## Hidden cost?

# Reps find parole reform won't be cheap

Most state representatives wouldn't talk out loud about the down side of a popular parole re-form bill they adopted last week on

a 99-2 vote.

But a staff memo to House Republicans apelled trouble shead:

"A direct consequence will be more immates within Michigan's prisons and a higher budget for prisons," warred the House GOP legal counsel. "As of July 1, 1992, there were 22,600 male prisoners in space designed for 24,885 — 7,721 overcaments."

over capacity. . ."

The staff predicted more prisoners because: "The rate of parole is

era because: "The rate of parole is illedy to drop because an inexperienced and politically accountable buard is going to be more cautious and afraid to make a mistake."

Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, D-petroit, voted yes but said only \$58 million of the Corrections Department's 31 billion budget goes for probation and parole. "The state has only 633 probation officers supervising 58,000 probationers," she said.

"Prison budgets are soaring due to lost hopes and high unemploy-ment. Not one of the Fortune 500 companies has increased employ-ment this year," Kilpatrick said.

All area lawmakera voted yea except Democrata William Keith of Garden City who was absent. Meanwhile, Gov. John Engler signed a Department of Corrections budget bill providing funds to open three new regional prisons and one me maximum security prison in the Upper Peninsula. It also will provide for continued operation of Capa Pugiley and Waterloo, which had been scheduled to close this year.

yeer.

The sudden action on parole was prompted by parolee Leslie Williams's confession that he killed young women in South Lyon, Milford and northern Livingston Councether crimes.

ford and northern Livingston Courty, among other crimes.

But Rep. Maxine Berman, D.
Southfield, warned that an earlier
Williams' conviction was plea-bargained down from burglary and rape
to just burglary. "As long as we view
rape as not as important as break
ing and entering, these Williams
cases will keep occurring," said
Berman.

Voting against the bill were Rep.
Ted Wallace, D-Detroit, who want-

Ted Wellace, D. Detroit, who wanted the matter to go through his House Corrections Committee, and Rep. Bill Martin, R-Battle Creek,

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committee and tacked the parole re-forms onto a minor bill that was in House-Senate conference commit-

### Careerists out

House Bill 4130, which goes to the state Senate for concurrence,

the state Senate for concurrence, will:

• Set up a perole board appointed by the director of the Corrections Department (himself an appointed of the governor) instead of career civil servants.

• Give members staggered four-year terms.

• Expand the board to 10 members from the current seven.

• Require the Legislature Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCRR) to approve the department's parole guidelines.

• Require lifers to serve at least 15 years (instead of the current 10) before qualifying for parole.

• Allow a crime victim or prosecutor to a gourt.

 Allow streamling of parole in-terview procedures. Lifers would be interviewed less frequently. Lowrisk prisoners can be denled parole without an interview. High-risk prisoners can be denied parole without an interview. Purpose: to allow cluser attention to more important cases

• Require the Corrections Dee Require the Corrections De-partment to ask a probate court for involuntary commitment for dis-charged or paroled prisoners who require mental health treatment, ei-ther because they are threats to themselves or others.

The new parole board is estab-lished Oct. 1. The old one is aboli-shed Nov. 15, so there will be six weeks overlap.

### Rally at Capitol

Rolly at Capitol
House passage was preceded by a
week of news conferences and rallies at which lamakers deplored the
fate of rape and murder victima.
"Our present perole board is not
accountable to the people," said
Rep. Willis Bullard, R.Milford, in
whose district Williams struck
twice. He addressed a rally the previous day on the State Capitol
steps. Some 40,000 people signed
cards expressing outrage at the
paralle system.

carine expressing outrage as the parole system.

Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint, introduced bills to create a Crime Victims Advocate office to assist victims and monitor the parole system.

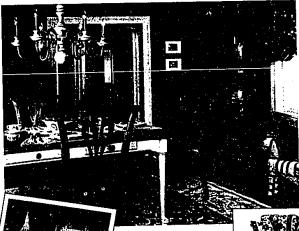


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