

# House to take up unemployment comp cuts

By TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

State Senate Republicans had less than a united front as they last month passed a bill cutting \$1 billion from unemployment compensation benefits.

"Wham, bam, bang... I feel like I stood in front of a train and got run over," said Sen. Fred Dillingham, R-Fowlerville, who cast the only dissenting vote among Republicans. "But the train may come back."

## LANSING

The bill goes to an evenly-split House of Representatives as early as Tuesday where it is likely to be modified. Republican House speaker Paul Hillebrands is expected to extract it from the House Committee on Labor today.

"It's critical to cost competitiveness," said Sen. Joanne Em-

mons, R-Big Rapids, sponsor of Senate Bill 2. "As a grandma, I'm sick and tired of saying goodbye to my son and daughter as they go to jobs in other states."

To 19 Republicans, cutting unemployment comp costs is a key to making Michigan competitive for business expansion against Indiana and the South. "It's a tax on job creation," said Sen. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield.

To Dillingham and 16 Democrats, however, it amounts to put-

ting the burden "on the backs of chronically unemployed people." Added Sen. George Z. Hart, D-Dearborn: "It was railroaded under the pretense of reform. It cuts benefits for the unemployed. We're not addressing the needs of the unemployed."

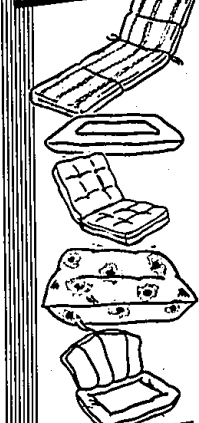
Dillingham's chief complaint was that only \$170 million of the cut would go back to employers, large and small. The other \$800 million-plus will still be collected

and go into a trust fund.

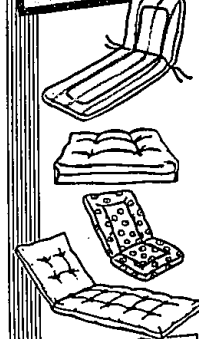
"It takes that money out of the economy," said Dillingham. Although the Livingston County portion of his district is insulated from the economic downturn, he said Shiawassee County residents, many of whom used to work in Flint, are hard hit.

"Michigan would go from sixth in the nation (in benefit levels) to eighth," said Honigman. "That's still very high."

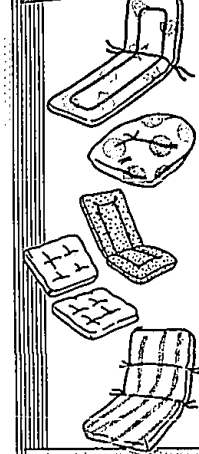
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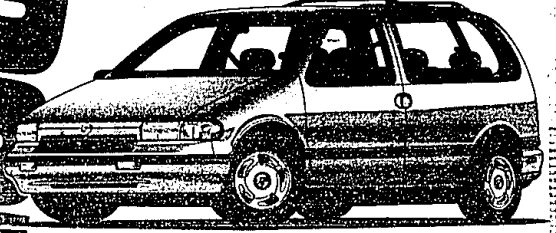
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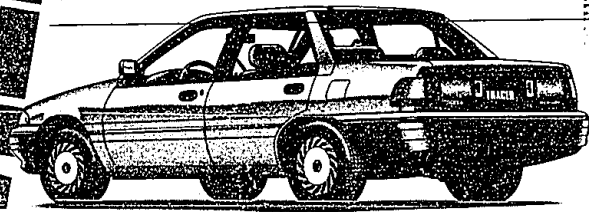
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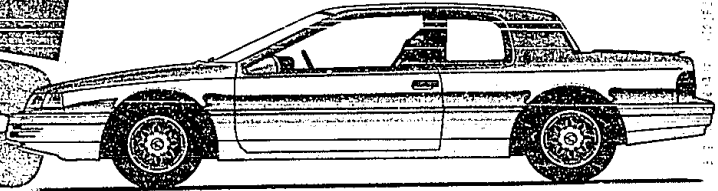
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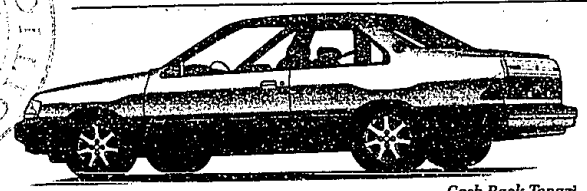
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