



President Clinton's Address to the Michigan Legislature

Clips • Press Releases

Compiled by House Democratic Caucus Services



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Curtis Hertel
2nd District

Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913
Phone: (517) 373-1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 6, 1997

CONTACT: Speaker Curtis Hertel
(517) 373-1983

HERTEL PRAISES PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO LEGISLATURE; SAYS HOUSE IS READY TO "CONTINUE THE WORK WE STARTED"

LANSING -- Praising President Bill Clinton as "a man of vision and hope who respects the challenges states face" in improving education and reforming welfare, House Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit) said today he would commit the next 50 days of the legislative session to improving public education in Michigan and expanding opportunities for college education.

"The President respects the challenges faced by state government, because he came from state government," Hertel said. "He knows the challenges working families face, because he came from one. He is a man of vision and hope, who is a genuine partner in our effort to help Michigan's families build a secure future."

Hertel accompanied the President back to Washington aboard Air Force One. Tomorrow, the Speaker will attend Vice President Al Gore's appearance before the National Conference of State Legislatures' meeting in Washington.

The Michigan House of Representatives already has passed several bills to ease the transition of welfare recipients into the workforce. Now, Hertel said, the House will turn its attention to improving K-12 education and helping ease the financial burden of families paying for college.

"We will continue the work we started during these first 37 days to help move people into permanent jobs that keep them off welfare," Hertel said, "and commit the coming weeks to passing legislation to restore academic standards to our classrooms, improve early education and make it more affordable for families to pay college tuition."

-MORE-

Earlier this session, the House passed Democratic legislation to increase the state minimum wage to \$5.15 per hour on September 1; create a \$5,000 per child tax deduction for child care for working families; and create a new state Earned Income Tax Credit for lower-income working families. All three bills are essential elements of welfare reform, Hertel said, because they help people find employment and stay employed.

Over the coming weeks, House Democrats will look to pass legislation to provide incentives to school districts to reinstate core curriculum academic standards in math, reading, science, writing and social studies; improve early education by limiting class size and providing all-day kindergarten in some at-risk school districts throughout the state; and expand the state's college tuition tax credit from \$250 to \$500, and make more families eligible to receive it.

"President Clinton came to Michigan, pointed to the future, and asked us to help him take America there," Hertel said. "The President's vision of the future is one where every child attends a quality school that meets the highest standards, where every student can afford to attend college, and where welfare reform lifts people up, rather than keeping them down. That's what House Democrats have been fighting for here in Michigan."

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Curtis Hertel
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State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 5, 1997

CONTACT: Speaker Curtis Hertel
(517) 373-1983
Rep. Sharon Gire
(517) 373-0159
Rep. James Agee
(517) 373-2646

HOUSE COMMITTEE ENDORSES EDUCATION STANDARDS **On Eve of Presidential Address, House Democrats Underscore Importance** **of Academic Standards for Michigan's Schools**

LANSING -- One day before President Clinton is expected to make education standards a cornerstone of his address to the Michigan Legislature, the House Education Committee voted on a bi-partisan basis today to report a bill restoring content standards in math, science, reading, writing and social studies to Michigan's public schools.

"An overwhelming majority of Michigan's parents want academic standards in their children's schools," said House Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit). "House Democrats are working to guarantee an education for Michigan's children which is second to none in the nation."

A recent poll of parents conducted by the State Board of Education, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and leading business groups found that 87 percent of respondents favored content standards for schools. Polling conducted Feb. 17-20 by EPIC/MRA found that only 1 percent of respondents did not want content standards in Michigan's classrooms.

"Content standards reflect the basics students need to know to be successful beyond high school," said House Education Committee Chair Sharon Gire (D-Clinton Township). "You can't guarantee educational quality for children if there are no standards in our public schools."

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The legislation, sponsored by Rep. James Agee (D-Muskegon), establishes incentives for schools to adopt the core curriculum standards developed by the Board of Education as part of the school reforms of 1993. Those rigorous standards, which were never required to be implemented, were the model for Michigan's high school proficiency tests. Last year's proficiency test results revealed that large numbers of high school juniors across the state were failing to learn the basic educational concepts reflected in the tests.

"The results of the proficiency test cry out for standards," Gire said. "When 68 percent of high school juniors aren't proficient in science and 66 percent aren't proficient in writing, we know they are not learning the concepts they need to succeed beyond high school. Standards must be implemented to improve this performance."

"Standardized tests, by their very definition, should reflect the success or failure of educational standards," Agee said. "In this state, we have testing, but no standards to guide schools and students along the way. Content standards guarantee educational quality and ensure that all students receive the core knowledge to be able to compete, both on the tests and in life."

Agee's legislation is one of 12 initiatives House Democrats have pledged to pass during the first 90 days of the legislative session.

"President Clinton has endorsed rigorous educational standards as the best way to prepare today's children for tomorrow's high-tech jobs," Hertel said. "We are proud to work hand-in-hand with the President to provide the best education in the world to Michigan's students."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 5, 1997

CONTACT: Speaker Curtis Hertel
(517) 373-1983

HOUSE SPEAKER: CHARTER SCHOOLS MUST COMPLEMENT, NOT COMPETE WITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LANSING -- House Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit) released a letter today sent to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley in February, voicing his support for President Clinton's education goals and explaining what he perceived to be the differences between the President's vision of charter schools and that which has been promoted by conservative education reformers in Michigan.

"House Democrats have always stood firmly behind our public schools," Hertel said. "We have supported the concept of charter schools in the past, and still do, as long as they do not jeopardize the public education system."

President Clinton unveiled his education agenda, including charter schools, in his State of the Union address in January. The President's education plan strongly supports public schools and calls for teacher certification and a required core curriculum of academic standards.

"The President proposes charter schools only as a part of a broad-based program to strengthen public education," Hertel said. "We stand firmly behind his agenda, and are ready to move forward with academic content standards and teacher certification, both of which the President has endorsed."

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Curtis Hertel
2nd District

Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913
Phone: (517) 373-1983

February 19, 1997

Mr. Richard Riley
Secretary of Education
600 Independence, SW
Washington D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Riley:

As Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, I am writing on behalf of the House Democratic Caucus in support of the President's education agenda.

In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton articulated a ten point plan designed to support the nation's public schools. Many of the issues contained in the President's agenda are also a priority for the new House Democratic Majority. Our caucus has worked to provide Michigan students with a quality education by supporting a mandatory core curriculum, teacher certification, advanced education tax incentives and adequate funding for our schools. However, one of the major battle grounds currently in our state is over the issue of charter schools.

As Democrats, we have always been supportive of innovative and creative proposals to improve our public schools - including charter schools. Our bottom line is increased student achievement. However, the current definition of charter schools in Michigan is problematic and we have seen evidence of decreased test scores and student failure. With the absence of a mandated core curriculum, and certified teachers, our charter schools have been a disappointment.

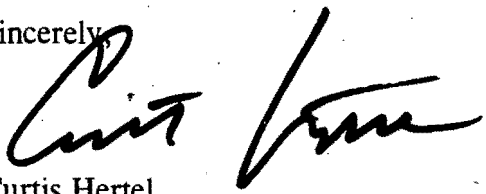
The President's charter school proposal combines all of the necessary elements to make them a success while strengthening our public schools. As I am sure you are aware, Michigan House Democrats have opposed the charter school initiative as instituted by Governor John Engler here in Michigan. In his 1997 State of the State address, Governor Engler declared his alliance with the President over this issue. It is our understanding that the charter schools proposed by the President are radically different than the Michigan system.

The President's charter school proposal, in conjunction with a mandated core curriculum and increased teacher certification, will empower American families and teachers to work for a stronger public school system. The Michigan model of charter schools does not call for the necessary tools to ensure a quality education for all students.

The charter school definition in Michigan has enabled the Governor to create a system that competes with public schools for funding and allows private schools an opportunity to collect Michigan tax dollars. Michigan's state law allows for the conversion of private students to public schools while at the same time placing a cap on the amount of funding a district can receive. As a result, many of our public schools are struggling with lower funding on an already limited budget. I urge your Department, as well as the President, to look at the mistakes of the Michigan system as you develop a funding plan for the charter school proposal.

As always, do not hesitate to contact my office if you require assistance in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hertel", written in a cursive style.

Curtis Hertel
Speaker of the House



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Curtis Hertel
2nd District

Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913
Phone: (517) 373-1983

From: Andi Brancato, Director of Media Relations
Office of the Speaker
Phone: (517) 373-5745

Date: March 4, 1997

INFORMATION REGARDING CREDENTIALS FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VISIT

Reporters, photographers, TV and radio stations wishing credentials for President Clinton's address Thursday are asked to call (517) 373-5745 to request credentials. Media will need to provide name, organization, title (photographer, reporter, etc.), social security number and date of birth. Media will be able to pick up credentials on site at the west entrance of the State Capitol by showing valid photo and press identification. **CREDENTIAL REQUESTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE END OF THE BUSINESS DAY ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5.**

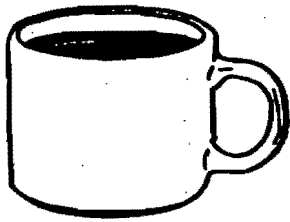
NOTE: MEDIA AT THE AIRPORT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE CAPITOL FOR THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The following information outlines the schedule for President Clinton's visit to Lansing:

Thursday, March 6, 1997:

- 10:15 a.m.** President arrives at Capital City Airport, General Aviation Terminal, Lansing, MI
OPEN PRESS
NOTE: THERE WILL BE A PHOTO OPPORTUNITY WITH THE PRESIDENT AND AREA SCHOOL CHILDREN.
Press entrance: General Aviation Terminal Lobby
Pre-Set: 7-8 a.m. for trucks/cabling
Final access: 9:30-10 a.m.
NOTE: YOU MUST BE IN THE DESIGNATED PRESS LOCATION BY 10 a.m.
- 11 a.m.** President addresses joint session of the Michigan Legislature in House Chambers, State Capitol

Due to space constraints, there will be a **LIMITED NUMBER** of seats available in the House gallery. A media overflow/pool feed room will be located on the ground floor in the



Press Release

STATE SENATOR Dianne Byrum

P. O. Box 30036 · Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536 · (517) 373-1734 · FAX (517) 373-5397

March 5, 1997

CONTACT: Dianne Byrum or
Larry Steckelberg (517) 373-1734

News Alert

Teachers Respond to President Clinton's Speech

(LANSING)---State Senator Dianne Byrum (D-Onondaga) and the Lansing Schools Education Association will host a forum to view a videotape of President Clinton's speech to the Michigan Legislature and to discuss education issues facing our public schools. The forum will be held this Thursday from 4-5 p.m. in the Everett High School small auditorium at 3900 Stabler in Lansing.

After viewing a tape of the President's speech, Senator Byrum will lead a discussion with Ingham county teachers.

Educators will be available to provide their reaction to the President's speech. Individual interviews can be arranged. For further information, contact Senator Byrum's office at 373-1734.

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MICHIGAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS & SCHOOL RELATED PERSONNEL

American Federation of Teachers • AFL-CIO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 5, 1997

Michigan Federation of Teachers & School Related Personnel Welcomes President Clinton & Academic Standards

Praising President Clinton's call for high academic standards and for testing methods to determine if these standards are being met, the Michigan Federation of Teachers & School Related Personnel welcomes President Bill Clinton to Michigan. The President is scheduled to address a joint session of the Michigan Legislature on March 6. His speech will center on academic standards and testing.

"Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has been the leading advocate for high national academic standards," Stated MFT&SRP President Rolfe Hopgood. "The public has indicated its support of meaningful academic standards for good reasons. Expect more of the student and the student will perform better," remarked Hopgood.

High academic standards has been the long-time cause of recently deceased AFT National President Al Shanker. In remarks following President Shanker's February 22 passing, President Clinton praised him for believing "that all children could learn - with high expectations and high standards, high quality teaching and high accountability."

"Michigan has skilled teachers and educational support personnel. This is the primary reason Michigan scored in the top quarter of students in the National Assessment of Education Progress. Mandatory standards would be of significant assistance with the further improvement of public education in Michigan."

A mandatory core curriculum and high academic standards are a major component of the MFT&SRP's Legislative Agenda. "We call for a bi-partisan effort to reinstitute Michigan's core curriculum and adopt high academic standards and standards of conduct," noted Hopgood. "The education of our children must not be a political issue."

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KNOLLENBERG TO INTRODUCE HIGHWAY TAX BILL

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Hills) said Monday he is introducing legislation in Congress to return the 4.3 cent a gallon federal gas tax increase enacted in 1993 to the states. Such a revenue return would mean as much as \$200 million a year to Michigan.

Meanwhile, Sen. Jim Berryman (D-Adrian) will announce Tuesday he is suing the administration of Governor John Engler for failing to appoint members to a transportation-related committee as required by law.

And it was also announced that that planned visit by the governor and the Quadrant leaders to Washington, D.C., on Wednesday to lobby for more federal funding for roads has been postponed in anticipation of President Bill Clinton's visit to the Legislature on Thursday.

Joined by Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Mr. Knollenberg said at a press conference the tax increase enacted in 1993—as part of Mr. Clinton's deficit reduction plan—had never gone to highways but only to support other government spending. His proposal would return the funds to the states in the form of a block grant.

If approved, the proposal could mean up to \$2 billion going to the states of which Michigan's share would be \$200 million, Mr. Knollenberg said.

The proposal is similar to Mr. Engler's call on the federal government to return more funds to the states.

At the press conference, Mr. Patterson also said he was holding back on his call for a petition drive to enact a gas tax increase. Initially, Mr. Patterson had said he would start the drive at the Detroit Chamber of Commerce's Mackinac Island meeting in June if something is not enacted by the Legislature, but Monday he said wanted to give more time to the Legislature and Congress to act on a proposal to put more money to road maintenance.

