# Equal education amendment eyed for ballot

A House panel is advancing a state constitutional amendment requiring "equal opportunity for education" amid fears it will hurt affluent sub-

CHAIRMAN William Keith, D-Gardon City, won passage of the plan, known as House Joint Resolution Q, and sent it to the House floor. The vote was 13-4 with two absent. Area members voting yes were Keith and Justine Barns, D-Westland. amul tears it will hurt affluent suburbs in the aname of helping the poor.
The treasure also would raise the
proportion of the state budget spent
on all education — kindergarten
through the doctorate level — from
the current 45.6 percent to 52 percent in five years.
"Educational opportunity has been

determined by property wealth," the sponsor, Rep. Kirk Profit, D-Ypsi-lanti, told the Education Committee Tuesday.

## land. Voting no were Bankes and James Kosteva, D-Canton. Their major school districts get no state ald and are fighting Keith's efforts to eliminate their categorical aids. Help for adoptive parents

A workshop to help distressed adoptive parents will be held June 1, 8 am to 12:30 pm, at the Ramada Inn Telgraph at 1696 in Southfield.

When Love is Not Enough: Issues and Strategies for Adoptive Parents and Strategies for Adoptive Parents

But an opponent, Rep. Lyn Bankes, R-Livonia, said, "There's no guarantee this will help my school district. I'm elected to represent my district." The measure requires a two-thirds vote of both chambers to go on the Nov. 6 ballot and majority approval by voters to become part of the state constitution.

constitution.

HJRQ would:

\* Require the Legislature to provide "equal opportunity for education for each public elementary and secondary school pupil." (Currently, the constitution requires only "free" K-12 schooling without racial or religious bias.)

\* Dedicate all lottery profits and interest to the school aid fund.

\* Mandate the Legislature to raise spending for elementary, secondary, community college and higher education to at least 475 aprent of available state revenue in fiscal 1991-2, then to 49, 50.5 and 52 percent by 1994-5.

"Available state revenue in the dedicated school aid fund.

First year fund budget plus the dedicated school aid fund.

First year the provinces is dedicated school aid fund.

First year improvement would be \$179 million, a co-sponsor said.

PROFIT SAID his proposal would

provide "a constitutional founda-tion" for equal opportunity — "not dollar for dollar, it would allow local school districts to enhance their pro-grams."

Bankes said poor school districts which want to sue the state for more ald found their case was badly harmed because the state constitu-tion currently falls to require equal opportunity.

tion currently falls to require equa-opportunity.

"This would allow a judicial op-portunity to override the Legislature and local control," said Bankes, pointing to court rulings in Kentucky and Texas.

"These 100 poor, in-formula school districts need 'equal opportu-nity' for their lawsuit to be success-ful," Bankes said after the meeting.

KEITH SAID said it's wise to lump all education funding into one budget category because "it you have a bulge (population boom) run-ning through the system, you need the flexibility between higher educa-tion and K-12."

Another supporter, Rep. Joe Young Jr., D-Detroit, agreed, calling LENNOX 6

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the measure a "hollstic" system. "I'd want heavy emphasis on K-12," Young added.
Bankes, however, lears the money will be dispersed too broadly, "it can be dispersed without paying for social security, retirement or categoricals," she said.
"If there's a recession," Bankes said, "maintaining 52 percent for education could mean cuts in social services and mental health.
"It was a philosophical vote and not a practical vote. Philosophically, I'm for it — but this is the real world."

A BUSINESS group opposed the measure, but three education groups supported it. Steve Young, lobbyist for the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, objected to the "trigger language of equal opportunity." But he liked the section raising the state budget's percentage for all education. Lobbyist Al Short said the Michigan Education Association, the

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state's largest teachers' union, "fully supports it. Public education has to be priority number one for state gov-ernment."

pe priority number one for state gov-ernment."

Ellen Hoekstra, representing the Michigan Federation Teachers, said that union "strongly supports" the measure. "If we look at other states' court rulings, we see 'equal opportu-nity' is more than an educational buzword, as the State Chamber save."

Tom White, lobbylst for the Michigan Association of School Boards, said local elected officials "support the general concepts. 'Equal opportunity' provides a useful constitutional policy statement."



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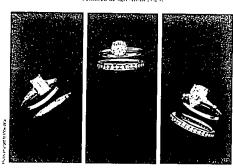
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