

# Recall gets mixed reaction

By Pat Murphy  
Staff writer

The recall of Gov. John Engler: Fact or fiction?

Fact, say people like Dorothy Habicht, a single mother of two. Sunday she held open house at her home in Wayne so some people could sign the recall Engler petitions. . . and others could get informal schooling on the proper way to circulate petitions, so names won't later be invalidated.

"We had 30 to 50 people," said Habicht, who attends Wayne Community College. "We'll get a lot more as this thing catches on."

The recall is fiction. At least from the point of view of Judy D. Riedinger, who lives in Bloomfield Township and with her husband owns a small business in Novi.

"I haven't seen any signs or recall whatsoever," said Riedinger, who is also GOP chairman of the 18th Congressional District that includes much of Oakland County. "I haven't seen proof of any recall."

LAST WEEK organizers of the re-

call released figures showing they had garnered 351,166 signatures, more than half the 641,141 needed to put recall of Gov. Engler on a statewide ballot.

Besides surpassing the magical half-way point, that figure reflects an emotional benchmark, according to Robert Alexander, a former Oakland County resident who now works in the Michigan Department of Social Services and coordinates the recall Engler drive.

"We're gaining momentum. We're going to make it," said Alexander, a 1964 graduate of Berkley High School. "We're going to get more than enough signatures to force a recall."

No Michigan governor has ever been recalled. Until recently, many believed such a recall was impossible, mainly because of the large scale organization and effort required to get that many signatures.

Meanwhile, the state GOP isn't worried, according to Richard M. Czuba, director of research and communication.

State Republicans are going about

**'I haven't seen any sign of a recall whatsoever.'**

— Judy D. Riedinger,  
GOP chairman, 18th

District

their business as if the recall didn't exist, said Czuba. "Recent polls show Gov. Engler's approval rating up by 11 percent (with 49 percent of those responding approving of Engler's performance and 46 disapproving)."

"More and more people are starting to realize that Gov. Engler is doing the right thing," said Czuba.

BUT PEOPLE like Vic Taylor of Livonia and Mary Johnston of Farmington Hills disagree.

Taylor, a Army retiree, said he is committed to the recall because the budget cuts attributed to Engler fall most heavily on the poor. "Because of those cuts, people who are dependent on general assistance are forced to choose between food and drugs."

Donald Broersma, a recall coordinator from Ypsilanti, said many affluent and middle class residents feel the same way. "We were at the Ann Arbor Art Fair over the weekend. They were lined up six deep to sign our petitions . . . and these were not poor people."

THE RECALL was initiated May 20 as a protest against a wide range of cuts in state services including general welfare assistance, or welfare.

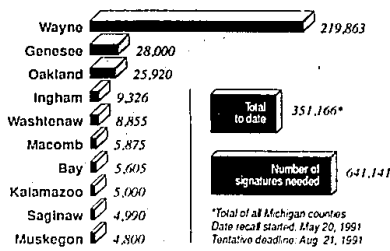
In March, general assistance to families, the disabled and so-called "able bodied" adults was cut across the board by 17 percent.

Benefits for a "typical" welfare family (a single parent and two children) in Wayne County were cut from \$488 to \$405 monthly, according to the Michigan Department of Social Services (MDSS). About 60,000 families in Wayne County were affected.

In Oakland County, welfare recipients get more because of higher housing costs) benefits for about \$,000 typical family were cut from

## Recall update

The top 10 counties in the drive to recall Governor Engler



Source: July 25 newsletter, Committee to Recall Gov. Engler

TAMMIE GRAVES/Observer & Economist

\$518 to \$435, according to MDSS figures.

Monthly benefits for a single adult with no children were cut from \$252 to \$217 in Wayne County and from about \$292 to \$247, reports MDSS. Additional cuts in welfare benefits

were scheduled to take affect today, when assistance to single, able-bodied adults without children are reduced by 12 percent.

Families receiving welfare and the disabled are not subject to this latest round of cuts.

# Adoptions bureaucratic, costly, senators informed

By Tim Richard  
Staff writer

Michigan law and custom put up many barriers to adoption, a state Senate committee learned last week.

Black social workers don't want white couples to adopt black kids. Health insurers don't want to cover adopted kids for a year. And counselors tell women with "problem pregnancies" about abortion and birth but not about adoption, the Senate Family Law Committee was told.

"There are more unadopted children than the general public thinks," said Sen. H. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

Chairman Jack Welborn, R-Kalamazoo, said the panel would write legislation as it goes along. Goals: "to reduce the barriers to and costs of adoption, reduce the bureaucracy and focus on special needs kids" referring to handicapped and black youngsters.

WHATEVER THE panel reports is likely to get support from both Republicans and Democrats, pro-life and pro-choice forces. Adoption is turning out to be a popular issue.

Karen Krupanski of Rochester, representing the Michigan State Medical Society, endorsed three House-passed bills requiring health insurers to give adopted children the same coverage as birth children. Some insurers require the adoptee to be in the home a year before coverage starts.

"It will be considered at the same time as other adoption bills," said Welborn. His committee has the bills, sponsored by Rep. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield.

"Women (with problem pregnancies) are not told about adoption — just childbearing or abortion," Krupanski added.

That brought agreement from Ed Rivet, lobbyist for Michigan Right to Life, the anti-abortion group. "Wom-

**'The problem has already been identified, and legislation to correct this situation has been pending for the past 2 1/2 years.'**

— Linda Gabriel of Rochester,  
Representing Families for Children

en in crisis are convinced only abortion or birth are their options," Rivet said.

WELBORN, QUESTIONING a Macomb County foster mother, concluded that black social workers in Wayne County resist letting white couples adopt black children.

"I've had 37 (foster) children," answered Dorothy Tallman of Armada.

"I'm OK to foster, I'm not OK to adopt."

Her testimony called social workers "totalitarian" and "usurpers of authority" who are "so biased as to not listen to the desires of the children themselves."

Linda Gabriel of Rochester, representing Families for Children, urged Welborn's panel not to wait for a full study of adoption but to move

promptly on Berman's health insurance bills. "The problem has already been identified, and legislation to correct this situation has been pending for the past 2 1/2 years. We need you to take immediate action."

Adopted children must go to a doctor who accepts Medicaid patients. "Other doctors don't want them. The (Medicaid) paper work costs them more than the Medicaid reimbursement," she said.

"It sends a message to the adoptive child — an awful message: 'You're not as good as other children,'" Gabriel said.

NORA EDGAR, a home health care nurse from Flint, proudly held up the handicapped baby boy she and her husband adopted three weeks ago.

"He's from Ohio. It took five months (to complete the adoption). With the roadblocks, we waited three years in Michigan," Edgar said.

"Are you saying Ohio has a better system?" asked Geake.

"Maybe it's just the (social) workers," Edgar replied. "We got the brush-off from workers here."

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, noted Ohio still subsidizes adoptions, but Michigan has cut back aid for "special needs" adoptions.

Welborn's committee also heard from a Task Force on Adoption chaired by Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfield. Staff worker Jan Long said the panel has met five times but isn't ready to announce recommendations.

"It's a far greater issue than any of us even realized," she said.

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