# **Banks fighting in Lansing** for right to sell insurance

Bankers and insurers — two groups politicians love to hate — are fighting in Lansing in what one lawmaker calls "a turf battle."

The House Insurance Committee is considering a bipartise processes of the considering a bipartise and other financial institutions from selling insurance.

On the bankers' side, opposing the bills, is Rep. William Keith, DeGarden City, a former banker. "The national banks can sell insurance," Keith said, citing a court opinion. "State-chartered banks can't compete on a level playing field."

Supporting the insurers' view is Supporting the insurers' view is Control of the Control of the

Township, a co-sponsor of the bills. "There are insurance agents all over the state. I don't know how allowing a bank (to sell insurance) is going to make much of a difference (in its availability)," asid Junior and the state of the state of the self insurance).

a difference (in its availability)," said Jamien.
On the fence, but leaning toward the bankers, is Rep, Jerry Vorva, R.Plymouth. His view is that government shouldn't interfere in the marketplace, competition is good for consumers, and "that's the American way." Insurance agents who want Vorva's vote will have to convince him that there's something overwhelmingly evil in letting banks sell insurance.

### Which is worse?

IN NEED OF A

Detroit Democrats dislike both industries. They see insurance agents abandoning their city, Flint and Saginaw, leaving them

without coverage.
"But at least with financial in-

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Seven Democrate and three Republicans are sponsoring the bills. They would prohibit a financial institution from getting into "the insurance or surety business as a principal, underwriter, agent, broker, solicitor or insurance counselor." The bills also prohibit financial institutions from buying "shares of a corporation engaged (in) the insurance or surety business."

Insurers set rates

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atitutions," and Rep. Nelson
Saunders, D-Detroit, "we have a
hammer — the Community Reinvestment Act. They (banka) became much more diligent in complying (by making leans in the
city). But we don't have that
hammer with insurance companies."

Rep. Bill Martin, R-Battle
Creek, sees banks as the greater
evil. "You go to a bank and give
them your life history, your next
life's history, your children's history, It's these practices that
make this (banks selling insurance) so difficult to swallow.

"Banks keep saying 'competition, competition, competition,
said Martin, noting that hig
banks are acquiring smaller
banks and reducing competition.
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lills. They would prohibit a fi-

Regarding questions about what banks would charge for insurance. Anderson repiled, "Banks don't set the insurance rates. Banks distribute (sell) insurance. The insurance carrier sets the rates."

Banks, however, have seen their business shrink from 38 to 18 percent of deposits nationally as other institutions move in. Even Merrill Lynch, a name associated with Wall Street's stocks and bonds, is moving into mortgages. So banks now are trying to diversify by selling insurance and annuities.

Polly Reber, of the Small Business Association of Michigan, supported the ban because "lending institutions hold a great deal of power over small business."

Rober foresees banks using their lending power as a "subtle, coercive" influence to make borrowers buy their insurance from the 50,000 licensed insurance agents, many of whom serve ural communities that banks don't serve. "Insurance agents are at a competitive disadvantage," she said.

Supporting SBAM's view was Don Wilke, of Wilke Brothers

said.
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Don Wilke, of Wilke Brothers
Conveyors in Maryaville. Wilke
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with hapka

said he can pick and choose between insurance agenta, "but the relationship changes with banks. It's not which bank I will accept. It's which bank will accept me."
Refer to House Bills 5281 to 5284 when writing to your state representative. The bills are still in the House Insurance Committee.

## Camp fair offers big selection

Are you looking for a camp to send your children to next summer?
If so, then consider attending the fifth annual "Camp and Activities Feir" 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 27, at Bloomfield Hills Middle School, 4200 Quarton Road.
Sponsored by The Merrill-Palmer Institute of Wayns State University, Metro Parent magazine and The Observe & Eccentric Newspepers, the fair features representatives from 72 camps and activity programs from around the state and across the country.
Twenty-two of the 72 programs represented are new to the camp fair, so there's something new for those who actuated last year's fair.
Merrill-Palmer spokeswoman Sandy Schwartz reports that there is a camp specializing in virtually any activity a kid could conceivably be interested in.
Those activities include skiing, sailing, wind-

ested in. Those activities include skiing, salling, wind-surfing, keyaking, biking, canoe paddling, rock climbing, dancing, photography, horse riding, rific

shooting, archery, scuba diving, snorzenng am-recketry.
Other camps emphasize computers, ecology skills, leadership, marine biology, music, art and drama. There is even a camp for speech- and hearing-impaired kids and a camp for kids from abusive families.
Also, representatives from Nacel Cultural Ex-changes will be on hand to answer questions about sending your children to foreign countries or hosting a foreign student in your house.
Admission is free and camp operators are asked not to take any money.

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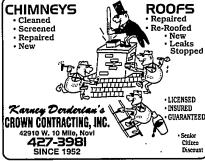
Among organizations scheduled to attend the fair are the Howe Milltary Summer Camp, the Tall Timbers Sports Camp, the Upland Hills Farm Day Camp, the Beverly Hills Racquet/Health Club, the Jewish Community Center, Deriot Country Day Camp, the Farmington Gymnastics Center and the Catholic Youth Organization.

For additional data, call Schwartz at 872-1790.











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