

Making the rounds

Engler contends abortion won't be issue in race for governor

By Philip A. Gherman
staff writer

Contrary to political leaders, pro-life and pro-choice advocates nationwide, state Sen. John Engler said he does not believe abortion will be an issue in the 1990 Michigan governor's race.

Engler, the Republican Senate majority leader from Mount Pleasant, was in Oakland County Tuesday as part of his "exploratory" campaign to run for governor against incumbent Democrat James Blanchard.

Besides the abortion issue, Engler

also said he believed enough money is in the general fund to improve education statewide without a tax increase, and said he opposes both proposals on the November ballot to increase the sales tax by one-half cent or by 2 cents.

HE ALSO SAID he thinks school equity and quality issues "are both able to be solved within the current resources of the state." Equity is defined as dollars spent per pupil per district; some districts' spending is disproportionate, which affects quality.

"Any decision we make (on abor-

tion) or any failure to act is immediately appealable to the general population and that's where the decision is going to be fought out," Engler offered as his rationale for why the issue won't play a major part in the governor's race.

He said he would support a bill restoring parental consent, which is opposite the law in effect today that states a minor may seek and receive an abortion without first seeking parental or judicial approval.

"In effect what the Supreme Court's done with the Missouri decision is really tossed it in the laps of all Michigan voters," Engler said in reference to Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services.

"We're not in the position where the Michigan Legislature can make a final decision."

However, Engler said he probably would assign an abortion-reform bill drafted by Sen. Jack Welborn, R-Kalamazoo, to the Human Resources Committee chaired by Sen. Fred Dillingham, R-Fowlerville, one of

the state's best-known abortion opponents.

Welborn's bill parallels Missouri's regulations on how and when a woman may receive an abortion. Engler's decision on which committee would receive the bill was due yesterday.

ON EDUCATION, Engler said he believes there is a need to rebuild education's share of the general fund budget, but he doesn't think that money should come from the November ballot proposals.

Michigan's education dollars come from three sources: the school aid fund, which basically is sales tax; the lottery; and the general fund.

"I think they (the proposals) both represent, particularly A, a \$400 million tax increase with not even a dollar's worth of property tax relief," Engler said. "They're wrongly conceived. They suggest that the only way we can help education is by raising taxes and they avoid the question of new priorities, not new taxes."



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— Sen. John Engler

He acknowledged that the size of the Detroit Public Schools "makes it the single greatest problem." But he said "Detroit doesn't have an equity problem. They are not classically de-

fined as an underfunded district." He said he supported the HOPE state, which called for drastic changes and won election to the Detroit school board, "early on."

Senator has eye on top state post

State Sen. John Engler, who represents Mount Pleasant and spends the majority of his time in Lansing, got a taste of traffic gridlock Tuesday in Oakland County.

He didn't seem to care for it much. When asked how he would improve the traffic situation if elected governor, of Michigan, his immediate response was to continue lobbying to get federal funds released for road development and improvement.

Engler also didn't think the separation of the road commission from the rest of the county government was detrimental.

But who is this man who wants to be governor? John M. Engler is:

- A Libra; he was born Oct. 12,

1948 in Mount Pleasant. He is one year younger than Arlo Guthrie, according to today's horoscope.

- A graduate of Michigan State University with a bachelor's degree in science. He also has a law degree from Cooley Law School.

- The state Senate majority leader and a member of the legislative council, retirement board of trustees and government operations committees.

- A divorced Roman Catholic.
- A former member of the House, elected in 1970, '72, '74 and '76.

- Representing the 25th District, which includes Clare, Gratiot, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland and Oshtemo counties.

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