

Campaign rules changes at issue

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

To Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Debbie Stabenow, it looks like Republican Gov. John Engler wants to change the rules in the middle of the game.

The rules: Senate Bill 695, a campaign finance reform measure pushed through the upper chamber last week.

"There are 219 reasons to vote 'no,'" said Stabenow, a first-term senator from Lansing. "They are the 219 out-of-state contributions to John Engler matched by state taxpayer dollars in 1990."

The bill still would allow candidates to collect contributions from non-Michigan residents, but there would be no matching state campaign dollars for non-residents' contributions.

Sponsor Joanne Emmons, R-Big Rapids, noted pointedly that "several special interest groups help women, but only pro-choice women."

Emmons referred to "Emily's Fund," a nationwide effort helping pro-choice women running for Congress and governorships. "Emily" stands for "early money is like yeast" — it raises the dough.

Stabenow is expected to receive major Emily backing in 1994, as did Sen. Lana Pollock, D-Ann Arbor, when she ran for Congress in 1988.

The Senate passed the bill 20 to 16. All Republicans voted yes except David Honigman of West

Bloomfield and one who was absent. All Democrats voted no except two who were absent.

Currently, a candidate may obtain \$2 in state funds for every \$1 of "qualifying contribution." SB 695 changes the definition of "qualifying contribution" to exclude "a contribution by an individual who resides outside of this state."

It raises, from \$2 to \$3, the amount a Michigan income taxpayer may contribute to the state campaign fund.

Currently a candidate is limited to 66 percent state money for a campaign. SB 695 inserts an absolute cap of \$900,000 in a primary and \$1,125 million for a general election.

The bill raises the overall limit by a candidate's committee from \$1.5 million to \$2 million for one election.

Current law says costs of soliciting contributions are not considered as campaign expenditures. SB 695 removes that section, meaning solicitation costs would become campaign costs.

Meanwhile, Pollack introduced a separate bill to provide 85 percent public financing for legislative candidates who agreed to strict spending limits.



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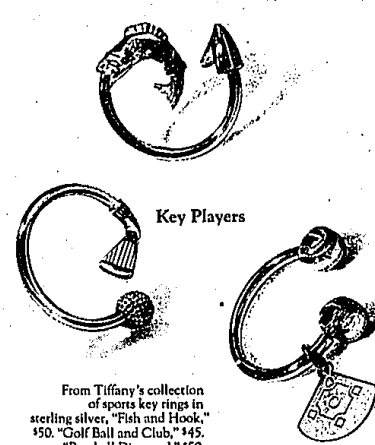
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