

House passes gender equity bill

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

School districts would be required to make gender equity and multi-culturalism part of their 3-5-year improvement programs under a bill recently passed by state representatives.

But majority Democrats shot down a Republican attempt to make public schools pay for the retraining of graduates whose first employers find them deficient in any basic skill.

The gender equity bill was passed 76 to 22 amid male Republican complaints that it didn't go far enough.

"It's fatally flawed," said Rep. Tom Middleton, R-Ontario, "because it doesn't deal with equity for handicappers."

Rep. William Bryant, R-Grosse Pointe, added that House Bill 5901 also should require schools to do something about gender and handicapper equity, not just "give reason or excuse for non-action."

Sponsor was Rep. Mary Brown, D-Kalamazoo. Co-sponsors included Lyn Bankes, R-Livonia, Justine Barnes, D-Westland, Max-

EDUCATION

ine Berman, D-Southfield, Barbara Dobb, R-Union Lake, Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, George Goss, R-Northville, Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, and Susan Munsell, R-Howell.

Now in a Senate committee, the bill would amend the school code by asking for specific descriptions of "gender equity components of the school improvement plan."

It also requires the core curriculum "shall be fair to each gender and shall be multi-cultural."

Warranty loses

A day earlier, the House rejected, on nearly a party-line vote, a Republican plan for certified diplomas. Under it:

■ An employer hiring a person within two years of high school graduation could find the worker deficient in basic skills.

■ The school district would have to administer basic skill tests. If the worker flunks, the school would have to offer remedial work or pay another district to

do it if the graduate has moved within Michigan.

The amendment was offered by lame duck Rep. Claude Trim, R-Waterford. He based it on a Senate-passed bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham.

At least one community college, Henry Ford in Dearborn, offers employers a warranty on its graduates' skills.

Republicans bashed Democrats for refusing to report the Bouchard bill out of the House Education Committee for a floor vote.

"If you want this bill to go down in flames, then adopt this amendment," warned Democrat William Keith of Garden City, chairman of the Education Committee.

"We had a hearing on it. The Michigan Association of Schools Boards, the Michigan Education Association, the Michigan Federation of Teachers — all are against it."

Keith said the Bouchard bill should be amended, as educators wish, to let the employer see the graduate's attendance record and

grades.

"You (Republicans) call them interests, but they're on the cutting edge of what takes place in education," Keith said.

The Trim amendment lost 47 to 51 with 11 not voting. All area lawmakers voted with their parties except Republicans Shirley Johnson of Royal Oak and Gordon Sparks of Troy, who voted no.

Party tactics

Rep. Michael Bennane, D-Detroit, chastised Republicans for "grinding the wheels to a halt. It's malarkey."

But GOP minority leader Paul Hillebrands, who hopes to become House speaker if his party takes control after Nov. 3, said a majority of the House is continually frustrated at the Democratic leadership's refusal to take up bills.

"This issue isn't allowed to happen. There's a majority for no-fault (auto insurance) reform, for medical liability reform."

"But the folks who control the procedure don't allow it to happen. I hope the public understands that."

Compromise eyed on adoption rules

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

State legislators will have to work out a compromise if adopted children are to receive health insurance coverage the day they enter their new homes.

The state Senate and House are advancing slightly different bills.

"This legislation is an important step in our efforts to provide health care to children who wouldn't normally be insured," said Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, sponsor of the Senate version.

"Adopted children often have to wait a significant period of time before they receive insurance coverage — if they receive it at all. In the interim, they often have to rely on Medicaid."

"These bills allow insurance coverage for adopted children to

begin at the time of placement rather than at the time of legal adoption (usually a year later)," Geake said.

The state Senate last week gave 24-12, 30-6 and 30-7 approval to Geake's three bills, one covering each class of health insurer in the state.

"The Senate Family Law Committee chose Geake's bills rather than (Rep. Maxine) Berman's (D-Southfield)," said a Geake aide. "Bob's bills say you can't treat an adopted child differently from a birth child."

"Berman's bills would have required insurers to pay for all 'special needs' for adopted children to age 18. Hers went away from the original intent. Now (Berman's) are almost an entitlement — coverage in spite of pre-existing conditions."

Chamber seeks Athena nominations

Nominations must be received by Nov. 2 for the annual Athena Award, sponsored by the Oakland County Chamber Division of the

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How to Judge A Judge:

BY BACKGROUND: A graduate of Harvard and the University of Michigan Law School, Martin Doctoroff was a Special Agent for the FBI before building a 27-year career as a trial lawyer. In 1987 he was appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals — our state's second highest court. His peers elected him Chief Judge in 1992.

BY CHARACTER: As a lawyer, Martin Doctoroff's intelligence and preparedness benefited his clients. Now as a judge, his integrity and vast trial experience benefit all Michigan citizens. Applying organizational skills and concern for promptness and efficiency, he brings increased order to his court. The Oakland County Bar Association's Judicial Qualifications Committee rated him outstanding.

BY EXPERIENCE: Judge Doctoroff's views and vision have been shaped by his own legal career as well as by his many legal offices: Public Administrator for Oakland County; Special Assistant Attorney General for Michigan; Chair of the state's Attorney Discipline Board; leadership positions on county, state and national Bar Associations.

BY ENDORSEMENTS: While he has received many from both public and private associations throughout the state, those of his colleagues are indicative of his judicial qualifications: Past presidents of the Oakland County Bar and the State Bar have given endorsements. Now he needs yours. Vote November 3.

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