

Senate approves teachers' right to 'reasonable force'

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Teachers would be allowed to use "reasonable force" to maintain discipline under a bill that has passed the state Senate and gone to the House.

Senate Bill 338 won 33-1, with all area senators voting yes except William Faust, D-Westland, who was excused.

But it brought a lengthy and bitter protest from Lana Pollack, D-Ann Arbor, author of a 1988 law that prohibited corporal punishment in public schools.

"IT TAKES a step backward," said Pollack. "There's nothing wrong with the current law, but current law has been misinterpreted — I suggest purposefully so — by the Michigan Education Association, which has sent out inaccurate and inflammatory memos to teachers. Teachers receiving such explanations of the current law would be

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— State Sen. Lana Pollack, Opponent of bill

spoiled. "The evidence was overwhelming (in 1988 hearings) that corporal pun-

ishment was used inappropriately. "The MEA is a poor loser," Pollack said, charging the teachers union which represents most suburbs told teachers they couldn't restrain

unruly students. She called MEA "an 800-pound gorilla that wants to make sure that they maintain veto power over this Legislature as a whole."

SPONSOR JOHN Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, chair of the Senate Education Committee, hailed the "strong bipartisan support" given the measure, which he said clarifies the definition of corporal punishment.

"Now we'll have some clear guidelines that define specific situations where physical intervention would

be permissible," Schwarz said. Those situations are:

- To remove a disruptive pupil from a classroom, school bus or school premises.
 - To quell a disturbance.
 - To prevent a pupil from inflicting harm on himself.
 - To maintain order in a school-related setting.
 - To take a weapon away from a student.
- Non-public schools again are excluded from the bill.

Bill would let state suspend drug dealers' drivers' licenses

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Michigan would use drivers' license suspensions as a tool against both adult drug dealers and minors who drink under bills passed by the state Senate.

All go to the House, where they face an uncertain future.

The Senate approved, 29-6, a pair of bills to require a 30-day drivers license suspension for anyone committing drug-related offenses. Some 80,000 licenses a year could be affected.

SEN. JACK Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, was the only area member voting no. He protested that the state "would be impeding their opportunities at both securing legitimate employment and functioning

within our community. I think it is counterproductive. It would only further compound the problems of their being re-incarcerated for driving without a license.

Sen. Virgil Smith, D-Detroit, said the bills amount to "mixing apples and oranges" because the drug offenses may not be driving related.

The bills would mandate the suspensions for 90 days for the second offense and six months for subsequent offenses. Sponsor was Jack Welborn, R-Kalamazoo.

THE SENATE approved 30-4 even tougher bills affecting minors, sponsored by Robert Geake, R-Northville.

A minor would have his license suspended for six months for a first offense or until age 18 for a list of offenses.

The list includes drunk driving, impaired driving, transporting alcohol, consuming alcohol, and using or dealing drugs. An estimated 13,300 youngsters per year could be affected.

All area senators voted yes except Faust, who was absent.

"It's going to be a gimmick," said Sen. Don Koivisto, D-Ironwood, who voted no. "Everyone wants to show how tough they are on drunk driving and how tough they are on drugs because MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) has gotten so powerful."

"But sometimes you go overboard. This is a case where you are saying if your teenager gets caught with a beer, they lose their license, their insurance goes up another couple thousand dollars, and they are unable to drive," Koivisto said.

Senate moves to ban zoning against local music teachers

The state Senate has moved to stop local governments from zoning day-care centers and home music teachers out of residential areas. All go to the House.

Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, was sponsor of the bill to allow licensed family day-care homes (up to six children) and group day-care homes (up to 12) in residential zones in cities. (Similar laws affecting villages and townships were enacted last year.)

Senate Bill 486 was adopted on a

32-3 vote, with all area senators voting yes except William Faust, D-Westland, who had an excused absence.

Sen. Gil DiNella, D-East Detroit, voted yes but protested that "it takes the right away of a local unit of government to govern locally... What you have is automobiles and vans coming and going, picking up children in the neighborhood."

Local units could still inspect the homes and restrict operating times

to 16 hours a day. The Senate gave 30-5 approval to bills protecting the right of music teachers to give lessons in their homes or the homes of pupils. All area senators voted yes except Faust, who was excused.

The bills were sponsored by Sens. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, and Faxon after a nationally publicized battle involving a West Bloomfield pianist. SB 535-34 amend laws governing municipalities, townships and counties respectively.

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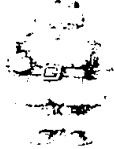
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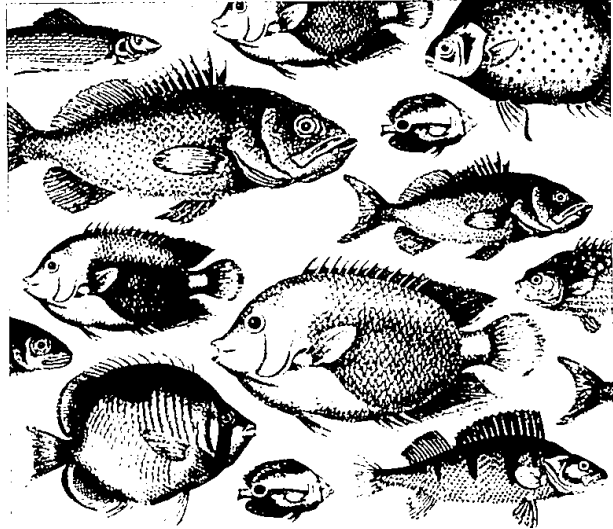
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