

Battle over Allo appointment likely

By Tim Richard
staff writer

If you thought last spring's income tax battle was a donnybrook, wait until you see this fall's battles over Clifford Allo and Gov. James J. Blanchard's "Michigan Strategic Fund."

Allo, a former United Auto Workers official who lives in Birmingham, is Blanchard's designee to chair the Workers Compensation Appeals Board.

"Blas" is a word you'll hear a lot. Already two area senators — Republicans Doug Cruce of Troy and Robert Geake of Northville — are calling on Blanchard to withdraw the nomination.

It's not, said Cruce, that Blanchard isn't entitled to have someone of Allo's views on the board. Rather, it's that the chair has certain agenda powers that the ordinary voting member doesn't have.

ALLO IRRITATED lawmakers and businesspeople as he led the UAW's opposition to workers compensation reforms. Apparently he was pretty vehement.

"In 1981," said Cruce, "the Legislature, in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation, made reforms in the Workers Compensation Act which have had a significant effect on improving Michigan's business climate. The Legislature was able to hammer out a reform package that took the first step toward making workers compensation equitable to both employer and employee."

"At the time of the debate, Allo, in the employment of the UAW, was a vociferous opponent of these reforms who fought hard and long to prevent their passage."

"Passionately one-minded" was Geake's characterization of Allo — "an ideologue incapable of properly performing the quasi-judicial tasks of the appeal board."

Significantly, they asked Blanchard to withdraw Allo's name as chairman and threatened to vote against confirmation, but they said nothing about his being just another member of the board.

Suburban businesspeople are joining the cry: Jerome Grossman of General Fasteners Co. of Livonia, Joe Tate Associates of Plymouth, the Sheet Metal Contractors Association in Troy, Lear Siegler Inc., Associated General Contractors.

THE HOT POTATO of maneuvering Allo's appointment through the upper body is the job of Senate Majority Leader William Faust of Westland.

Faust doubles as chair of the Senate Administration, Rules and Elections Committee. He has asked Allo to make himself available to senators for questioning but has not scheduled hearings before his committee.

The Capitol corridor rumor mill has it that Faust is reluctant to have the matter aired in hearings. In that case, the appointment could go to the full Senate for a confirmation vote.

Faust is reported to have no objections to Allo.

A Republican staff member said Allo is making the rounds, meeting Democratic senators. He also has called on Senate Minority Leader John Engler of Mt. Pleasant and Sen. Connie Binsfeld of Maple City. They are the two Republican members of Faust's Administration Committee.

ALLO, MEANWHILE, announced a new procedure for disputed injury cases to assure impartial handling.

It calls for constant rotation of the makeup of the five three-member panels which hear appeals in compensation cases. Allo said cases will be assigned in numerical order to these panels.

All will be handled by staff without his becoming involved, and be promised not to "steer" cases to any particular panel.

Each panel will have representatives from labor, management and the public.

If Allo intended to allay the fears of business, he is in trouble. James Barrett, president of the state Chamber of Commerce, said the new procedures do not erase his concerns over Allo's bias toward organized labor.

"The procedures are a small part of his administrative responsibility," said Barrett. "The real problem is you've got a chairman who is a spokesman and policy person in the administration to comment on and interpret the law and suggest changes."

CHALK UP Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville, as one vote against Blanchard's "Michigan Strategic Fund" — the \$54-million fund that guarantees and underwrites loans to fledgling firms which show promise of providing jobs.

"It would be a negative intrusion of public money into the private sector," said Geake, whose district includes Redford, Livonia, Plymouth and Canton.

"We would be better off improving the business climate through 1) reduction of business costs in workers compensation, unemployment compensation and revision of the single business tax, and 2) reduction of regulations."

Underline that phrase about the single business tax. At a public hearing recently, Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, raised the possibility of Republicans' supporting the strategic fund in return for changes in

state capitol news

the SBT. Sen. John Kelly, D-Detroit, didn't seem interested in a deal.

