Election ethics Bills hit pre-election mailings

BY TIM RICHARD STAFF WRITER

Right in the middle of a cam-paign, a state Senate panel is work-ing on bills to reform ethics and prohibit state-paid pre-election

prohibit state-paid pre-election mailings by Jawmakers. The Senate Government Opera-tions Committee's public bearing was due at 10 a.m. today (Monday) in Birminglana's Board of Educa-tion building: 550 W. Merrill. Future hearings are acheduled for Aug. 6 at Muskegon Community College and Aug. 24 in the State Li-brary in Leaning. "These bills provide an excellent opportunity to restore truets and in-

opportunity to restore trust and in-tegrity in state government," said Karen Holcomb-Merrill, executive director of Common Cause, which

director of Common Cause, which endorsed the package. "This ethics package will bring nuch-needed accountability to the process," said Gov. John Engler, who voluntarily reported this 1991 gross income was \$110,443, as would be required under one of the bills. Packer show reported that in 1988.

bills. Engler also reported that in 1988 and '89 he accepted honoraria of \$800 and \$1,300, respectively. One bill in the package would ban re-ceipt of honoraria, a device by which interest groups pay favored politicians thousands for routine luncheen speeches. Mailings cut

Senators aren't up for re-election

How to start a business in Oakland County The "Starting a Business in Osk-land County" guide is now avail-shie through the small business off-ice of the Oskland County Econom-ic Development Division (EDD). The 44-page, 11-chapter guide in-

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until 1994, giving chairman Phil Arthurhultz, R-Whitehall, ample time to work on the package. Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham, Is a member. In the second sec

Arthurhultz is Senate mejority floor leader, the traffic cop who sets the sgenda for sessions. His Gov-ernment Operations Committee deals mainly with the internal state working

workings. It rarely gets much public atten-tion. Notable exception: acathing hearings over Engler's appoint-ments to the Natural Resources

ments to the Natural Resources Commission. Biggest change ordinary Michi-ganians could see would be an end to pre-election "newsletters" from their legislators.

State elective officeholders would be prohibited from using state funds to mail 200 or more pieces of substantially similar material be-tween the election filing deadline (May) and the general election (No-uembar) vember).

There's a flip side to this story: At least one representative says her newsletter was delayed for weeks by House staffers, giving the false im-pression she was using it as a cam-

cludes sections on writing a busi-ness plan, marketing, financial plans and funding.

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Officeholders and candidates would be barred from accepting gift (except from immediate family members), complimentary meals, transportation and accommoda-tions. Violators could be fine dup to \$1,000 and jaited for 90 days. Candidates would have to file a "personal financial disclosure statement" (PPDS) with copies of their tax returns and list of income-producing sesets and loans.

(F)11A

Ethics panel

Centerpiece is a proposed "Legis-lative Ethics Commission" to an-swer questions from senstors, rep-resentatives and their staffs about ethical conduct.

The LEC could investigate complaints and hold public hearings when preliminary findings merit further action.

LEC members would be appoint-ed by legislative leaders but could not be legislators, staffers, party of-ficials or candidates.

Campeign finance law enforce-ment would be tightened. All con-tributions, noi just those over \$20, would have to be reported. Higher penalites with no waivers and no limita would be imposed on candi-dates who file late expense reports. Officeholder expense funds (OEFs) would be eliminated.

\$10 by sending a check made pay-sble to Oakland County to: Leo Linkenmeyer, Oakland County Eco-nomic Development Division, 1200 North Telegraph Road, Pontiac

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