A petition drive for a gas tax increase would a last resort effort, he said.

CLINTON VISIT SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY MORNING

President Bill Clinton will address a joint session of the Legislature at 11 a.m. Thursday, Governor John Engler's office announced Monday.

Both the President and Mr. Engler will be introduced by Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit), and Mr. Engler will speak briefly before the President, said John Truscott, Mr. Engler's communications chief.

The visit will be very short, just to allow Mr. Clinton to address the Legislature and then return to Washington, D.C. No extended private meetings or functions are planned at this point, Mr. Truscott said.

HOUSE PANEL VOTES TO RESTORE ORIGINAL F.O.I.A. LANGUAGE

A House panel overwhelmingly approved legislation to replace language that had been mysteriously added to a Freedom of Information Act measure in the waning hours of last year's final session night.

The measure (HB 4339), passed by the House Oversight and Ethics Committee on a 13-0 vote, restored original language that lawmakers thought was on the preamble to the bill when they passed it on the final night of last year's session.



MICHIGAN REPORT

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Information Pertinent to Legislative and State Department Activities Since 1906

REPORT NO. 42, VOLUME 36

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1997

NORMALLY OPEN CAPITOL MUST ADJUST TO CLINTON VISIT

Michigan's Capitol, normally an open and easily accessible building, will undergo a transformation by Thursday morning in anticipation of President Bill Clinton's address to a joint session of the Legislature.

For one thing, the building will not be open to anyone Thursday morning except legislators, some regular employees in the building, guests with tickets and news media with credentials. Everyone except the legislators will have to present photo identification, and everyone will go through a metal detector.

Protesters who want, however, will still be able to voice their complaints, but outside, on the east lawn of the Capitol away from where the President will enter the building on the west side.

The large security requirements that surround a presidential visit dictate the changes and some inconveniences that would be unimaginable during a normal business day, or even a regular ceremonial event such as the governor's State of the State address.

Mr. Clinton will become the first sitting president in 90 years to address a joint session of the Legislature when he speaks on education and welfare reform. His address is schedule to begin at 11 a.m., but the joint session will begin earlier, as the Senate is to be in the House chamber by 10:15 a.m.

Presidential visits, while exciting for the local population, are also a bit of a headache as roads are closed off and access to some points is blocked during the time of the motorcade and the address. Lansing Police Department officials refuse to say which streets will be blocked off, but did say that no streets will be blocked off until about 10 a.m. to allow for the normal morning commute into downtown.

People who park on the street adjacent to the Capitol will have to make other arrangements, however, as the police will cover all the meters starting Wednesday night.

Parking will be a problem for some legislators and Capitol staff, however, as the north end of the parking lot behind the Capitol—where House members park—will be closed off. Jerry Lawler of the Capitol Committee said members will be able to park in the legislative annex across from the Capitol on Allegan Street.

A special tent will be erected on the west side of the Capitol for the President to go in and out of the building. Ever since the assassination attempt on former President Ronald Reagan in 1981, the U.S. Secret Service requires that either the President be admitted through an underground entrance or through a tented entrance where the view of him is cut off.

Access to the Capitol from the office complex via the pedestrian bridge will be cut off, and several officials said Secret Service officers along with State Police Capitol Security and Lansing police officers have been checking the rooftops and access points of neighboring buildings.

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MICHIGAN REPORT

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Information Pertinent to Legislative and State Department Activities Since 1906

REPORT NO. 43, VOLUME 36

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1997

SENATE G.O.P. TURNS CLINTON ON TO DEMOCRATS WITH SCHOOL BILL

On the eve of President Bill Clinton's address to the Legislature, Senate Republicans clasped the Democratic president to their collective caucus bosom Wednesday as they passed a bill effectively lifting the cap on the number of charter schools in the state and scorned Democrats for voting against the bill.

"I'm sorry, Mr. President, we tried to roll out the red carpet, but the Democrats wiped their muddy boots on it," said Sen. Joanne Emmons (R-Big Rapids) as SB 146 passed on a 20-16 vote. Sen. Jon Cisky (R-Saginaw) was the only senator to break partisan ranks in voting with the Democrats against the measure.

Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus (R-Alto) said Mr. Clinton's support of charter schools showed the bill was not a partisan issue. "The Democrats are out of step as they try and detract from an issue we as Republicans and President Clinton agree with," he told reporters after the session.

Democrats responded that Republicans were not backing the kind of charter schools that the President has supported during his 1996 re-election bid and in his State of the Union speech in January.

Sen. Jim Berryman (D-Adrian) said no one should construe Republican comments as proof the President would back the measure. The charter schools the president has called for are far more innovative than those Michigan has permitted.

And Sen. Chris Dingell (D-Ecorse) said Republicans completely missed the point of Mr. Clinton's proposal by refusing to tie standards to charter schools. "They walk away from standards," he said.

Ironically, the Senate passed the bill as the Supreme Court considered arguments on whether the initial charter school law passed in 1993 was constitutional. (See related story.)

Under the bill, the current limit on charters which can be issued—100 this year—would not apply to charter schools created for students with disabilities and other special educational needs, court-placed at risk students or students with large pockets of poverty. The bill would remove the cap on charters in districts where there were at least 2,000 students that received free or subsidized lunches or where 50 percent of the students received free lunches. At least 22 school districts would fall into that category.

Ms. Emmons said the measure would give hope to parents in "geographic districts where they are not serving their needs."

But Sen. Ken DeBeaussiaert (D-New Baltimore) charged the bill was being taken up just for the President's visit. The bill was not on the Tuesday agenda of Education Committee and Democrats did not know it was coming up for a vote.

Rep. Charles Perricone (R-Kalamazoo) said the Legislature should retain the inflation cap so it would have some leverage over universities' tuition levels.

But Mr. Profit pointed out that tuition is a "function of state appropriations. When appropriations are inadequate as they have been over the last five years, that drives tuition up."

Glenn Stevens, executive director of the Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan, suggested that the Legislature install a trigger mechanism for the credit, where a credit would be triggered only if the appropriations level was at least at the rate of inflation. Universities already showed in the last fiscal year that, if provided an increase like the 5 percent increase they received last year, they will hold their tuitions down, he added.

GROUPS UNVEIL WHAT THEY WANT CLINTON TO SAY

When he addresses the joint session of the Legislature Thursday, President Bill Clinton is expected to discuss education reforms such as testing standards. Listen to what different groups and individuals say he should say, however, and the president's address would include that and a few other topics:

Mr. Clinton should also talk about vocational-technical education, he should point out how his proposal for charter schools differs from the state's version but he should also back ending the cap on the number of charter schools in Michigan, he should back a mandatory core curriculum, and he should talk about the devastating effect gambling has on America's youth.

He should also know that Sen. Jim Berryman (D-Adrian) isn't skipping the address because he doesn't support the president; he's skipping it because he does support Mr. Clinton and he's angry at the Republican agenda on education reform.

In the 24 hours before Mr. Clinton arrives for the first address to the Legislature by a sitting president in 90 years, a number of groups, legislators and individuals issued their own versions of what they want the president to address when he speaks from the House podium.

The Michigan Association of Public School Academies said Mr. Clinton should endorse removing the state's cap on charter schools—set at 100 this year, 125 in 1998 and 150 in 1999—in his address. In a statement urging support of SB 146, which did pass the Senate Wednesday, Executive Director James Goenner said, "Charter schools are creating miracles, but this cap slams the door in the faces of many more students and parents who want to participate.

"President Clinton challenged every state to give all parents the right to choose a charter school. That's all parents, not some parents," Mr. Goenner said.

Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit) said Michigan should heed Mr. Clinton's call that charter schools complement public education, not compete with it. Because the state's version of charter schools does not include a mandated core curriculum along with increased teacher certification it does not comport with Mr. Clinton's view, he said.

"We have supported the concept of charter schools in the past and still do, as long as they do not jeopardize the public education system," Mr. Hertel said.

The Michigan Federation of Teachers also backed Mr. Clinton's proposal for a mandatory core curriculum, saying that if the public expects more of students they will perform better. "Michigan has the skilled teachers and educational support personnel. This is the primary reason Michigan scored in the top quarter in the National Assessment of Education Progress," said Rollie Hopgood, the state MFT president. "Mandatory standards would be of significant assistance with the further improvement of public education in Michigan."



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Information Pertinent to Legislative and State Department Activities Since 1906

REPORT NO. 44, VOLUME 36

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 1997

CLINTON CALLS FOR EDUCATION UNITY, HIGH STANDARDS

America's top priority must be improving the education of its children and it is task demanding both Democrats and Republicans to come together to achieve, President Bill Clinton told a joint session of the Legislature Thursday.

Legislators, however, while saying they heeded the call for bipartisan unity on education wasted no time in pointing partisan fingers at one another over which side is failing to meet the challenge over improving the schools. While the president was still greeting legislators after his address, Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus (R-Alto) said any Democratically-passed House bill on mandating a core curriculum would be dead on arrival in the Senate.

And outside where Mr. Posthumus made his remarks, Democrats blasted Republicans for ignoring many of the points of Mr. Clinton's speech on imposing standards and making sure that educational reforms were open and available to all students.

There was virtual unanimity in enthusiasm for the president's remarks from lawmakers, with Sen. Dan DeGrow (R-Port Huron) saying he did not know if he should be pleased or alarmed that he agreed so much with Mr. Clinton.

The president emphasized the need to improve education, but he also renewed his call for private businesses to hire and train welfare recipients so they can begin to break free of dependency. And he also called on Congress to amend the recently-enacted welfare reform act to allow legal immigrants the right to collect some benefits when they face economic distress.

Governor John Engler, in his remarks before the President spoke, echoed the need for bipartisanism in dealing with education. "Our search is not for a strictly Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution—a solution that unites rich and poor, parents and teachers, principals and employers," Mr. Engler said.

Michigan accepts the challenge to measure its students against the rest of the world, Mr. Engler said, pledging to make Mr. Clinton's proposal effective in the state beginning in 1998.

Mr. Clinton easily drew in the audience during his address as he talked about the historical patterns of Michigan and his home state of Arkansas that interweaved. He drew comparisons between his address and the speech of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907, the last time a president made an appearance to a joint session in Michigan. At the 90-year point since that time, he said the United States enjoys a remarkable period of peace and prosperity.

Mr. Clinton warned against complacency in his address, saying that at a time of prosperity and no other crisis, people often fall into petty bickering. "We cannot afford to do that. We owe something better to our children. We have been given this unique opportunity" to improve the education system, Mr. Clinton said, especially when research indicates that the vast majority of jobs in the future will require more skills than the typical K-12 school system teaches.

State Sen. Diane Byrum (D-Lansing), who had met Mr. Clinton on three prior occasions, said she was no less impressed with a fourth handshake. But she was more impressed with his ability to convey a personal connection during his speech on the House floor.

"To actually be in the same room when he's making a presentation like he did today, he has a command, an eye contact that locks into you," she said. "And what he did today, with his body movement, he delivered his message equally to both sides of the aisle. He is a president that has phenomenal abilities to connect and to communicate with the American people, regardless of their politics."

Rep. Bill Bobier (R-Hesperia) was near-giddy after shaking Mr. Clinton's hand, and didn't feel the need to apologize. "Hey, it's once in a lifetime thing. What the heck, it's something to talk to my grandchildren about."

If nothing else, Mr. Clinton proved his reputation as a man who can please everyone in his range of movement. But it was when the two parties began to interpret what he said that the harmony began to unravel.

To Republicans, Mr. Clinton's call for charter schools was a confirmation of their policies and a green light to lift the state's cap on charter schools. To Democrats, his call was heavily weighted with cautions: that charter schools be public and that they continue to undergo public oversight.

Governor John Engler, who arrived with the president in Michigan aboard Air Force One, said he hopes the president's speech will help usher support for expanded charter schools. But he said it was also a message demanding all schools do better. "The most spontaneous and most enthusiastic reaction was when the president was telling people to be their best."

Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit)—who accepted an impromptu Clinton offer to ride Air Force One back to Washington to attend Vice President Al Gore's appearance before a National Conference of State Legislatures' meeting—called Mr. Clinton's speech was a blueprint for states to follow into the 21st Century.

"The president's version of the future is one where every child attends a quality school that meets the highest standards, where every student can afford to attend college, where welfare reform lifts people up, rather than keeping them down," Mr. Hertel said in a prepared statement. "That's what House Democrats have been fighting for here in Michigan."

Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus (R-Alto) said Mr. Clinton's remarks made it clear that "we're headed in the right direction. We need to begin setting standards."

Republicans shouted their loudest cheer of approval during a particularly moving moment in Mr. Clinton's speech when he said that "sometimes, out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

"That was the one remark I thought was absolutely dead on—that to me was the key remark of the speech," Rep. William Byl (R-Grand Rapids).

"In many respects, he got better response from Republicans than Democrats," said Rep. Frank Fitzgerald (R-Grand Ledge). "In his remarks on charter schools, it was very quiet on the Democratic side of the chamber."

"If you listened, his whole argument was about public charters," said Rep. Lynne Martinez (D-Lansing), emphasizing the word public. The argument heard in the Supreme Court this week was all about whether Michigan's charter schools are truly public charters, she added. "We're not

Lawmakers often had the sound of footsoldiers ready to charge up San Juan Hill. "This is the dawn of a new millenium, said Ms. Byrum. "You can feel that anyway by what's going on (in education), but there couldn't be a more important theme in a call to arms that the president of the United States should be making."

Possibly the harshest Republican assessment came from U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland) who praised the president's ideas but warned that the details of his proposals would spell their success or failure. He criticized some proposals which he said sounded good, but could actually leave the states swamped under new federal mandates.

