

House raises debt ceiling

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes between Jan. 29 and Feb. 5.

HOUSE

THE NATIONAL DEBT — By a vote of 308-104, the House passed and sent to the Senate a bill raising the national debt ceiling from \$335.1 billion to \$985 billion. The bill enables the government to pay its current bills but does not hike spending levels. In past years, Republicans generally voted against raising the debt limit and Democrats generally supported an increase. This year, scores of members in both parties reversed their past positions.

Supporter Ed Weber, R-Ohio, urged his colleagues to "give President Reagan the time he needs to bring about the economic programs to which he is committed."

Opponent Peter Peyser, D-N.Y., reminded Republicans of their opposition to the debt or so requests for an increase that former President Jimmy Carter had sent to Capitol Hill. "You didn't give (Carter) a chance to get started," he said.

Members voting yea favored a \$50 billion increase in the debt ceiling.

Reps. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, David Bonior, D-Mt. Clemens, William Ford, D-Taylor, William Brodhead, D-Detroit, James Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham voted yea.

roll call report

SENATE

LABOR SECRETARY — By a vote of 80-17, the Senate rejected President Reagan's nomination of Raymond Donovan of New Jersey as Secretary of Labor in the new administration. Donovan, whose confirmation was delayed by uncorroborated accusations that he made payments to organized crime to insure labor peace for his construction firm, was the final Reagan cabinet choice to be approved and drew the largest number of nay votes.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, a supporter of the nomination, said the Senate should reject "unsupported allegations and conclusory hearsay" regarding Donovan's background.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., an opponent, accused the nominee of a "hewed sensitivity to the dangers of criminal activity."

Senators voting yea favored the nomination.

Michigan's Democratic senators split their votes. Sen. Carl Levin voted yea. Sen. Donald Riegle voted nay.

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Budget plan on tap

Gov. Milliken's property-tax-relief/sales-tax-increase plan will be explained to local government officials at an 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, meeting in Schoolcraft College's Liberal Arts Building.

Gerald Miller, state budget director, will outline the proposal which would give property owners \$785 million a year in property-tax relief but increase the state sales tax revenue \$535 million through a 1 percent increase (to 5 percent) in the state sales tax. The \$250 million net tax reduction would be accomplished through state and local

government spending cuts.

The proposed sales tax increase must go before state voters. Milliken is eyeing early June for a special election but must have two-thirds approval from both houses of the Michigan Legislature to put the plan on the ballot.

The Schoolcraft meeting is sponsored by Republican state Reps. Jack Kirksey and Sylvia Skrel, both of Livonia, and state Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

Schoolcraft's campus is on Haggerty Road, between Six and Seven Mile roads.

Building starts hit low

Building construction in the metropolitan area nosedived to at least a 12-year low in the first six months of 1980, according to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

SEMCOG reported that the number of building permits issued in the seven-county region during the first six months of 1980 was the lowest since the regional planning agency began collecting such statistics in 1968.

According to SEMCOG, the 3,900 permits issued for single-family and multi-family dwellings between January and July last year reflect a 66 percent decline from the 11,400 permits issued for the same period in 1979.

About 3,200 demolition permits were issued during 1980's first half. That was a 26 percent increase over the 2,500 residential buildings torn down in the first six months of 1979.

In Detroit, 2,400 demolition permits were issued, a 23 percent increase from 1979's first half.

The permits minus the demolitions

left a net 646 residential units added to the housing stock in 1980's first half, according to SEMCOG. A year earlier, the net addition was 8,830 units.

"THE GOOD news is they (building permits) can only go up," said Edward Hustoles, SEMCOG's director of planning.

The last six months of the year will show no significant rebound, according to Hustoles. Incomplete records covering six counties through last November show 6,900 residential permits were issued, far fewer than the 10,000 permits issued in the second halves of prior years.

The regional building decline during the first half of 1980 ranged from 76 percent in Monroe County to 30 percent in Washtenaw, when compared with the same period for 1979.

Oakland County showed a 65.5 percent decline; Wayne, 67 percent and Macomb, 75 percent.

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