

# Gun bills approved, await Blanchard's signature

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

A package of bills to make Michigan's pistol laws uniform and punish violators more severely is awaiting Gov. James Blanchard's signature. The bills would prohibit "street sweepers" — shotgun that can spray nine rounds of ammunition — and armor-piercing bullets. But the state Senate last week eliminated a House-passed requirement that first-time gun buyers take a safety course.

"Mandatory training was the biggest obstacle as viewed by proponents of the pre-emption bill," said Rep. James Kosteva, D-Canton, a major player in the deal.

"THE SENATE stripped it out. We accepted a compromise where the State Police and a review board would develop a brochure and pamphlet. All pistol purchasers would take a test, akin to 'what every driver should know.' The objective is to see that some training takes place,"

Kosteva said. Buyers would be given the answers they got wrong.

"I've never seen information that can relate the benefits of safety training," said Kosteva. But he said research does show the benefits of a personal background check and seven-day waiting period.

THE BIG ISSUE was House Bill 5436, stripping local governments of the power to establish their own pistol licensing ordinances. It will af-

fect Detroit and East Lansing. It was a home rule issue as well as a gun issue.

"Some of our cities would like to take stronger measures with regard to the control of firearms," said Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, who vetoed no. "It may be that the Constitution has certain protections about what people have a right to bear, but the society also has a right to protect itself by imposing appropriate rules."

Although voting yes, Rep. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield, called it dis-

gusting that the Senate Tuesday stayed in session eight hours beyond its normal noon adjournment time but couldn't take up other important matters.

HERE IS HOW Observer & Eccentric area legislators voted on HB 5437, the pre-emption measure: Senate — passed 23-10. Yes votes were Doug Crone, R-Troy, Richard Fessler, R-Commerce, Robert Geake, R-Northville, and Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford. Nays were Faxon and William Faust, D-Westland.

An excused absence was given to George Z. Hart, D-Dearborn.

House — passed 73-7. Yes votes were Lyn Banks, R-Livonia, Justine Barnes, D-Westland, John Bennett, D-Redford, Berman, Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, David Hontigman, R-West Bloomfield, William Keith, D-Garden City, Kosteva, Judy Miller, R-Birmingham, and Wilfred Webb, D-Hazel Park. Missing the vote were Mat Dunaskis, R-Lake Orion, Gerald Law, R-Plymouth, and Gordon Sparks, R-Troy.

# 'Leadership Oakland' urged to combat subtle racism

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Community leaders must increase corporate consciousness to combat racism and sexism, participants in "Leadership Oakland" have been reminded.

While most companies have policies against discrimination, in accordance with federal and state laws, they must be supplemented with personal commitment, according to Richard Lobenthal, director of the Michigan Anti-Defamation League. "We must let co-workers know that ethnic or sexist jokes are not acceptable," Lobenthal said, giving an example of how individuals can —

and must — combat discrimination. ETHNIC OR SEXIST jokes are ultimately a form of hostility, Lobenthal said. To tolerate such jokes is to send a message that subtle racism or sexism is acceptable.

Lobenthal was one of the principal speakers at the day-long conference Wednesday at the Farmington Hills corporate headquarters of Michigan National Bank.

About 55 people — representing a cross section of Oakland County — attended the conference focusing on Racism and Ethnic Diversity. Segments included a film clip of comedian Bill Cosby talking about racism and discussions on some of the factors contributing to discrimination

— such as ignorance, prejudice, community climate and ethnicity.

The key to combating racism and sexism in the workplace, Lobenthal said, is raising the consciousness of both the company and individuals within it.

A company's management should take action against the individual who perpetrates discrimination — by telling inappropriate jokes or by overt or subtle acts of discrimination.

BUT MANAGEMENT must also notify other workers within the or-

ganization — the audience — to enforce the idea that discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated and in fact will be addressed and possibly punished.

Some of the discussion focused on Southfield and remarks attributed to some city officials to the effect that too many black residents would lower property values and contribute to urban blight.

As if to illustrate the complexity of the factors and attitudes contributing to urban blight, Lobenthal cited the Open Housing Center of Oakland County, saying some people,

including blacks, regard it with mixed feelings.

The Open Housing Center is a not-for-profit agency supported by private and governmental donations, including the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Southfield public schools. It opened an office earlier this year in Farmington.

Lobenthal said some people ap-

plaud the center and its efforts to assure equal housing opportunities throughout Oakland County.

Others, however, view it with suspicion as an agency to direct blacks and other minorities away from the southern part of the county.

Some view the center's activities "as a means of diluting black political power," Lobenthal said.

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