The glow of the president's visit, however, is likely to rub off soon for some Republicans. Mr. Goshka, for one, was not about to be charmed into changing party affiliations. "He's still the same man he was when he got here, so I have the same opinion of him," he said.

For some Democrats, the glow will be lifelong. "It was a thrill. No matter how long you've been around, no matter how jaded you are, the presidential office is awesome and he did a wonderful job," Ms. Martinez said.

STAR-STRUCK CAPITOL TRANSFORMED FOR CLINTON VISIT

Bunting and yellow police tape, one half of the Capitol curtained off from public view, rooms shed of their standard furniture for traveling reporters and star-struck legislators crowding the center aisle of the House giddy with excitement, and all for one visitor for less than four hours. President Bill Clinton's visit and speech to a joint session of the Legislature Thursday caused a rapid transformation of the Capitol and turned normally sophisticated politicians into nervous wrecks.

By sunset Thursday, however, the transformation had reversed itself, as the bunting was gone, the television trucks vanished and Capitol maintenance staff put rooms back to rights.

While Mr. Clinton's visit did not spark the same hoopla and hysteria that the visit of President Theodore Roosevelt engendered in the pre-electronic media days of 1907 (when special trains were chartered to come to Lansing and the president rode to the Capitol in a carriage down Michigan Avenue), it was nonetheless exciting to all who had a chance to participate.

"I can truly say I've seen something here today I've never seen before," said Michigan AFL-CIO Lobbyist Tim Hughes who watched the address from the gallery, "And that's kind of neat. The speech itself wasn't much of anything new. It was nice having a Democratic speaker introducing him."

Treasurer Doug Roberts said it was a special day in the Capitol and proudly showed off the multiple copies of the program for the day he had gathered. Plus, he said he and Mr. Clinton shared something in common. "He said he had served with Governor Engler, Governor Blanchard and Governor Milliken. So did I. He hasn't got anything on me."

Security and protocol preparations for the president's visit had been underway since the address was announced a week ago. But while some outward trappings—like the bunting on the east entrance of the Capitol—were up a little early, it was Wednesday night that the main transformations were completed.

The north end of the first floor of the Capitol—where the office of Speaker Curtis Hertel (D-Detroit) is located and where the President waited with Governor John Engler and the legislative leadership before coming onto the House floor—was curtained off for Security. So too was the north end of the ground floor and the second floor, all the areas the president would be walking.

A tented entrance was erected on the north end of the Capitol where the president's limousine waited.

mistaken for the President. "C'mon in, Doug," legislators then laughed as Mr. Ross sheepishly took a seat.

When Mr. Clinton arrived at the podium he took great interest in the ceiling and mentioned in his address how the seals of Michigan and Arkansas were side by side. He praised the restoration of the Capitol and encouraged other locations to "invest a little money" to preserve their history, and Sen. Joe Schwarz (R-Battle Creek)—a leading proponent of the Capitol's restoration—was seen nodding in agreement.

And Mr. Clinton guaranteed that Mr. Hertel will have an heirloom to pass down to his children. While Mr. Engler was speaking, Mr. Clinton, without looking up from his text, appeared twice to ask for a pen and Mr. Hertel quickly fumbled in his jacket pocket to find one. Each time the President handed it back Mr. Hertel fixed on the pen momentarily before carefully putting it back into his jacket.

STELL STAYS EDUCATION REORGANIZATION ORDER

Finding that Governor John Engler's efforts to shift powers from the State Board of Education to the superintendent of public instruction effectively blocked the board's ability to carry out its constitutional duties, Ingham County Circuit Judge Carolyn Stell on Thursday granted a temporary injunction against the first of two executive orders.

Ms. Stell, finding that board Democrats who filed the suit were likely to prevail and that the board would be irreparably harmed while the public and the governor would not, blocked planned implementation Monday of Executive Order 1996-11, which names the superintendent as the head of the Department of Education, a title currently held by the board.

The order did not block EO 1996-12, which moved specific powers to the superintendent, because that order is not set to take effect until July 1. But Ms. Stell said she would reconsider if the case "drags on" to the point that the order could become effective before the case is resolved.

"That was the one we needed," said board President Kathleen Straus (D-Detroit) of the order blocking EO 1996-11. "That other one: he could still withdraw it."

"It was an excellent decision," said board member Barbara Roberts Mason (D-Lansing). "The judge had done her homework."

Engler Communications Director John Truscott said the ruling was "not surprising given the history of the Ingham Circuit, particularly regarding EOs."

Mr. Truscott said the governor would most likely appeal the ruling. "We don't feel she adequately took into account many of our arguments. ... She's saying the governor does not have the constitutional power to rescind an executive order," he said. "We're confident in the end the executive orders will be upheld."

The board was set as the head of the department in an earlier executive order (1965-9) as well as in the Executive Organization Act (PA 380, 1965). Under EO 1996-11, the earlier order is rescinded.

Plaintiff attorney Mary Ellen Gurewitz during her arguments and during a break indicated that there would be little value to an appeal for either side, as the case was not likely to last long. She expected to move for summary disposition within a month and said the case could be resolved on legal issues without a trial.

JACKSON CITIZEN
PATRIOTS
2-28-97 1A

State lawmakers to hear Clinton

Lansing Bureau

LANSING — President Clinton is coming to the Capitol next Thursday to talk to lawmakers about school reform at a time when there are serious partisan divisions over education policy in the state.

The speech is the second in a series of addresses Clinton will make to state legislatures this year to press for education and welfare reform. It's the first time in 90 years that a sitting president has visited Michigan's Capitol.

The White House announced the speech after Clinton called Gov. John Engler Thursday morning and said he'd like to come and talk to members of the

Topic will be education reform

House and Senate. He spoke to the Maryland legislature on Feb. 10.

"The governor then certainly issued a formal invitation for him to do so," Engler spokesman John Truscott said.

Teddy Roosevelt was the last sitting president to visit the Capitol — on May 31, 1907. He spoke in the House chambers and also addressed crowds assembled on the east lawn from a second-floor balcony. William Howard Taft addressed lawmakers in 1919, but at the time was between jobs — president and U.S. Supreme Court chief justice.

Mike McCurry, Clinton's spokesman, said Michigan would be an "interesting" setting for the president's speech.

Interesting, and contentious. While there is bipartisan agreement on welfare reform in Michigan, the president will be addressing lawmakers who are bitterly divided over education policy.

This week alone, for example, Senate Republicans blocked debate on a House-passed Democratic resolution rescinding Engler orders that stripped powers from the Democrat-controlled state Board of Education.

Scandals? What scandals?

Americans are giving President Clinton a thumbs up for job performance despite getting an earful on ethical problems, a new poll suggests.

In the Pew Research Center survey, 60 percent approved of the way Clinton is handling his job, a record in Pew polls and up a point from one taken the week before his second-term inauguration. Thirty-two percent disapproved, also up one point.

The survey came amid continuing revelations about Democratic money-raising but before the release of documents showing Clinton's direct interest in offering big donors White House access.

Clinton to speak to state officials

■ President to
address lawmakers
on schools, welfare

By Peter Luke
TIMES LANSING BUREAU

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See CLINTON, 2A

CLINTON

From 1A

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This week Senate Republicans blocked debate on a House-passed Democratic resolution rescinding Engler orders that stripped powers from the Democratic-controlled state Board of Education. Democratic board members are considering a lawsuit against the governor.

Democrats also have assailed as meager Engler's proposed spending increases for Michigan public schools next fall. And they've criticized Engler's proposal to install state receivers who would take over and supervise poor-performing school districts.

Democrats said Clinton's visit would buttress their positions on school issues, particularly their call for a core curriculum that would set education standards for public schools across Michigan. Republicans have rejected course standards as a violation of local control.

Engler aides, on the other hand, wonder whether Democrats will sit on their hands should the president reiterate his call for the creation of more charter schools, a cornerstone of Engler's education policy. Michigan has 77 such independent public schools.

Clinton is calling for the creation of 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000, and Engler is seeking \$24 million from the Clinton administration for charter school development. The money could significantly increase the number of charters in the state.

Democrats say the schools are financially damaging to traditional public schools.

President using address to enter education flap

□ President Clinton's Thursday address to the Legislature is the first visit to the Capitol by a sitting president in 90 years.

By PETER LUKE

Chronicle Lansing Bureau

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Please see CLINTON

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CLINTON

Continued from Page 1A

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The Muskegon Chronicle

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ter school development. The money could significantly increase the number of charters in the state.

Democrats say the schools are financially damaging to traditional public schools. And Democratic lawmakers were dead silent during Engler's Jan. 28 State of the State address when the governor urged them to follow Clinton's call.

Engler's tough talk about fixing failing schools has been echoed by the Clinton administration as well. During a recent speech U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley went even further than Engler, arguing that chronically bad schools should be closed.

"We're actually very close to the president on a lot of education issues," said Truscott.

CORRECTION

To help assure accuracy in The Chronicle, errors of fact in news stories published in this newspaper will be corrected in this column as promptly as possible. Regardless of cause, The Chronicle regrets all errors.

An item in the Free Time calendar should have included the date of a Basketball and Rock-n-roll fundraiser at Hart High School this weekend. The event is Saturday.

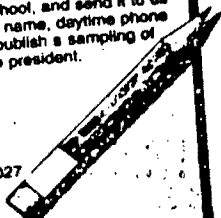
3-1-97 1A

Dear Mr. President!

Here's your chance to share your education message with the president. In 50 words or less, tell President Clinton what he should know about your school, and send it to us before 5 p.m. Tuesday. Include your name, daytime phone number, and town or school. We'll publish a sampling of responses and deliver others to the president.

Mail to: Lansing State Journal
120 E. Lenawee St.
Lansing MI 48919
(517) 377-1298

Fax: (517) 377-1298
E-mail: lsjlocal@aol.com
Call: 485-5463 and press 9027



Clinton's visit to leave out schools

Lansing principals invite president, but his stay here to be only an hour

By Mark Mayes
Lansing State Journal

Lansing school principals lined up early Friday for a chance to welcome President Clinton during his trip to Lansing next week, but they all may be disappointed.

Early indications are that the president won't make any side trips Thursday when he addresses a joint

session of the Legislature to push his education agenda.

"It's just in and out," U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow said Friday after talking with White House schedulers. "It kind of ends all the debate over where he's going to go. He's not going anywhere" besides the Capitol.

Stabenow, a Lansing Democrat, invited Clinton to the capital city about two weeks ago and learned earlier this week that he would make the trip.

He's expected to tout his educational goals, including national testing, expansion of charter schools

and a push to teach all children to read by the third grade.

With the focus on schools, many Lansing educators see the visit as an opportunity to showcase their programs. And, Mayor David Hollister hoped the president could squeeze in a classroom visit.

But Clinton may be in town little more than an hour before jetting back to Washington, D.C., Stabenow said.

"It's in tight right now, with the budget and other things," she said. "We're very lucky and fortunate to get him in town at all."

White House officials on Friday did

not provide further details of the visit.

Lansing School District Superintendent Richard Halik said he received calls from about a dozen principals Friday morning who all wanted the president to come to their schools. The district will make a formal invitation, he said.

"We would hope he finds time for the kids, since one of his priorities is education," Halik said.

At the very least, Halik said he will work to get some local students in the Capitol gallery to see the pres-

Please see SCHOOLS, 2A

Schools: Tight itinerary prevents visit with kids

Continued FROM 1A

ident speak.

"The best option is to get him out to a school building to interact with the young people," he said.

Wainwright Elementary School Principal Maxine Cain met with staffers first thing Friday and then called the superintendent's office to pitch the school.

"I said Wainwright, Wainwright, Wainwright, Wainwright," she said. "We would love to have him here."

She said there also is a push to have Clinton visit Mid-Michigan Public School Academy, the state's largest charter school, where her husband, Eugene, is principal. Clinton's education plan includes spending \$49 million for 3,000 new charter schools.

Cain said the president should make visiting schools a top priority and then speak with legislators if he has time.

"To come to Lansing to talk to the legislators, that doesn't put him close enough to the heartbeat of the problem," she said. "He needs to spend time in our schools in Lansing and less time in the Legislature."

"Have him bring the whole meeting to Wainwright and they can

have the gym for the whole day. This is where the action is, and this is where he needs to come."

Cain said she would like to show the president reading-recovery programs and teen-mentoring projects that are making a difference with elementary school students. She also would show the progress the school has made in improving student behavior through character-education efforts focusing on respect and responsibility.

The school's standardized test scores have risen by more than 40 percentage points in the last six years.

Stabenow said the president is inclined to get close to the public during visits, but it may not be possible this time.

Yvonne Caamal Canul, principal at Lansing's Center for Language, Culture and Communication Arts, was one principal who didn't call Halik early Friday in hopes of landing a presidential visit. But she said she sends invitations to the president each year for other school events. He hasn't shown up yet.

"It would be uncharacteristic of the president" if he didn't spend time at a school, Caamal Canul said. "He always takes time to be with the people."

For Clinton, little time, but lots of invitations

By Chris Andrews
Lansing State Journal

Lewton Elementary School Principal Steve Hecker isn't shy about using any and all political connections to persuade President Clinton to visit his school when he stops in Lansing Thursday.

The children of U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow went to the south Lansing school, he points out. Gov. John Engler's triplets might, too, since the governor's residence is within Lewton's attendance boundaries.

"I e-mailed the White House as soon as I got the State Journal Friday morning," Hecker said Monday. "We don't mess around."

Neither do scores of other area residents coveting a few minutes with the president.

Clinton comes to Lansing on Thursday to address the Legislature, probably at 11 a.m. He will speak about schools and welfare.