SENATE MAJORITY Leader William Faust of Westland is introducing a four-bill package to implement Proposal A, approved by voters last November.

Remember Proposal A? It was a constitutional amendment ending the immunity of state legislators from civil arrest and civil procedures while the Michigan Legislature is in session. Immunity was considered a fine idea when the Legislature met a few months a year, but nowadays its sessions are practically year-long.

The gist of Faust's bills:

• If a legislator is party in a civil action while the Legislature is in session, the civil action is to be postponed without motion to a non-session day. It must be at least two days after the date the Legislature adjourns either temporarily or for the year.

• If delay would harm the plaintiff's rights, a court could continue the civil action on a non-session day during the legislative session. This could apply during (say) paternity cases or attachment and sale of perishable goods.

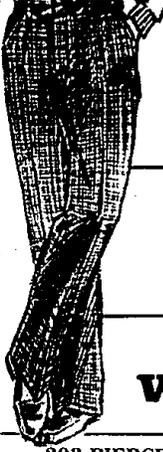
• A legislator called as a witness could have his/her testimony postponed to the earliest practicable non-session day.

WAYNE COUNTY Sheriff Robert Ficano has lined up help from state Rep. Justine Barnes, D-Westland, in his jail space problem.

Ficano gave Barnes a tour of the new jail and won her support in sponsoring a bill to allow double-bunking of prisoners in the new jail, scheduled to be opened Dec. 1 but more likely to open in spring.

"Let me stress that the proposal is for partial double-bunking — that is, only 384 cells are involved out of 578," said Ficano. "This bill must be seriously considered. Double-bunking is economically feasible and provides safe and humane conditions for the inmate population."

Ficano's earliest request to the state Corrections Commission was turned down.



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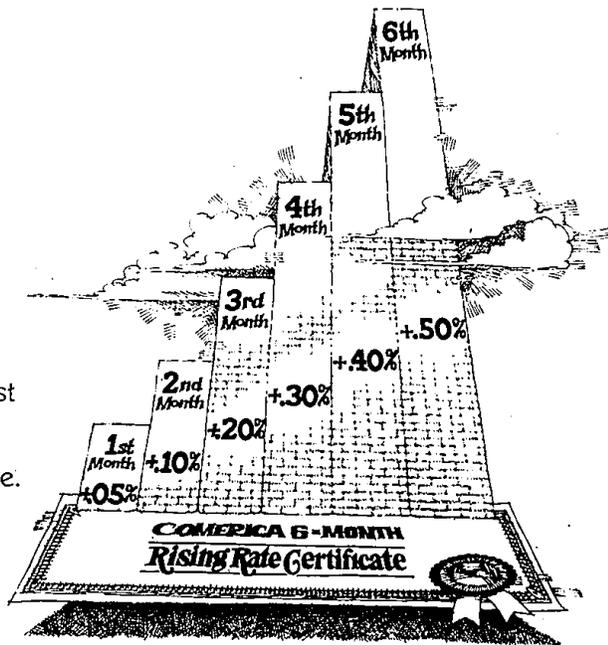
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Bench, board are 'sheltered'

The Haven, a shelter for victims of domestic violence, will open its doors to judges and Oakland County commissioners this evening to say thank you for a \$42,000 grant.

This support from the court and the commissioners literally means the survival of Haven's services," said Debi Cain, executive director of the program.

For security reasons, Haven's location is not revealed.

Accepting plaques will be Circuit Judge Steven N. Andrews and Lillian Moffitt, vice chairperson of the board of commissioners.

A 1980 law requires that 91% of each \$30 received from marriage licenses in the county must be appropriated by the county board and distributed by the Circuit Court for services to combat problems of divorce, domestic violence and child abuse.

Demand for Haven's services has tripled in a year, said Cain. It provides temporary shelter and support services to victims of domestic violence and their children.