

# Senate education plan is assailed by lawmaker

BY TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

A member of the state Senate committee on the Michigan Model for health education disagreed with every conclusion drawn by chairman Gili DiNello, R-Macomb County.

"For the last 18 months, I have been witness to a senseless and systematic attack on the freedom to learn," said Sen. Jim Berryman, D-Adrian.

The Lenawee County freshman, a former mayor, blamed "vocal and well-organized extremist organizations" for the attack on the Michigan Model.

Berryman said DiNello's report used only critical material, much of it repetitious and undocumented.

## 'Anti-family'

DiNello, a maverick Democrat during much of his 18-year legislative career, recently switched to the Republican column. He had been the only Democrat to chair any committee in the GOP-run Senate.

Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, another member of the panel is siding with DiNello.

"I've read both reports," he said Tuesday. "We're revising the DiNello draft, but it's not a significant revision. The general tone

will be as you've seen in the original draft. I plan to sign it."

Geake said he could identify three groups attacking the Michigan Model: the DADS Foundation of Kalamazoo, Kraft Bell's study group in Northville, and Bible-based churches. Geake said there were probably "several groups of concerned parents who probably had communication and read each other's newsletters."

Geake, a child psychologist who spent much of the summer and fall campaigning for Congress, represents Livonia, Plymouth, Redford Township, Plymouth Township and Canton Township in the state Senate.

Another member of the panel is Sen. Doug Carl, R-Macomb County, who also is expected to side with DiNello.

Using the catch phrase "concerned parents," many attackers of the Michigan Model have called it anti-family and asked for its abolition.

DiNello's report — released before his committee could vote on it — called for abolition of the State Board of Education, a federal investigation of the Department of Education, sale of the Michigan, and no state curriculum legislation with one exception: mandatory teaching of premarital sexual abstinence. He blamed "societal engineers" for trying to take over parents' roles.

## Repeated stories

Berryman said DiNello's report "neither acknowledges nor reports the hours of testimony from physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, clergy, academicians, parents, teachers, curriculum directors, superintendents, state and local school board members who praised the Michigan Model."

Far from hatching the model in secrecy, Berryman said, the state board and a steering committee held repeated public meetings under the Open Meetings Act.

Berryman found a contradiction in DiNello's report. DiNello first says the Michigan Model resulted in "increased adolescent sexual promiscuity" and then said it "has never received appropriate evaluation to determine its

efficacy in the classroom."

Moreover, Berryman said, "The Michigan Model does teach that abstinence is the best way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Experts in teenage sexuality, however, repeatedly testified during the hearings that teenagers are not choosing to abstain."

Berryman blamed "overactive and suspicious imaginations" for

stories about anti-Christianity, satanism, occultism, New Age and Hindu rituals in the Michigan Model.

Wes Thorp, a DiNello staff member who wrote "every word" of the critical report, said he saw no organized attack on the Michigan Model but attributed it to "pockets of concerned parents" around the state.

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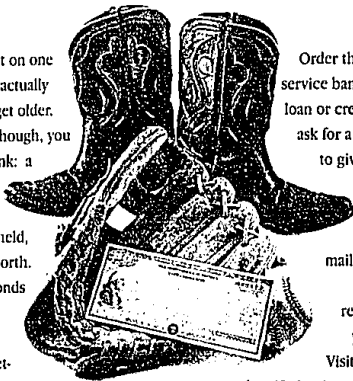
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