White House and local officials don't expect Clinton to make any other stops, though he'll have plenty of options if he has a change of heart.

Ruth Brazee has invited Clinton to the weekly luncheon at Central United Methodist Church.

Ruth and Fred Brazee and other church members will serve chicken salad, a vegetable, and fruit salad to Lansing's less fortunate. They'd also like to show off the day-care center for people with low incomes.

The Lansing Housing Commission wants Clinton to see the computer classes it offers in housing projects.

Joan Stern, a U.S. Department of Labor wage-hour investigator, would love to tell Clinton how important the Family and Medical Leave Act has been to Lansing-area families.

Dear Mr. President!

Today's your last chance to share your education message with the president, who'll be in Lansing on Thursday.

In 50 words or less, tell President Clinton what he should know about your school. Include your name, daytime phone number, and a town or school. We'll publish a sampling of responses and deliver others to the president. Responses must reach us by 5 p.m. today.

- Drop off at:
120 E. Lenawee St.
Lansing
- Fax: 377-1298
- E-mail:
lsjlocal@aol.com
- Call: 485-5463 and
press 9027

And Lansing Community College President Abel Sykes wants to welcome Clinton to the campus.

"We've had people calling up, saying it's somebody's birthday or somebody's wedding anniversary, and they should be able to come down," said Jerry Lawler, the Capitol building manager. "We tell them they can come down, but the likelihood that they're going to see him is pure chance."

Presidential visit means high-level headaches

From students' dashed hopes to blocked streets, hospitality has a price

By Todd Schulz
Lansing State Journal

Becky Holmes and her fourth-grade students knew President Clinton's visit Thursday could throw their Capitol tour into turmoil.

They knew they'd face large crowds, endure delays and still not see the entire Capitol building.

And they didn't care. The class from Jackson's Bertha Robinson Elementary School remained ready to make the trip it planned in August.

But their hopes were dashed Tuesday when officials decided to close the Capitol Thursday morning during Clinton's speech to state lawmakers.

"They told us that if we showed up, the building would be locked and we couldn't get in," Holmes said. "The kids are all going around with gloomy faces. One said, 'We're only fourth-graders, we wouldn't hurt the president.'"

Robinson Elementary was one of seven tours affected by Clinton's visit. State tour guide director Kerry Chartkoff said each group was offered two choices:

- Wait at the state museum and take their tour Thursday afternoon after Clinton's speech.

- Pick another date.

The first option didn't work for Holmes' class, which visited the museum two weeks ago. The class is trying to arrange a new date.

"It's disappointing," she said.

The rare visit by a president to speak before state lawmakers is exciting for most Lansing residents but means headaches for Chartkoff and others.

How to watch

- WKAR-TV (Channel 23) will broadcast live President Clinton's address Thursday to the Legislature.
- Clinton's address will begin about 11 a.m.

"When the leader of the free world is coming, there's going to be some inconveniences — there's no way around it," said Capitol building manager Jerry Lawler, who assigned crews to start spring cleaning about two weeks early.

Capital City Airport's Mike Lynn is scrambling to prepare for Clinton's arrival Thursday morning.

Though none of the airport's eight airlines should encounter delays, Lynn said the visit poses one challenge for his crews: finding a parking spot for Air Force One.

The president's personal plane is a modified Boeing 747, about 100 feet longer and wider than the largest aircraft Capital City normally handles — Northwest Airlines' Boeing 727 jets.

"It does require us to find a special parking place," said Lynn, deputy executive director of operations and maintenance. "We have to close off a section of the apron that other planes usually taxi on."

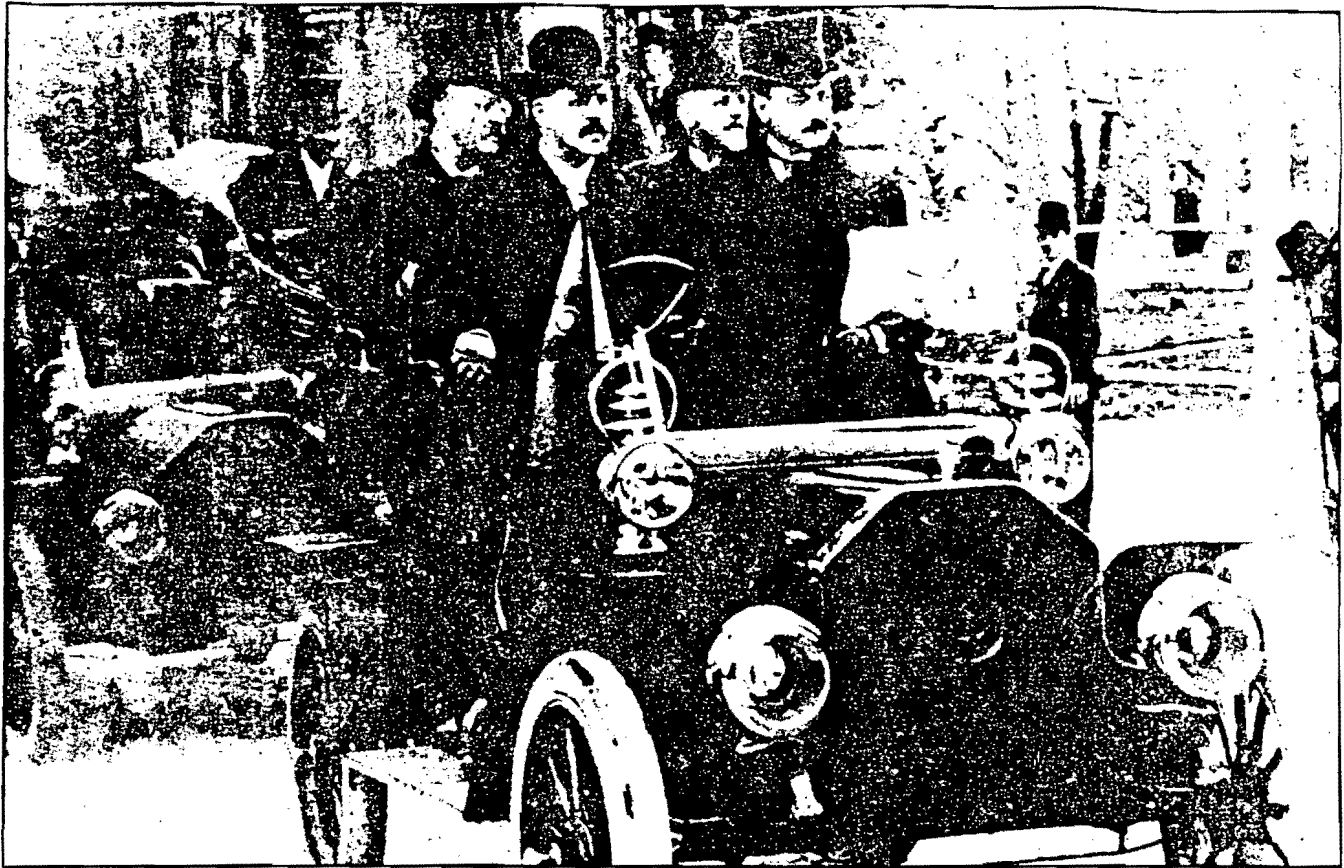
Blocked off streets around the Capitol also could cause problems for some businesses.

Blue Coyote Brewing Co., on Michigan Avenue, runs a trolley service from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. each day to pick up lunch customers.

It's not yet known which city streets will be blocked. But the shuttle may have to pick a new route Thursday, Blue Coyote supervisor James Jackson said.

"If they block off the streets, we'll just have to go around and do our best," Jackson said.

Not since Teddy Roosevelt ...



PHOTOS / MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION

President Theodore Roosevelt (seated behind driver Ransom E. Olds at left) gets a lift to Michigan Agricultural College during a visit to the state in May 1907.



President Roosevelt was the first president to address the state Legislature.

Times have changed, not the setting

By Karen Schulz
JOURNAL LANSING BUREAU

Lansing - The last time a sitting president spoke at the Michigan Capitol, 20,000 people turned out to cheer and wave teddy bears as he rode a touring car down Michigan Avenue.

Teddy Roosevelt, 49 at the time, was the first - and until today the only - sitting president to address the Legislature when he came to

the state May 31, 1907.

When President Clinton speaks to lawmakers today, he will look out over a vastly different crowd than Roosevelt did 90 years ago. The room itself, however, will look much the same thanks to a \$58.2-million restoration completed from 1989 to 1992.

"Teddy Roosevelt would recognize it," said Capitol historian Kerry Chartkoff.

Roosevelt's audience for the

joint-session speech was an all-male crowd that, likely, was all-white, Chartkoff said.

There were just five Democratic lawmakers in the audience.

"He came to Lansing for the 50th anniversary of the founding of Michigan Agricultural College," Chartkoff said. "Roosevelt's speech to the Legislature was 'Well, I'm here and I'll give a speech.' The re-

Please see **ROOSEVELT, A11**

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ROOSEVELT

Continued from A1

al reason he came was for the college."

How times have changed.

Clinton asked to come to Michigan to talk about education and welfare reform. He'll speak to a politically divided Legislature that includes many women and minorities.

His address to a joint session was to be attended by 60 reporters and broadcast live on public television stations.

In 1907, just three newspaper reporters traveled with Roosevelt. There was no television.

Roosevelt, a Republican, spent about an hour at the Capitol. Before addressing the Legislature, he spoke to a group of Civil War veterans on the Capitol lawn.

Historic records of the visit show that Roosevelt's train arrived at 9:59 a.m., nine minutes late. Republican Gov. Fred Warner greeted Roosevelt at the depot, now Clara's Restaurant.

As it was for Roosevelt's visit, Clinton's audience

will include Supreme Court justices, state officers and select invited guests in addition to legislators.

"The same protocol will be used for President Clinton," as was used for Roosevelt, Chartkoff said.

The House's chief sergeant-at-arms, Jack Porm, will announce Clinton's arrival.

"Jack's been coached on how to do it," Chartkoff said. "You can't say Bill, you say William."

After his speech, Roosevelt rode to the college in a Reo car chauffeured by Oldsmobile founder Ransom E. Olds.

While there, he ate tomato soup at the college president's home, spoke to a crowd estimated at 20,000, and handed out diplomas to 96 graduates. The combined population of Lansing and East Lansing in 1907 was less than 30,000.

During his speech to lawmakers, Roosevelt called on people to not fall for the "very wealthy citizens" who may be "tempted by their position to take a somewhat erroneous view of the situation."

"It is not the man who promises most freely, who can be trusted to perform most accurately what he promises," Roosevelt said.

Clinton, Engler see eye-to-eye



President Clinton: He's looking for a friendlier place to pitch his plan for nationwide testing of students' math and reading skills.

► The president and governor may not agree on most issues, but when it comes to education, they're headed down the same road — and many of Michigan's lawmakers are on the same page.

By Ed Golder and Roland Wilkerson
The Grand Rapids Press

When President Clinton talks about school choice, Mark DeHaan applauds loudly.

It's a strange reversal for a Grand Rapids man who frequently finds himself sparring with state Democrats in his fight for more charter schools.

But DeHaan, chairman of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies — a charter school coalition — says political preference means nothing when it comes to expanding student choice.

"This is truly a bipartisan issue," said DeHaan, an administrator at Educational Development Corp. in Grand Rapids, which operates four charter schools. "It's exciting to see our governor work with our president to create a better public education system."

DeHaan was one of a handful of West Michigan guests invited to hear Clinton address a joint session of the Legislature today about education.

Also on the guest list: DeHaan's boss, J.C. Huizenga, president of EDC; and Ruth Jones, the principal of Henry Park Elementary in Grand Rapids.

Jones, who helped lead a crusade to rebuild the struggling inner-city school, initially refused the invitation to hear Clinton because of a school conflict. She quickly reconsidered.

"It hit me. 'What am I talking about!'" Jones said. "I called back and said I would be there."

The visit also drew dozens of students from Grand Rapids and Holland-area charter schools, who planned a rally greeting Clinton on the Capitol steps.

It was the first time in 90 years a sitting president was to address the state Legislature. The last was Theodore Roosevelt, in 1907.

**Arguments over
charter schools
reach the
Michigan
Supreme Court. F4**



Gov. Engler: He agrees with the president's plan to test fourth- and eighth-graders and is "hoping the testing will start next year."

CLINTON

President, Engler of like minds on education

CONTINUED FROM A1

Clinton and Gov. John Engler, enemies on other fronts, have forged an alliance to promote charter schools, independent public institutions often built around increased parental involvement.

Which puts Engler spokesman John Truscott in the situation of admonishing state Democrats — who oppose charter schools because they say the schools take funds from traditional education — to sit up and pay attention when the Democratic president speaks.

"I would hope (Democrats) would listen closely to the president — what he's said in the past, and what he's going to say here," Truscott said.

Charter school proponents were hoping Clinton would help spur passage of a state bill to lift the cap on charter schools in Michigan. The state is at its limit of 100 university-chartered schools.

They're also hoping he'll see his way to give them more money.

Clinton promised in his State of the Union address to double charter school funding from \$51 million to \$100 million nationwide next year to fund 3,000 more such schools.

Engler is asking for nearly a quarter of that money, \$24 million, to expand charter schools in

Michigan.

The governor strongly supports a bill that passed the Michigan Senate Wednesday that would help open charter schools in some of the state's poorest districts, including Grand Rapids.

"One of the reasons we did it today was to emphasize that education isn't a partisan issue," said Senate Majority Leader Richard Posthumus, R-Alto.

"One of the things we Republicans in Michigan have agreed with President Clinton on is education, like charter schools," he said.

