

Dems scoff at Broomfield arms talks resolution

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

To Republican Rep. William Broomfield, the nuclear arms package resolution passed by the House was a "victory for the country."

But to Democratic colleague William Ford, the resolution was a "fraud."

In a narrow vote of 204-202 Thursday night, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an amendment sponsored by Broomfield of Birmingham, which supports the START talks on nuclear arms now under way with the Soviets in Geneva.

The amended resolution was given final passage in a second vote, 273-125.

INSTEAD OF an immediate freeze, which Democrats would have liked, Broomfield, ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a spokesman for the Reagan administration, offered a substitute resolution.

It called for eventually achieving "an equitable and verifiable agreement which freezes strategic forces at equal and substantially reduced levels."

"It endorses strategic arms negotiations already under way," Broomfield said in a telephone interview. "My bill calls for reduction at all levels."

Democrats disagree. They refer to Broomfield's amendment as the Broomfield-Reagan plan.

DEMOCRATS FAVORED a committee resolution calling for an immediate freeze in superpowers production, testing and deployment of nuclear arms. It never came to a vote.

Democrats said the Broomfield amendment just maintains the status quo. "It's not a freeze at all, it's a fraud," said Rep. William Ford, D-Taylor. He voted against the amendment and left before the final vote was taken.

"It calls for the U.S. and the Russians to agree to a mutually verifiable freeze of tactical nuclear weapons," said Ford, whose district includes Garden City, Westland and Canton.

Ford added that Reagan and the Republicans favor a nuclear buildup until the U.S. catches up with Russia.

"The White House says that we may be behind the Russians in the buildup. Maybe we are, but it's a waste of money building more arms. You don't need a case of ammunition to go deer hunting and shoot one deer," he said.

ONE REPUBLICAN, Carl Pursell of Plymouth, joined all Michigan Democrats opposing the Broomfield amendment, but later voted for final passage of the resolution.

"As a former military officer and a member of the Appropriations Committee, I believe our arms race is out of control," said Pursell, advocating that the U.S. "take the initiative to put a stop to the buildup."

Pursell cited a public opinion poll showing that 66 percent of the American public favors an arms freeze.

"These are not just intellectuals or students protesting. It goes much broader than that. It touches middle America," said Pursell, whose 2nd District includes Livonia, Ann Arbor and Monroe.

"One benefit of this is that it may make the U.S. force its allies to up their own defense funds and establish a better reciprocity. We can't carry Europe and the Far East on our backs forever. It's time for NATO to go out and fund its own programs for defense," Pursell said.

VOTING FOR the Broomfield resolution were Pursell and James Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge.

Among those opposing it were Democrats David Bonior of Mt. Clemens and William Brodhead of Detroit.

Ford and Dennis Hertel, D-Detroit, left before the final vote.

Blanchard said he was disappointed with the resolution, but said the final draft calls for a reduction.

"I would have preferred a freeze, but this is better than nothing," he said.

Brodhead described the "Broomfield-Reagan" proposal as one that says, "We should have equal ability in arms before we have a freeze."

"It says 'Let's continue the status quo. Only when we are equal, then we can talk about arms control agreement.'"

"I favor a freeze and this proposal is not a freeze," he added.

While Broomfield said his proposal was a reduction tactic, he said he didn't believe it would satisfy nuclear freeze support groups.

The resolution goes to the Republican-controlled Senate, where it is expected to pass.

County drain units merged, job cut

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners voted 21-0 to reorganize the office of the Drain Commissioner George Kuhn leaving one person without a job.

Because of the depressed state of the economy and a reduced workload, the drain commissioner's water and sewer unit was merged with the drain engineering unit. The combined unit will be called "engineering."

The merger eliminates the position of chief of drain maintenance in the maintenance unit.

However, the position of chief engineer III will be created.

Commissioner William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, asked that every effort be made to find a job for the laid-off person.

Commissioners not voting were Wallace Gabler, R-Royal Oak; Donald Geary, D-Ferndale; George Jackson, R-Birmingham; Robert Page, R-Birmingham; and John Peterson, R-Rochester.

Gilbert hears OU case arguments

Arguments were heard Wednesday in the case of the Michigan attorney general versus the Oakland University Board of Trustees.

Oakland Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert said she would issue a written opinion at a later date in deciding whether OU trustees violated the state's Open Meetings Act when they selected Joseph Champagne as president in 1980.

Richard Headlee, OU board chairman and Republican gubernatorial hopeful, has been able to escape any repercussions of a possible unfavorable decision because of numerous postponements in the case.

ATTORNEY General Frank Kelley, who filed suit against the trustees in November 1980, charged that closed-door interviews of presidential candidates violated the Open Meetings Act.

Kelley is seeking \$500 in civil damages from each of OU's eight trustees. While there are both Democrats and Republicans on the board, the most politically potent name is Headlee's.

Headlee was appointed to the board by Gov. Milliken. After Headlee deliv-

ered blistering criticism of his policies, the governor said aloud he was sorry he had ever appointed Headlee to the post.

A spokesman for Kelley said that while many complaints about violation of the Open Meetings Act come to the attorney general's office, the complaint from OU was selected because it is a statewide institution and because the OU board's violations have been flagrant.

THE TRUSTEES' attorney, James Howlett, of Bloomfield Hills, maintains that because the trustees met in small groups of less than a quorum, they were not bound by the Open Meetings Act.

Assistant Attorney General Deborah Devine, however, argues that the group deliberately circumvented the law by breaking into small committees, each less than a quorum, and meeting simultaneously in the same building to conduct interviews with presidential candidates on Oct. 17 and 18, 1980.

"The defendants, with the advice of their counsel, subdivided into two

groups of less than a quorum to conduct interviews to avoid the requirements of the Open Meetings Act," her brief said.

COURT DOCUMENTS state that on Dec. 6, 1980, six members met in a closed session to discuss the final selection of president. Three days later, a public vote was taken, with the same six members who attended the closed

session voting to hire Champagne.

The Open Meetings Act, Kelley maintains, says public bodies must hold interviews with candidates for public office in an open meeting.

Howlett argues that all of the candidates for the university presidency requested confidentiality.

But Devine's brief countered: "We're talking about a \$70,000-a-year public office and the public interest is strong."

County sets 5 evening meetings

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners, answering a plea of several citizens, has set five night meetings to determine if it will stimulate more public interest.

In a 15-5 vote, the commissioners voted to establish board meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of September and at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of October, November and December. Commissioners Robert Page, R-Birmingham, and John Peterson, R-Rochester, voted with the minority.

The night meetings were established on a trial basis to see if there will be enough interest generated to be worth the extra costs incurred by employing county personnel at staggered hours.

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