

Consent bill: an election issue

By Tim Richard
staff writer

The parental consent abortion bill will become a 1990 legislative issue, though politicians dislike it in an election year.

"I don't like to get involved in abortion from a political standpoint," said Sen. Fred Dillingham, R-Fowlerville. "We had no choice but to send it back to committee."

"It" is House Bill 5103, which the House passed Dec. 7 after attaching a so-called "suicide amendment."

Senate Democrats wanted to take up the bill immediately on Dec. 11. But the Republican majority, joined by two outstate Democrats, sent it to Dillingham's Human Resources Committee.

He expects to hold a hearing early in February and report it out to the Senate floor by mid-February.

RIGHT TO LIFE of Michigan supports the bill, which would require girls 17 and under to obtain either parental or probate court consent before obtaining an abortion.

But RTL dislikes the suicide

amendment, which was added on the House floor. RTL lobbyist Ed Rivet explained.

"It would allow a minor to have an abortion without parental consent if she presented a note to the abortionist from a certified psychologist or psychiatrist saying she was suicidal."

"We've seen it in other states. When Colorado and Oregon were liberalizing their abortion laws (in the 1960s), they allowed abortion in four cases — rape, incest, physical health and mental health of the mother."

"A woman would be referred to a sympathetic psychiatrist. It can all be said and done in 15 minutes. The potential for abuse is there."

"If a child is suicidal, then there's a serious dysfunction that parents should know about. Letting her have a secret abortion is not going to solve it."

SENATE MAJORITY leader John Engler, R-Mount Pleasant, and Dillingham agreed to hold up the bill.

"I have a problem with the amendment. It circumvents the intent of the bill," said Dillingham.

"The House made a major change in

that bill, and did it in the last hours of the session."

The Senate passed its own parental consent bill in October. But for political reasons, the House took up its own bill, sponsored by Rep. Michael Griffin, D-Jackson.

"There was a strong feeling Mike Griffin was a better person to be sponsor because he's a Democrat," said Dillingham.

Gov. James Blanchard, a pro-choice Democrat, is expected to veto the bill, and the pro-life majority in the Legislature is likely to attempt an override.

"The override would start in the House," Dillingham said. "If we can

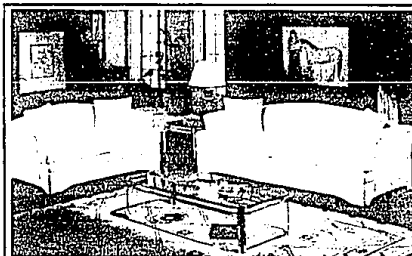
get the votes to override in the House, we can easily override in the Senate."

The Senate bill passed with a two-thirds majority, but the House vote was eight votes short of two-thirds.

BLANCHARD and the Democrats were said to want to avoid voting on an abortion bill during an election year. Senate Democrats made three separate attempts to get a vote Dec. 11, before the Legislature recessed for 1989.

"What you picked up is a very strong political feeling in Lansing," Dillingham agreed.

His committee usually meets at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays in Lansing.



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Right to Life - Lifespan rally

Right to Life — Lifespan of Metro Detroit is holding its annual Rally for the Unborn, 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21, at Kennedy Square, Detroit.

Detroit City Councilmen Keith Butler and Jack Kelley and Martha Jones, youth director, Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOSAD) will be featured speakers.

Church bells at some area churches will also be tolled 25 times at noon that day and the next day in memory of the 25 million abortions performed in the United States since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 ruling legalizing abortion. Additional information on both events is available by calling Right to Life — Lifespan, 261-2757.

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