But the bill faces uncertain fortunes in the Democratic House, said House Minority Leader Kenneth Sikkema, R-Grandville.

"The other side of the aisle has been very, very resistant about giving parents more options," Sikkema said. "It's my hope a different climate would be created" after the Clinton speech.

DeHaan, who is project director at Educational Development Corp., said he thinks Michigan has to create more charter schools to convince Clinton it's serious about the movement — and to help procure more federal funding.

"It's my belief we have to have a system that gives parents the right and responsibility to choose what's best for their child's education," he said.

CLINTON'S EDUCATION PROPOSALS

- Set national standards, with national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and hold schools accountable for their scores.
- Set standards for teachers and have 100,000 master teachers achieve national certification.
- Recruit 1 million volunteer tutors to help children read independently by the end of the 3rd grade.
- Expand Head Start to cover more disadvantaged children and encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.
- Double funding to start charter schools so there will be 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.
- Make schools safer, drug-free and more disciplined with school uniforms, character education.
- Modernize schools with \$5 billion for repairs or replacement.
- Give tax credits for college tuition costs.
- Provide skill grants to help eligible workers get education and training.
- Connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and help all students become technologically literate.

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In Lansing, Clinton touts education testing

President, governor seek common ground

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING — President Clinton and Gov. John Engler tried to find common ground on education as the president brought his campaign for school standards and national testing to Michigan today.

Clinton spoke to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature, promising his plan for public education would improve

Americans' educations and lives. Engler, in a welcoming speech, told Clinton that Michigan wants to lead the way in national testing and improved schools.

The president revisited some of the 10 points he raised during his State of the Union speech, pushing for support for education vouchers for worker retraining, new research and efforts in early childhood education, improved school buildings, and easier access for children to computers.

"Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who are simply not equipped for the real world of work."

THE CLINTON VISIT

■ Teddy Roosevelt was last president to address state Legislature, Page A4.

Clinton said. "It is our priority to make our education system the best in the world."

Engler promised Clinton that Michigan would join efforts to improve education, saying successes there also would help reduce welfare caseloads by keeping more people in the work force.

Clinton's visit to Michigan was preceded by some bipartisan showmanship.

The president arranged for Engler, who was in Washington Wednesday, to fly back to Lansing aboard Air Force One.

And Engler said Wednesday that he backed Clinton's proposal to expand the nationwide school testing.

"I'm hoping (the testing) will start next year," Engler said while in Washington.

The president has proposed using the National Assessment of Education Progress to test students in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math to make sure students

Please see **CLINTON, A2**

CLINTON

From Page A1

master key skills.

Those tests now are given only in a random sample of school districts, rather than to all students. Engler said inserting the national questions into the existing Michigan Educational Assessment Program test would let Michigan see how its students stack up against the rest of the nation.

"When you give your state-only test, everybody is above average. When you ask how they're doing individually, everybody is doing great," Engler said.

The Clinton administration gave the state a pat on the back in return. Michigan students improved 12 points on eighth-grade math scores compared with 1990 on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress tests.

U.S. Secretary of Education

Richard Riley said Michigan, North Carolina and Texas improved the most. "They get my most improved player award. This is a big achievement," Riley said.

Clinton's speech is the first visit to the Michigan Legislature by a sitting president since Theodore Roosevelt spoke on May 31, 1907, according to Jerry Lawler, executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee.

Lawler said preparations included a speeded-up spring housecleaning of the Capitol and grounds.

Besides lawmakers, more than 150 guests were invited to listen to the president in the House chamber.

"The demand far exceeds the supply of tickets," said Engler spokesman John Truscott.

In advance of the speech, Michigan officials had plenty of ideas of what they wanted to hear.

Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint, e-mailed the president to urge him to tout an experiment in Flint that has raised

test scores by limiting to 17 the number of students in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms. "I have told him that this is the way we ought to go in terms of reforming our public school systems, to make sure these kids can get a good chance, a good start," Conroy said.

Rep. Jim Agee, D-Muskegon, wanted to hear support for his idea of reinstituting core curriculum standards for Michigan schools.

Michigan had set in place a requirement that districts follow standards of what should be taught in key academic areas at each grade, but Republicans repealed that.

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, said the focus on education is more important than the specifics of what the president says.

"Any time the president of the United States is here talking about a topic, that topic becomes important. That in and of itself is positive because of the attention (to education)," he said.

Clinton lauds state's education reforms

By KAREN SCHULZ

Chronicle Lansing Bureau

President Clinton today used the spotlight created by his historic visit to the state Capitol to trumpet Michigan's education reforms.

But speaking to a joint session of the Legislature this morning, the president warned that there is still a long way to go.

"We have to build America in the new century, and we have to know that we have to do it as one America," said Clinton, who two years ago addressed a Michigan State University graduating class.

"The era of big government truly is over."

Clinton was greeted at the Capitol by 200 children from 20 charter schools throughout the state. Gov. John Engler, a big backer of the alternative public schools, has applied for \$24 million in federal charter school aid.

Engler also wants Michigan to be a pilot program for offering a national assessment test starting next year. Clinton has called on states to participate in such a program.

Some of the recent sobering news in Michigan: Less than one-half of the state's fourth-graders passed the reading portion of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test last year

LANSING

And just 48 percent of high school juniors passed the High School Proficiency Test.

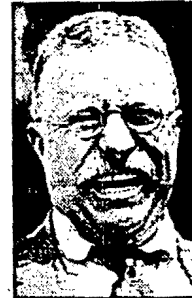
But there is little agreement about how to fix the problem. Among the ideas being debated: a move to make elementary classes smaller and develop a statewide core curriculum, which Democrats are pushing. Republicans, meanwhile, want to expand charter schools and Engler wants the state to take over failing districts.

The last time a sitting president spoke at the state Capitol, 20,000 people turned out to cheer and wave teddy bears as he rode a touring car down Michigan Avenue.

Teddy Roosevelt, 49 at the time, was the first — and until today the only — sitting president to address the Michigan Legislature when he came to town on May 31, 1907.

Clinton today looked out over a vastly different crowd than Roosevelt did 90 years ago. The room itself, however, looks much the same thanks to a \$58.2 million restoration completed from 1989 to 1992.

"Teddy Roosevelt would recognize it," said Capitol historian Kerry Chartkoff.



Teddy Roosevelt's audience in a 1907 speech to the state Legislature included just five Democratic lawmakers.

Roosevelt's audience for the joint-session speech was an all-male crowd that, likely, was all-white, Chartkoff said. There were just five Democratic lawmakers in the audience, which included GOP Gov. Fred Warner and several Civil War veterans.

"He came to Lansing for the 50th anniversary of the founding of Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University)," Chartkoff said. "Roosevelt's speech to the Legislature was 'Well, I'm here and I'll give a speech.' The real reason he came was for the college."

How times have changed.

Clinton, who arrived aboard Air Force One — Roosevelt was not only the first president to fly, he was also one of the first Americans to go up in an airplane — asked to come to Michigan to talk about education and welfare reform. He spoke to a politically divided Legislature that included many women and minorities.

Roosevelt, a Republican, spent about an hour at the Capitol. Prior to addressing the Legislature, he spoke to a group of Civil War veterans on the Capitol lawn.

Clinton to push school testing

Engler backs plan as
president visits state

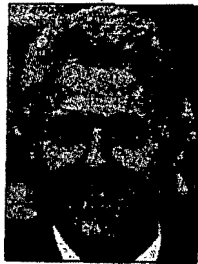
Associated Press

LANSING — President Clinton brings his campaign for school standards to Michigan today, having already picked up some bipartisan support for the idea in advance.

Gov. John Engler and state schools chief Arthur Ellis said Wednesday that they back Clinton's proposal to expand the country's national testing program.

"I'm hoping (the testing) will start next year," Engler said while in Washington.

The president, who will address the state Legislature, has proposed using the National Assessment of Education Progress to test students in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math to make sure students master key skills.



**President
Clinton**

Those tests now are given only in a random sample of school districts, rather than to all students. Engler said inserting the national questions into the existing Michigan Educational Assessment Program test would let Michigan see how its students stack up against the rest of the nation.

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The Clinton administration gave the state a pat on the back in return.

Michigan improved 12 points on its eighth-grade math scores compared to 1990 on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress tests. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said Michigan, North Carolina and Texas improved the most.

"They get my most improved player award. This is a big achievement," Riley said in a statement released by Engler's office.

Adding to the bipartisan flavor, Engler planned to return from Washington with Clinton aboard Air Force One.

State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus would like to hear the president talk about adequate resources for schools.

And the Detroit Democrat would not mind at all if he brought up her proposal for full-day, full-service schools. She proposed having schools stay open longer to offer day-care, tutoring and quality after-school activities to keep youth from joining gangs.

Besides lawmakers, about 150 invited guests will listen to the president in the House chamber.

It is the first visit to the Michigan Legislature by a sitting president since Theodore Roosevelt spoke to lawmakers on May 31, 1907, according to Jerry Lawler, executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee.

3-6-97 10A

SCHOOLMATES

Clinton, Engler join forces for better education

Gov. John Engler and President Bill Clinton, for today anyway, stand side by side as the odd couple of politics. With their dramatically different styles and outlooks, they nonetheless share some of the same ideological space on education.

The governor probably hopes the president, in his speech to the Legislature, will stay within that shared space: a belief in pupil testing to help maintain accountability and to ensure that every child receives an excellent education, the use of charter schools to give parents options and to serve as a prod for continual improvement in the public school system.

Particularly in the area of standards and testing, Gov. Engler needs all the public-relations help he can get. In some Michigan districts, high school students and their parents have openly rebelled over state proficiency tests, which are only in their second year. Without acknowledging the flaws that fomented rebellion, the governor swept ahead and suggested that poor scores on those tests should be the basis for state takeovers of schools.

President Clinton has the eloquence to make the case more persuasively for standards and tests. And despite the governor's blunt tactics, Michigan's recent history provides the president with a solid

illustration of how compilation and publication of test scores by school and district have given educators new focus, raised expectations among parents and voters, and prompted extra help for students who need it. Children *have* benefited.

Public education remains the backbone of America's strength, and must be a priority at every level of government. But the tiers of government need to define their roles carefully; when they flail away at each other — as Gov. Engler has done with his takeover proposals and his executive orders removing some powers from the State Board of Education — they become counterproductive. Michigan citizens now spend more time expressing apprehension about the governor's political agenda than discussing how to keep the school improvement process moving.

Mr. Clinton can draw lessons there, too, making clearer distinctions than the governor has about leadership of, support for and interference in a system that, at least in Michigan, has a strong tradition of local control. These two politicians may not work as harmoniously on other issues (the governor undoubtedly has given the president an earful on environmental regulation, for example), but on education they actually may help each other — and all of America's schoolchildren.



Engler serves as escort for Clinton's visit to Michigan

By Carol Stevens

Detroit News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Gov. John Engler caught a ride on Air Force One today and is escorting President Clinton to Lansing.

The entire Michigan congressional delegation and former Gov. James Blanchard also are invited to travel with the president, who addresses a joint session of the Michigan Legislature about his proposals to reform the nation's educational system.

Engler was in the nation's capital this week for a series of private meetings and to give a speech about Michigan's success cutting state taxes and reforming welfare.

Engler said "it happened to work out," that he was able to catch a ride back to Michigan with Clinton.

"We'll have a chance to chat some," he said.

Engler has been a frequent critic of the administration and joked Wednesday about recent revelations that Clinton allowed generous campaign donors to spend the night in the White House.

"We said, 'If you want a check, you have to work,'" Engler said, describing Michigan's welfare reform program to the National Association of Business Economists. "That's a sharp contrast to what's going on in the White House with the Lincoln bedroom."

But the governor told reporters he was "absolutely" happy that Clinton had decided to speak to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature today, the first president to do so since Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. The address is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. in the House of Representatives' chamber of the State Capitol.

Engler has been supportive of Clinton's blueprint for improving education. He has offered to make Michigan the first state to take Clinton up on a proposal to implement national tests for fourth and eighth grade students.

"I'm hoping it would start next year," said Engler. "It won't take much federal money. But we will need the federal government's help in test development."

Politics, times have changed since days Rough Rider spoke to the Legislature

When flamboyant Teddy Roosevelt came to the state Capitol 90 years ago, he urged legislators to talk straight to citizens, and citizens to learn to shoot straight.

Before addressing a joint session of the Legislature, as President Clinton was scheduled to do today, TR spoke to about 10,000 people, including war veterans, from the Governor's Balcony on the east side of the Capitol.

"Encourage marksmanship among our people as a whole," said Roosevelt, who as a lieutenant colonel in 1898 led the Rough Rider Regiment up San Juan ridge in Cuba.

In a speech that would be hailed by today's National Rifle Association, he stressed importance of good marksmanship among potential volunteers who might be called upon to serve their country:

"Put a premium upon the old American power of shooting straight. You know in a fight it is not the number of shots that are fired. It's the number of shots that hit that count."

That was sure *not* to be the theme of easy rider Clinton, a gun control advocate whose focus of the day is education. Guns and schools are a mix he wants to undo.

Times were far different on May 31, 1907 when Roosevelt became the only sitting president — before today — to address the Michigan Legislature.

His Secret Service agents wore silk hats, a grand total of "three representatives of the press associations" came with him by train from Washington, and at a Capitol reception there was "no restriction as to who should be presented to him."

Clinton, by contrast, travels in a security cocoon with about 60 national journalists (plus about 50 Michigan media people who'll join today's entourage) and speaks only after sweeps by bomb-sniffing dogs and various electronic devices. Considerable restrictions are placed on who's presented to him — unless, of course, we're talking campaign contributors.

Some things never change in politics. Among them: politicians who chant importance of promises made, promises kept.

