Farmington and includes Troy and the Birmingham/Bloomfield area.

Other Michigan eligibles are Reps. William Ford, D-Taylor, \$223,618, and Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, \$154,564.

Ford's district includes southern Livonia, Westland Garden City and Canton. Pursell's district includes northern Livonia, Plymouth and Plymouth Township.

Sander Levin, D-Southfield, was

## Broomfield gets new post

U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, has been elected a co-chairman of the bi-partisan National Security Caucus.

The Michigan Republican is also serving as a co-chairman of the Coalition for Desert Storm which was organized by the caucus to welcome U.S. troops home from the Persian Gulf. The coalition is a broad-based alliance of organizations and prominent individuals supporting a bi-partisan in defense and foreign policy outlook.

"I was especially pleased that our nation remained steadfast behind the young men and women in our armed forces as they and our United Nations allies fulfilled their historic mission to repel aggression and to build the basis for a secure peace," Broomfield said.

"I know my work in the National Security Caucus will be very productive, and I am honored my colleagues have chosen me for this position."

The National Security Caucus is composed of over 200 lawmakers in the U.S. House and Senate, and is one of the largest congressional alliances on Capitol Hill. The group works on a wide range of defense and foreign policy issues, and Broomfield's election was attributed to his role as ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Broomfield was nominated for the position by Reps. Bob Michel (R-IL), Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and William L. Dickinson (R-AL). His nomination was unanimously ratified by the 160 Republican lawmakers who belong to the National Security Caucus.

## Channel 56 needs items

Donations are sought for the Channel 56 Auction.

Detroit's public television station will hold the auction fund-raiser April 12-21. A 900 number and various home shopping games have been added.

Items to be auctioned must be either brand new or antique and must have a retail value of at least \$70. Call the auction office, 476-8350, to donate.

Items already donated include such specialty items as lunch with former Gov. James Blanchard in Washington, D.C., a handmade stained glass castle valued at \$16,000 and 10 acres of wilderness.

Viewers will also be able to acquire an express bid number. For \$10, bidders will receive their own three-digit number allowing them to make automatic bids.

The auction will also feature theme days and nights. They include:

- Sunday, April 14 — Art, wine and antiques day.
- Monday, April 15 — Computers and electronics night.
- Tuesday, April 16 — Home and garden night.

first elected in 1982 and isn't eligible. Why isn't anyone taking the money and running?

Love of the job appears to be the biggest reason. Michigan's delegation is perhaps the nation's most powerful for its size, with three members — John Conyers, D-Detroit, John Dingell, D-Trenton, and Ford — chairing major committees. Most of the others hold key committee or party leadership posts.

For this breed, the trappings of politics and government simply are more alluring than money. Broomfield, whose office walls are covered

**U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, whose office walls are covered with photographs of himself with world leaders, relishes being the top-ranking Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee.**

with photographs of himself with world leaders, relishes being the top-ranking Republican on the Foreign

Affairs Committee. "I'd still like to be chairman of the committee some day," he said.

BUT DON'T feel too sorry for your representatives. By the average American's standards, they're a long way from the poor house: Rank-and-file House members will earn \$125,100 this year.

And most would have no trouble earning solid incomes after leaving Congress — as lobbyists, lawyers, teachers, lecturers or business people.

Finally, there's the little-publicized matter of congressional pensions. They are two to three times more generous than most in the private sector, according to the non-partisan National Taxpayers Union.

The group estimates that pensions will make millionaires of 254 current representatives and 77 senators. The study was based on the lawmakers' age, length of service and life expectancy according to standard mortality tables used by the insurance industry.

If the study is accurate, Conyers could expect to receive \$3 million in retirement benefits if he retired in 1993. Ford likely would take in around \$2.3 million. Eight others probably would top the \$1 million threshold.

Retire? This crowd is just getting started.

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