

# Farmington's state rep will oppose pay raises

**BY JONI HUBBARD**  
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How much are Michigan state lawmakers worth?

According to the State Officers' Compensation Commission, a lot more than they used to be. Charged by state charter to recommend salaries for the governor, the governor, Supreme Court justices and legislators, the commission has given everyone a substantial increase for 2001 and 2002, but none more than state legislators.

The SOCC has proposed a whopping 36-percent increase at that level, from \$66,981 to \$77,400.

Executive and judicial salaries would be bumped between 18 and 23 percent. The report's recommendation becomes effective on Feb. 1, unless lawmakers vote on it.

District 37 Rep. Andrew Raczkowski said his vote on the resolution won't change in his third and last term. "Every time I've voted for the resolution to reject the pay raise,"

The report is released at the end of December; the House Speaker and Senate Majority Leader have until the end of January to call a session for a vote.

The resolution could pass the

House with just 29 votes, Raczkowski said, because a quorum of 56 lawmakers could call the question. While he understands the idea of compensating people more to attract candidates, he believes the public should be more involved in the process.

"There should be compulsory requirements to vote to accept or reject the report," he said. "That way constituents would know how their legislator feels...I'd rather see this before than after the elections."

Raczkowski aide Dennis Darnold finds irony in the argument about higher salaries attracting candi-

dates.

"I thought the whole idea of term limits was to attract more citizens to run...not necessarily to make money," he said.

If it's offered again by Jackson Republican Clark Bisbee, Raczkowski said he would co-sponsor a law that would have lawmakers approving the SOCC raises not for themselves, but for the next term. The 106th Congress did that in Washington, D.C., last year; President-elect George W. Bush will benefit from a pay raise signed into effect by President Bill Clinton, Raczkowski said.



Andrew Raczkowski

## Winter Fun at the...

### Downtown series begins this Saturday

The Civic Theatre in downtown Farmington will be the site for another winter's worth of fun, beginning 12:30 p.m. Saturday.

The annual "Winter Fun Series," sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, features 45-minute presentations suitable for all ages. The program runs Saturdays through Feb. 17.

Admission each week is \$2 per person, with no charge for infants age 1 or under.

Following is the schedule:

- Jan. 13, Joe Casney, "Family Fun Filled Juggling Show";
- Jan. 20, Doug Scheer, "Mystery of Science";
- Jan. 27, Rich Paul, "Family Fun Ventriloquist Variety Show";
- Feb. 3, The Amazing Clark Puppet Show;
- Feb. 10, Ceri Green, "A Musical Program for Youth of All Ages";
- Feb. 17, Ben Spitzer, "Comedy, Magic and Juggling."

The Civic Theatre is located on Grand River, just east of Farmington Road. For more information, please call the DDA at (248) 473-7276.

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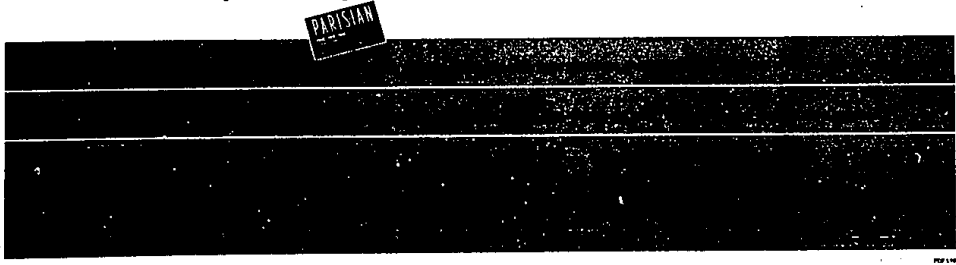
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## Woman is ticketed for leaving kids in her car

**BY JONI HUBBARD**  
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An employee at a Farmington Hills business was ticketed by police last Friday morning, after a TV news station tipped off authorities that she was leaving her children in her car while she worked.

Based on the information received by Chief Bill Dwyer, detectives watched the 28-year-old Wixom woman arrive at the Grand River dry cleaning store in a silver Dodge, at 8:45 a.m. on Jan. 6. She opened the business, leaving two small children in car seats, with the car running.

"The detectives watched until 7:30," Dwyer said. "She hadn't returned to the vehicle."

When confronted, the woman said she'd gotten to work at 7:20, and always left the children in the car for about half an hour, while the building warmed up. Then, she would bring them in while she worked, until 3 p.m.

"The woman became visibly upset...she was shaking and crying, and said she had to leave or her husband would be upset," Dwyer said.

Police allowed her to drive her own car, with the children still in their car seats, to the Hills Police Station, where she was interviewed. Officers suspected abuse in the home and called Protective Services and HAVEN, which provides crisis intervention and counseling for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

When the woman refused intervention, Dwyer said, she was ticketed for child abandonment. The misdemeanor charge carries a penalty of up to 90 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine.

"It's a clear abandonment case," Dwyer said, noting any number of things could happen to endanger the child's life. "You're leaving a child in a car during the coldest time of the year. It's extremely dangerous to leave them like that."

He cited cases in other communities where children have been left in running cars, which were then stolen, and the children were injured. Though officials recognize problems within the family, the mother's determination not to seek help left them with little choice.

"There's a number of issues here," Dwyer acknowledged. "We understand her trying to maintain a job and take care of her children, but I think the children have to come first, their safety and their welfare."