As Roosevelt told Michigan lawmakers: "I want always to have a man judged by the promises he makes before election plus his performances after election."

On that point, he drew laughter and one of 11 bursts of applause that interrupted his speech.

"On the one hand," said Roosevelt, "let the public man be extremely careful to make no promise that he cannot keep; and on the other hand — and this is just as important — let the public be on its side more than careful not to try to exact a promise that cannot be kept."

His longest speech of the day was at Michigan Agricultural College, marking the 50th anniversary of what is now Michigan State University.

Said Roosevelt: "We must raise the average of farm life. ... We must maintain a country civilization more than equal to that of the city."

He also touted industrial training, saying each citizen should be trained "so as to be effective individually as an economic unit."

Clinton was scheduled to arrive by plane at 10:15 a.m. and speak to lawmakers at 11 a.m. after an announced "photo opportunity" with area school children.

Ninety years ago, Roosevelt arrived by train at 10:10 a.m. and spoke to lawmakers at 11 a.m. after "some pleasant words to the industrial school boys as he was passing."



President Bill Clinton's visit to Lansing isn't causing nearly as much fuss as Theodore Roosevelt's did in 1907

A presidential visit

Bill Clinton is to address a joint session of the Michigan Legislature at 11 a.m. today, only the second sitting president to do so. The first was Theodore Roosevelt on May 31, 1907. Lansing seems to be taking the event calmly in sharp contrast to Roosevelt's visit, which turned the town on its ear. This column reports on Roosevelt's big day.

LANSING, May 31, 1907 — The hype and enthusiasm has been extraordinary — unparalleled, in fact — for today's speech-making by President Theodore Roosevelt, the popular Republican known affectionately to many as T.R.

**HUGH
MCDIARMID**

Politics



After all, most of Michigan is very Republican.

And T.R. is very well liked.

The state Senate, for example, which has 32 Republican and no Democrats, earlier this week approved a fawning resolution praising

Roosevelt's "intrepid and advanced leadership," his "militant integrity and unselfish fidelity to his exalted trust" and resolving that America's best interests "demand the nomination and re-election of Theodore Roosevelt" next year (Roosevelt did not run in 1908.)

And predictably the state House, which is 95-5 Republican, concurred in the Senate's gush with only two dissenters.

By this morning, there was a sea of bunting and flags in the capital city. Citizens had been implored to sweep the streets and be gracious to



DAVID P. GILKEY/Detroit Free Press

In preparation for President Bill Clinton's visit, Greg Hess, left, and David Diaz put up red, white and blue bunting Wednesday at the Capitol in Lansing. Clinton is to address the Legislature today at 11 a.m.

out-of-town visitors. Pictures of T.R. were being sold by an ardently pro-Roosevelt local newspaper, the State Republican, for a dime apiece and festooned the front windows of homes and businesses. A dry goods company was hustling "Teddy bargains," including 98-cent teddy bears; other stores were selling Roosevelt cigars, candies, suspenders, neckties and postcards. There were even "big stick" papier-mache reproductions of T.R.'s proverbial club available with candy inside.

By 9 a.m., downtown Lansing was jammed with onlookers. The Pere Marquette ran five trains in from Grand Rapids; the Grand Trunk ran

special trains from Battle Creek and South Bend, Ind. And those unable to make it by train or on the interurban (street car) arrived by horse.

The president's train pulled into the depot on East Michigan Avenue at 9:59 a.m. greeted by a Michigan National Guard battery's 21-gun salute. He was welcomed by Gov. Fred Warner, Lansing Mayor Hugh Lyons and Jonathan Snyder, president of Michigan Agricultural College where T.R., after addressing the joint legislative session in the morning, would speak at a semicentennial celebration in the afternoon.

Please see ROOSEVELT, Page 6A

Sources

This column is based on accounts assembled by Jerry Lawlerr, executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee, from House and Senate journals, documents at Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University), a history of greater Lansing titled "Out of the Wilderness" by Justin Kestenbaum and, especially, a piece on Roosevelt's visit by Roger Rosentreter, editor of Michigan History Magazine.

Roosevelt's visit was big event

ROOSEVELT, from Page 1A.

Security was tight as the eight-carriage presidential entourage moved toward the Capitol. After all, William McKinley's assassination in 1901 by Detroit-born anarchist Leon Czolgosz was what elevated then-Vice President Roosevelt to the top job. (He was elected in his own right three years ago.) And the assassination is still fresh in lots of minds.

At the Capitol, the president first went to a balcony off the governor's office where, in front of on-lookers massed on the front lawn, he recalled Michigan's contribution to the Spanish-American War and spoke of the need to encourage marksmanship in the National Guard. "You know, in a fight it is not the number of shots that are fired, it is the number of shots that hit that count," he said.

In the House chamber as he made his way to the speaker's chair, T.R. was greeted with a rendition of "Michigan, My Michigan." He then launched into his remarks, essentially a two-part plea for: 1) elected officials to keep their pre-election promises and not over-promise, and 2) for government to support both business and labor while, at the same time, working to restrain the abuses by wealthy individuals and corporations.

"Let us set our faces like flint against predatory wealth, but also against predatory poverty — put the emphasis on the predatory," he declared. "We are against the wealthy man when we ought to be against him, not because he is wealthy but because he has misused his wealth, and we are against any man, rich or poor, if he does wrong."

And he concluded: "This is an age of great industrial combination, combination of capital and combination of labor. Our purpose must be to favor both, so long as they do well, and to set our faces against either if it does ill."

There was loud and sustained applause.

**Stores were selling
Roosevelt cigars,
candies, suspenders
and neckties. There
were even "big stick"
reproductions of
T.R.'s proverbial club
with candy inside.**

Afterward, T.R. agreed to board a Reo automobile, a novelty to be sure but no doubt a sign of things to come, and was chauffeured by Ransom Olds out Michigan Avenue to the college where, following a "bully" sized lunch at Snyder's house (including soup, fish, tomatoes, cucumbers, brown bread sandwiches, fried chicken, creamed new potatoes, green beans, rolls, fruit salad, cottage cheese, strawberry ice cream and cake), he addressed a crowd estimated at 20,000. He then joined in distributing diplomas to the 96-member class of '07.

Finally, having learned of the fledgling auto rivalry in Lansing between the Reo Car Company and the Olds Motor Works, Roosevelt, who'd arrived via Reo, suggested returning to the train station via Oldsmobile.

And so he did.

He departed Lansing for Washington, D.C., in late afternoon.

FOOTNOTE: By one account, which seems credible given that the written version is relatively short — and even allowing for pauses for frequent applause — Roosevelt's 1907 address to the joint session of the Michigan Legislature lasted 10 minutes. Any bets on how long Bill Clinton's address will last?

The Nation's Schoolmaster?

Give Bill Clinton his due. On education reform, the announced focus of his address today to the Michigan Legislature, Mr. Clinton has made noteworthy headway. The president has openly endorsed charter schools and public school choice, and thus the idea of freer competition among government-run schools. He has done this, moreover, in opposition to the prevailing ideological bias of his own party.

Mr. Clinton is now pressing for a host of education reforms that would expand the federal government's role in national tests, national teaching certification, reading tutor recruitment and other areas. We are skeptical of these proposals, as we have noted before. But as Mr. Clinton prepared to speak today, we found ourselves thinking less of education nationwide than of the kids in the schools Mr. Clinton left behind in Washington, D.C. Mr. Clinton would do better to focus on the D.C. public schools to show what can go right. Until he does, Michiganians would do well to view his national reform proposals with caution.

The feds have clear constitutional authority over Washington's schools, after all. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever" over Washington D.C. One must stretch hard to find a grant of any federal power over the rest of the nation's public schools.

And there is little doubt that the kids in the D.C. schools could use help. Fiscal mismanagement has forced Congress to intervene. An Emergency Transitional Education Board of Trustees has been created; the superintendent has been replaced with a retired Army general; and the school board has been demoted

to an advisory role in an attempt to straighten out the books.

Yet amazingly, D.C. per-pupil spending was \$10,180 — 76 percent above the national average — in 1993-94, the most recent year for which figures are available from the National Center for Education Statistics. Teachers salaries were likewise high. Meanwhile, the district's scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress test and the Scholastic Achievement Test are pitiful.

In this milieu, the president has a perfect forum for testing his belief in education testing, school choice and early learning initiatives. Some of the president's ideas, such as charter schools, are already being implemented in the district. Mr. Clinton could ensure a controlled experiment with the rest. This could not only provide the children in D.C. schools with a shot at better schools, but test the value of the president's proposals before the rest of the nation is pressed — or slowly extorted — into adopting them as well.

Of course, this experiment would risk failure, which might discredit many proposals the president and his supporters in national teachers unions are backing. But at least the failure would be limited, and any eventual success would be all the more persuasive given the current problems of the D.C. schools.

If Mr. Clinton chooses to concentrate on District of Columbia school children, he will demonstrate courage, show respect for the limits of presidential constitutional authority and provide a useful testing ground for his own ideas. If he doesn't, there will be legitimate questions about the reforms he promotes, no matter how many states he travels to.

3-6-97:6A

Clinton's visit today stirs up the Capitol

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF
Lansing Bureau Chief

LANSING — They got the red-white-and-blue bunting out of mothballs and hung it from the Capitol.

They even ironed the flags in the House of Representatives.

President Bill Clinton's plan to address the Legislature today put the Capitol in a spit-and-polish mode, but not without minor turmoil.

Lawmakers will lose their parking spots behind the Capitol for the day, and the press corps will be booted out of its usual roost in the House chamber.

There's quiet lobbying by big contributors and friends of legislators for precious guest seats on the House floor for the president's 11 a.m. speech.

And the preparations prompted public grumbling from one fourth-grade teacher from Jackson whose class trip to the Capitol today was postponed.

Outside the Capitol grounds, however, Lansing went about its business as usual.

Inside, excitement built.

"It's a big deal," said Kerry Chart-

koff, Capitol tour guide director. Large amounts of news media equipment was arriving, and carpenters worked on platforms for it.

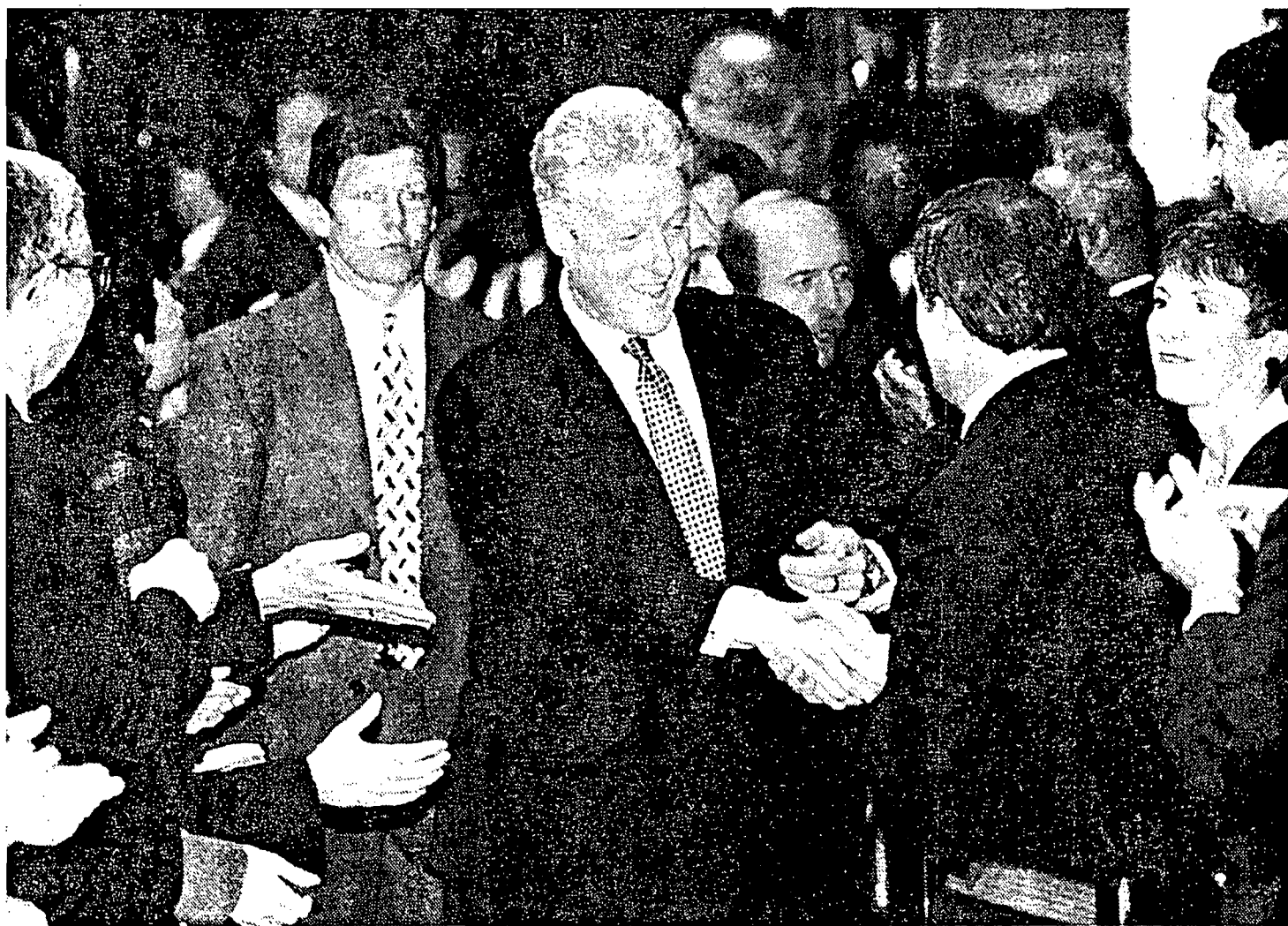
Chartkoff said her staff has fielded many calls from people asking for speech tickets that don't exist.

Clinton is expected to meet privately with lawmakers and allies before and after his speech. Joining Clinton for the flight to Lansing on Air Force One will be Gov. John Engler, former Gov. James Blanchard and nine members of Michigan's congressional delegation.

One lawmaker who isn't thrilled with the president's appearance is Rep. Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak. She said she turned down an offer to have her photograph taken with Clinton.

She said she would not shake his hand, either, as he walks into the House chamber and passes her seat.

"Any self-respecting female wouldn't want to be in the same room with the man," Johnson said. "I personally dislike the man and disrespect him so, I'm not comfortable to be in the same room with him."



Reuters

President Clinton entering the House Chamber in the Michigan Capitol in Lansing yesterday to address the state's lawmakers.

At Michigan Legislature, It's All Warmth for Clinton

By MICHAEL JANOFFSKY

LANSING, Mich., March 6 — Washington may be absorbed with the daily twists and turns of the campaign fund-raising controversy, but here in central Michigan today it barely cast a shadow over President Clinton as he became the first chief executive since Theodore Roosevelt to address a joint session of the Michigan legislature.

Delivering a speech in which he urged adopting national education standards in reading and mathematics and making improvements in the welfare bill that was passed last year, Mr. Clinton received a rousing reception from Democrats and Republicans alike, including Gov. John Engler, a Republican, who supports many of the same ideas on education and welfare.

More than a few Republican lawmakers — to say nothing of Democrats — strained, fairly leaping over ropes, to touch Mr. Clinton or shake his hand as he entered the House and walked down the center aisle.

The effect was just the one that the

White House had hoped for. The trip was the second in a series of visits to state legislatures intended to blunt the troubles over campaign financing and allow Mr. Clinton to whip up interest in his domestic agenda.

Residents of Michigan demonstrated what pollsters have been saying for weeks and what the White House is counting on, that campaign finance is not a burning issue for average Americans.

"Maybe people would talk about it over breakfast, but they wouldn't dwell on it," Cheryl Chapko, chief of staff to State Senator Harry Gast, Republican of St. Joseph, said as she sat in the Capitol gallery. "People here feel like they are removed from Washington. They have enough problems here in Michigan without dwelling on Washington."

Another visitor in the gallery, John Pirich, a lawyer from Lansing and a Democrat, said: "We all know it takes money to get elected. People here have been subject to the ravages of the cyclical impact of the auto industry. They're worrying if they still have their jobs."

The President's 45-minute speech gave no hint of troubles back East. Nor was the audience response an indication that his popularity had flagged. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle stood several times to underscore their enthusiasm for points that Mr. Clinton stressed. He received another bipartisan ovation at the end, and later, returning to Washington on Air Force One, he sounded at once like President and former Governor of Arkansas, saying: "I love state legislatures. They are all real life."

But was he not worried, a reporter asked, that the unfolding drama over campaign donations was shouting out his agenda? He flashed a wide-angle smile and said, "I thought my message got through just fine."

The distance between the universes of Washington and Lansing was also visible earlier, when Mr. Clinton's spokesman, Michael J. McCurry, briefed reporters after the speech. Mr. McCurry was asked only isolated questions about points that Mr. Clinton addressed on education and welfare or other issues, with the

rest focusing on Hillary Rodham Clinton's chief of staff, Margaret A. Williams, and interpretations of the laws that govern political contributions that, in the Administration's view, will keep her out of trouble.

"He's well aware we're in a feeding frenzy, and he's got to endure it," Mr. McCurry said of his boss and not looking the least bit exasperated at yet another defense of Administration goings-on. "He's pretty used to this environment."

At the end of the briefing, Mr. McCurry asked, "Any Michigan questions?"

There were none.

The trip followed by a month a similar visit to lawmakers in Maryland, where the reaction was much the same.

But although he broke no new ground today, he seemed to bask in the glow of friendly surroundings and his momentary connection to the last President who stood in the same spot. When he closed his remarks by saying, "Thank you for making me feel so welcome today," it sounded very sincere.



Michigan goes to school

Clinton pushes state to lead nation in movement to improve education

By Greg J. Borowald
Lansing State Journal

With history as a backdrop, President Clinton delivered an urgent lesson plan on education and cooperation Thursday to a rapt group of state officials and lawmakers.

In his speech at the Capitol, Clinton pushed a long list of proposals, from volunteers to help children read to tax credits to pay for college, but won the most applause for a simple message about standards.

He told the packed audience, filled with lawmakers, dignitaries and a few well-connected lobbyists, that all students must do better on tests that measure their progress — and adults must expect it from them.

"This will not be easy," Clinton said. "If they don't do very well at first, it's probably more our fault than theirs."

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less out of them," he said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

Those lines, toward the end of his 43-minute speech, earned Clinton a standing ovation. They also highlighted his common-ground approach — one that left both Republicans and Democrats satisfied.

"Bill Clinton has always been very progressive when it comes to education, both as a governor and as president," said Rep. Frank Fitzgerald, R-Grand Ledge. "Many of the ideas he has long held are ones that we as a party have supported in this state."

The day had a bipartisan feel from the start.

Clinton arrived in Lansing for his fifth visit in five years with Republican Gov. John Engler — and most of the state's congressional delegation — following him down the steps of Air Force One.

House Speaker Curtis Hertel and Lansing Mayor David Hollister, both Democrats, were part of the airport welcoming party, along with a giddy mix of schoolchildren.

All had praise for at least part of Clinton's plan, which includes a push for more charter schools, tougher testing standards and more computers in the classroom.

"I think he was here to celebrate what we have in common, not to highlight differences," said former Gov. James Blanchard, a Democrat and longtime Clinton friend who traveled here with the president.

"This was supposed to be a bipartisan trip, not a partisan rally."

The speech to a joint session of the Legislature was the first by a president since Republican Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. Clinton made a camera-popping entrance to the House chambers, with lawmakers and others snapping pictures and grasping for handshakes while those in the gallery above jockeyed for a better view.

The speech was Clinton's second to a state legislature to push the education goals he outlined during the 1996 campaign and in his recent State of the Union address.



Special pullout section inside

■ Democrats and Republicans have different takes on same speech, but both sides liked it.
Page 5A

■ President Clinton wows teen columnist at airport.
Page 6A

■ Crowd outside Capitol have different reasons for coming.
Page 6A

■ Excerpts from the address to the Legislature.
Page 7A

■ Students use speech as springboard for debate on education.
Page 7A

■ Clinton visit notebook.
Page 8A

Welcoming wave: President Clinton waves to the gallery in the House chambers Thursday before addressing a joint session of the Legislature. Flanking him are House Majority Leader Curtis Hertel (left) and Senate Minority Leader John Cherry (right).

Please see CLINTON, 8A

GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

LANSING STATE JOURNAL
3-7-97 1A (1 of 2)

Clinton: Both parties like speech

Continued **FROM 1A**

The first was last month in Maryland.

"There is no Democratic way or Republican way," Clinton said. "There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading, math is math. Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

That may not happen immediately in Michigan, where even as education is at the top of everyone's agenda, there are disagreements on just what approach to take.

The GOP, led by Engler, has pushed for more choice for parents and creating independent charter schools. Democrats, who control the House, have resisted, saying charter schools siphon money from traditional public schools and should have clearer standards and safeguards.

In the House, Democrats are pushing a return to a state-mandated curriculum for public schools — something Republicans removed during the last session, arguing that local control was more important.

Little of that was mentioned Thursday, however, as Hertel and Engler sat behind Clinton — one on each side — both beaming throughout the speech.

Before Clinton spoke, Engler stressed that Michigan is ready to be the first state to use national test questions to see how its students measure up. He also highlighted the state's 79 charter schools — two ar-



GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

eas where he and Clinton appear to be in sync.

"No challenge confronting our state or the nation is more urgent," said Engler, also greeted by applause.

In the midst of awe-struck references to the power of the Internet and the early-years growth of a newborn's brain, Clinton sketched out his own plan.

At the center: standards.

"It doesn't matter if your child makes the highest grade in the class if nobody gets over the standards bar," he said. "And it doesn't matter if your child makes the lowest grade in the class if everybody gets over the standards bar."

Among Clinton's proposals:

■ Childhood literacy. With the

help of volunteers, every student should be able to read by the third grade.

■ More charter schools. He wants to double federal startup money and have 3,000 nationwide by 2000.

■ College affordability. Tax credits and an increase in grant money would send more students to college.

■ Computers. Every classroom and library should be connected to the Internet.

While here, Clinton announced an \$8.6 million grant aimed at boosting technology in Michigan schools that have large numbers of low-income students.

In his speech, Clinton told of finding four books to help his daughter,

Worth the wait:

Therese Breuninger (left), Cindy Allen and Margie Moore clap as President Clinton waves to them from his car Thursday. The three are Legislative Services Bureau workers.

Chelsea, with a research paper, only to discover she already had found eight articles on the Internet.

"This is an incredible thing," he said. "If we make this available to all children, it will change in a breathtaking way what people can become, what our children can imagine themselves becoming."

The president worked in several references to Roosevelt, comparing the challenges of his time — when cars and electricity were new — to today, as the country faces a new century while enjoying peace and prosperity.

"This is a rare time," Clinton said.

While the presidential visit was less rare for Lansing than most cities its size, a growing crowd of more than 100 gathered on the north side of the Capitol just to watch the motorcade leave.

Some waited for nearly two hours in the cold.

"It's exciting," said Leslie Cimadevilla, a Cooley Law School student who waited with a pocket camera and a hat pulled over her ears.

Linda Rademacher of St. Johns waited during her lunch hour, hood pulled tight over her earmuffs.

"I guess I kind of agree with most of his policies," she said. "To me, he seems like a very likeable person. Lately, though, it seems like they're trying to find some fault with him."

Staff writer Chris Andrews contributed to the story.

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(102)

Clinton pushes school standards and testing

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — President Clinton brought his campaign for national education standards and testing to Michigan, but ended up in the middle

of a debate between state lawmakers on charter schools.

Clinton used his speech before the Michigan Legislature Thursday to urge states to test stu-

dents on national standards in reading and math so states can compare their performance with each other.

"It doesn't matter if your child makes the highest grade in the class if nobody gets over the standards bar," he said.

"Conversely, in this test it doesn't matter if your child makes the lowest grade in the class if everybody gets over the standards bar. That's the difference."

It was a speech that rang true to both Republicans and Democrats as members of each party read into it support for their own education visions. Lawmakers interrupted the president's 45-minute speech 24 times with applause, and got to their feet when he urged high standards for all students.

"... When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it," Clinton said to prompt the ovation.

Gov. John Engler already had committed Michigan to participating in those tests. Starting next year, fourth-graders would be tested in reading and eighth-graders in math, using the national standards and building the national tests into Michigan's own state tests.

Clinton clearly wanted to use Engler's support to build bipartisan support for that idea.

"This is not a partisan issue. There is no Democratic or Republican way to learn. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to

learn. Reading is reading, math is math," he said.

Republicans warmly embraced Clinton's speech overall, but tried to shine the spotlight on Clinton's call for a tenfold increase in the number of charter schools nationally. Engler said it would make it hard for Democrats to oppose his push to increase the limit on the number of charter schools in Michigan.

"What's their argument? The president's wrong on that, too?" he said.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said that was reading too much into the president's speech.

"The main point he stressed is there is no enemy when it comes to reforming schools. He's not picking sides in an important debate here about charter schools," he said.

The themes highlighted by the president were the same ones he laid out in his State of the Union message, including:

—Tax credits for college tuition costs.

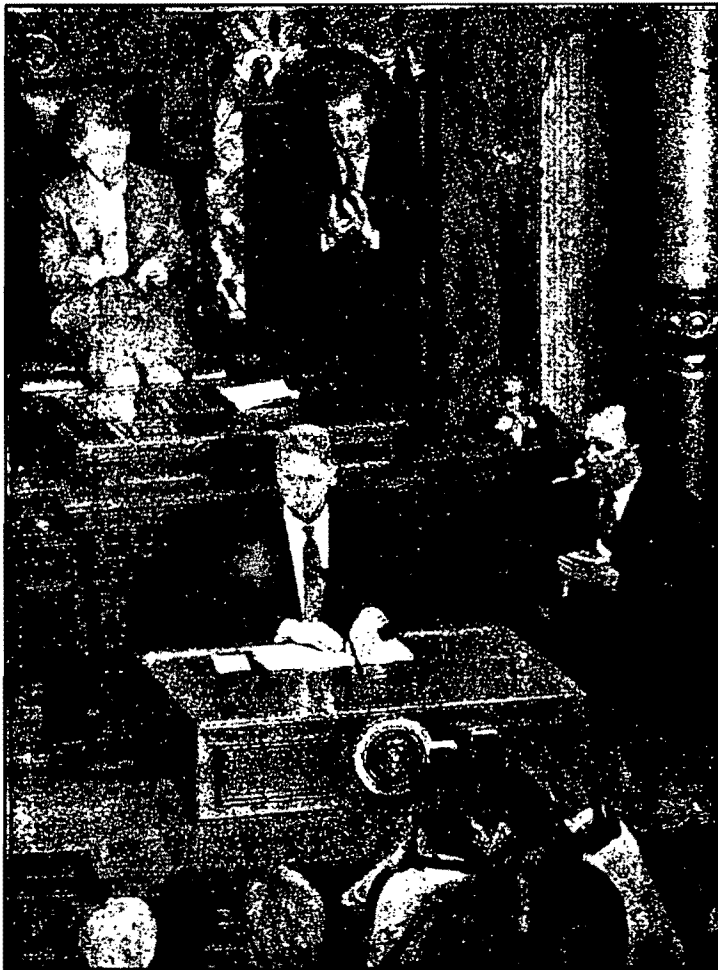
—Federal funds to lower the costs of borrowing money to fix rundown schools.

—Hooking every school and library up to the Internet by the year 2000.

—More freedom for parents to choose which public school their children will attend.

Rep. Glenn Oxender, a key Republican on education issues, said Clinton accomplished more in one speech than he has in 15 years of trying to achieve bipartisan solutions to education problems.

(See—CLINTON, Page 5)



President Clinton is introduced before a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in the House Chambers in Lansing Thursday. To Clinton's left is Michigan Gov. John Engler; in the back, is Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld and Senate majority leader, Dick Posthumus.

Clinton steps into school controversy

(Continued from Page 1)

"It was a phenomenal day in history," the Sturgis Republican said. "It's awfully unusual for a sitting president to be so focused on education."

Democrats basked in the pleasure of having a sitting president of their own party in their midst, but they put a different slant on Clinton's charter school comments.

Rep. Sharon Gire, D-Clinton Township, chair of the House Education Committee, said Clinton emphasized a need for accountability and oversight, as Democrats in Michigan also have stressed, by saying they need to be held to national standards and should be closed down if they fail to meet them.

"That's not what we're doing here in Michigan," she said.

"He's not saying, 'Do anything called a charter school and we'll give you money.'"

Several Democrats took care to note that charter schools were not the primary focus of the speech.

"Though he had a line or two on charter schools, the majority of his speech was on high standards," said Rep. Jim Agee, D-Muskegon, a gubernatorial candidate and longtime critic of Engler's education policies.

Agee said he believes it's hypocritical of Engler to sign on to national testing without also endorsing mandatory content standards in the classroom.

The president received a warm welcome when he arrived, 22 minutes late, for his speech to about 500 lawmakers, state officials and invited guests.

He worked his way slowly up the center aisle of the House

chamber, careful to shake every outstretched Democratic hand on the left side of the aisle before turning to his right to shake the hands of Republican lawmakers, too.

At the front of the chamber, the president craned his neck to look at the ceiling as Engler pointed out the glass panel bearing the image of Arkansas' state seal, located right next to the panel bearing Michigan's state seal.

Clinton drew many parallels between his time and the era of the last president to address the Michigan Legislature — Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke to a joint session in 1907.

Peace and prosperity reigned in both periods, Clinton said, and that's what makes this a rare time when the nation can concentrate on such things as improving education.

Clinton passes test

PRESIDENT:

More testing, aid to charter schools

BILL MILLER
The Enquirer

LANSING - President Bill Clinton swept into Michigan's Capitol Thursday, trying to forge bipartisan state support for his education plans.

It appeared to work - for now.

"Things in Lansing have been more partisan than I would have hoped," said state Rep. Mark Schauer, D-Battle Creek, two months into his first term. Clinton "gave something both parties could live with."

State Sen. John J.H. Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, said Clinton "picked the right themes, (supporting) charter schools, which is going to create the competition we need in public education. ... I think the fact he's behind it is going to make it easier for states like Michigan."

But Schauer, a member of the House Education Committee, and state Rep. Don Gilmer, R-Augusta, a leader in Republican Gov. John Engler's 6-year-old state budget-cut effort, disagreed on some education issues, including statewide curriculum standards.

Clinton's overall message wasn't new, observers said, but because the president spoke to the Michigan Legislature - the first to do so since Theodore Roosevelt gave an address in 1907 - sent a strong message.

Saying repeatedly that "politics should stop at the school house door," Clinton called for:

- National school testing standards.
- Creating many more charter schools.
- Volunteer tutors to help teach reading in the early grades.
- Tax breaks for post-high school technical or college study.
- Money for replacing aging buildings and wiring schools to the Internet.

Clinton also cited national and Michigan efforts to shrink welfare rolls, and challenged private businesses to provide jobs for those affected by those efforts.

But for the most part, the day was devoted to education.

ENGLER'S INVITE

The bipartisan flame was fanned by Engler's invitation for Clinton to speak here. The two share some key education goals, especially charter schools.

Clinton's entrance into the newly restored gold, green and rose-colored House chamber was greeted with thundering applause and cheers. The president arrived at 11:25 a.m., 25 minutes behind schedule.

As Clinton shook hands, walking down the center aisle, Schauer stood several feet away, snapped a photo with his camera.



SCOTT ERSKINE, THE ENQUIRER

Dominique Smith, an eighth-grade student at W.K. Kellogg Junior High School, looks over some math problems.

THE PROPOSALS

President Clinton's education proposals, and quotes from his speech Thursday before the Michigan Legislature to highlight them:

- Set national standards, with national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, and hold schools accountable for poor scores.

- Set standards for teachers and help 100,000 master teachers achieve national certification.

- Recruit 1 million volunteer tutors to help children read independently by the end of the 3rd grade.

- Expand Head Start to cover more disadvantaged children and encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.

- Double funding to start charter schools so there will be 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

- Make schools safer, drug-free and more disciplined with school uniforms, character education.

- Modernize schools with \$5 billion for repairs or replacement.

- Give tax credits for college tuition costs.

- Provide skill grants to help eligible workers get education and training.

- Connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and help all students become technologically literate.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Clinton acknowledges the joint session of the Michigan Legislature during his visit to Lansing on Thursday. Gov. John Engler are trying to find common ground on a variety of educational issues.

Clinton's speech tied to schools

CLINTON, from 1A

exchanged waves with Clinton. Schwarz sat immediately in front of the lectern. He shook Clinton's hand briefly and the two exchanged a quick greeting.

In Battle Creek, most educators and students didn't hear Clinton's speech. But some said they were glad to see education was getting such high-level attention.

"I commend the president for doing it, and the governor for being receptive," said Michael Bitar, superintendent of the 8,700-student Battle Creek Public Schools. "To put out that olive branch of nonpartisanship and say, 'Let's focus on how to improve opportunities for youth,' that's truly the key-stone for the prosperity of the nation."

LOW SCORES

The challenges, though, exist locally - in Battle Creek, as elsewhere in Michigan.

In the first tests last year for state-endorsed diplomas - the High School Proficiency Test - 50 percent or less of students in Battle Creek-area public schools showed proficiency in reading and writing, and Battle Creek Public Schools students were below state averages on math and science proficiency.

In addition, local schools' reading and math scores for fourth- and seventh-graders in the Michigan Education Assessment Program tests fell in many categories from 1995 to 1996.

The methods and value of those tests



SCOTT ERSKINE/THE ENQUIRER

Brad Billingsley, an 8th-grade student at W.K. Kellogg Junior High School, concentrates on math problems during class Thursday. He and other local students may be in for more standardized tests.

have been disputed, but they remain in use. Local legislators all support the concept of a national testing standard, so that student performances here can be compared to those in other states, or even other countries.

Engler pledged that Michigan will be the first state to adopt the national standard, but Schwarz said he's not certain that can happen by the start of the 1998-99 school year, as the governor projects.

Bitar speculates the MEAP tests could be replaced, but he's opposed to adding more testing for fourth-graders.

Lawmakers, including Gilmer, support more volunteer reading tutors, but emphasize that Battle Creek already has strong tutoring programs with hundreds of volunteers.

And charter schools aren't necessarily a threat to public schools, Bitar said.

"But let's make sure there are checks and balances - if they're meaningful, fine."

Educational choices already exist here, Bitar said, in the Battle Creek Area Mathematics & Science Center, Calhoun Area Technology Center and the dual-enrollment program with Kellogg Community College.

PARTY LINES

Although lawmakers from both parties voiced support for working together, the party lines were still evident in the remarks of Schauer and Gilmer.

Schauer blamed the Engler administration for problems with the MEAP and High School Proficiency tests, and for rejecting core-curriculum standards set by the state Board of Education.

"I have more faith in a national standardized test rather than what we've been using," Schauer said.

Gilmer said Republicans want to maintain local control of schools, making the core curriculum a model rather than mandatory. "If you follow this model, every school district will tweak it in their unique way."

Gilmer believes Democrats and Republicans can work out differences in some areas. But he said the best route to education reform starts in individual homes and schools.

He noted a recent Detroit-area school board meeting, "mobbed by angry parents - that's what we need at every board meeting. If you can get parents saying we will not tolerate failure . . . the standards are going to increase every year."

JACKSON CITIZEN PATRIOT 3-7-97 1A

Critics quick to assail Clinton's proposals

By Karen Schulz

Lansing Bureau

LANSING — President Clinton's call for national testing — and Gov. John Engler's offer to accept the challenge — comes at a time when tempers are hot in Michigan over standardized testing.

In his speech to a joint session of the Legislature Thursday, Clinton thanked Engler for offering Michigan as a pilot state for a national achievement test. The tests would be voluntary, but Clinton wants to make them all but impossible for states to resist offering.

"I want to create a climate in which no one can say no — in which (the test is) voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this," Clinton told the audience jammed into the House chambers.

But Air Force One hadn't even taken off at Capitol City Airport when critics started complaining.

"Do I need national tests to tell me how my kids are doing?" said Gary Wolfram, a Republican on the state Board of Education. "Why do I need to compare my kid? I, as a parent, will decide what my child ought to learn."

Consider the following ...

President Clinton's visit came at a time when testing is a sore spot for many educators:

- Less than half the Michigan high school juniors who took the first High School Proficiency Tests last year earned satisfactory scores.
- Results of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests last fall show that fewer than 60 percent of fourth- and seventh-graders earned satisfactory scores in math and reading.

And House minority leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, added this: "I don't want to see a massive change of national government in education."

In remarks preceding Clinton's speech, Engler stressed the need for high standards. He said Michigan students would take a national test beginning with the 1997-98 school year.

Clinton

only student success, but state success, many believe.

"The real reason for the testing is to have some test of accountability," said Sen. Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto. "If we have no tests of accountability, we don't know the schools are working."

For many, a major obstacle is deciding what percentage of students should pass the High School Proficiency Test. Should the test be a mark of achievement for all students, or simply designate varying levels of achievement?

"We're not writing a test where all students will pass, so what percent do we want to have a diploma for the state endorsement to have some meaning?" said state Rep. Glenn Oxender, R-Sturgis.

The state's assessment coordinator said proficiency is the "ultimate goal," but likely won't be achieved by a majority of students for 10 years. "(The test) is a bugaboo," admitted Diane Smolen of the state Education Department, "and it's been called worse than that."

Clinton said his administration

"Where our children are concerned, our search is not for a strictly Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution," Engler said.

Not all children will succeed when taking the tests, but lowering standards doesn't help anyone, Clinton said.

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less," he said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

Clinton's visit comes at a time when testing is a sore spot for many in the Michigan education community. Fearing failure, parents of some children have waived their children out of tests. Some lawmakers are talking about tightening the terms under which students may opt out.

Engler also wants the state to take over any school where 80 percent of students fail the High School Proficiency Test, or where dropout rates exceed 25 percent. The plan would require legislative approval.

Tough standards and rigorous testing will measure not

Please see CLINTON, A-2

will support the development of new voluntary tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math.

Engler suggested that the test questions be incorporated into existing state tests, including MEAP.

"It's great we have so much emphasis on education," said Kathleen Straus, Democratic president of the state Board of Education.

But she said she's not sure more

testing is the answer.

Multiple efforts are under way in the Legislature and state board to review the tests or delay administration of future tests.

"A lot of people have said the (high school) tests were designed to show that public schools were failing," Straus said. Instead their purpose should be to point out where students need help, she said.

DAILY TRIBUNE
3-7-97 2A

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In Michigan visit, president turns up pressure for standardized exams

By Ron Fournier
Associated Press

LANSING —President Clinton turned up the pressure for standardized school exams Thursday with a promise to create a climate in which "no one can say no" to testing the nation's schoolchildren.

Addressing state lawmakers as the guest of Republican Gov. John Engler, the president also called for a bipartisan approach to education reform in Michigan and Washington.

"We have to forge a new partnership for a new time," the president declared.

Clinton's one-day trip did little to deflect attention from his mounting fund-raising troubles, coming on the heels of the revela-

tion that Hillary Rodham Clinton's top aide accepted a campaign check from a donor in the White House. Aides wondered privately why Maggie Williams didn't simply send the donor to the Democratic National Committee.

When asked aboard Air Force One about the fund-raising problem, Clinton answered reporters by saying, "Tomorrow." He has a news conference scheduled today.

"I'm doing great," he said, and added he doesn't feel his message was obscured by the controversies surrounding him. "I thought my message got through fine. They got it," the president said.

Engler, a rising star on the national GOP scene for his welfare and anti-tax initiatives, greeted Clinton after the president entered

the House chamber to loud applause and offered a bow to Engler's wife, Michelle.

"Your visit is a significant event because we are focused on a significant challenge: improving the education of all our children," Engler said.

The governor, who made Bob Dole's short list of possible vice presidential candidates, endorsed Clinton's call for education standards and testing.

"Michigan accepts your challenge," Engler said.

Clinton wants states to establish one set of performance standards and tests that measure students' ability to compete in the world. He wants to focus on fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math.

Apprehensive that mandatory testing would cause a political uproar, Clinton decided last year to use the influence of his office to urge voluntary compliance. He stepped up the pressure Thursday.

"I want to create a climate in which no one can say no, and which is voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids their chance to do this," he said.

Speaking to critics who worry that the poorest and slowest of students would be held back by standardized testing, Clinton said: "Sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them, and we are selling their future right down the drain every day."

Clinton repeatedly thumped his fist on the

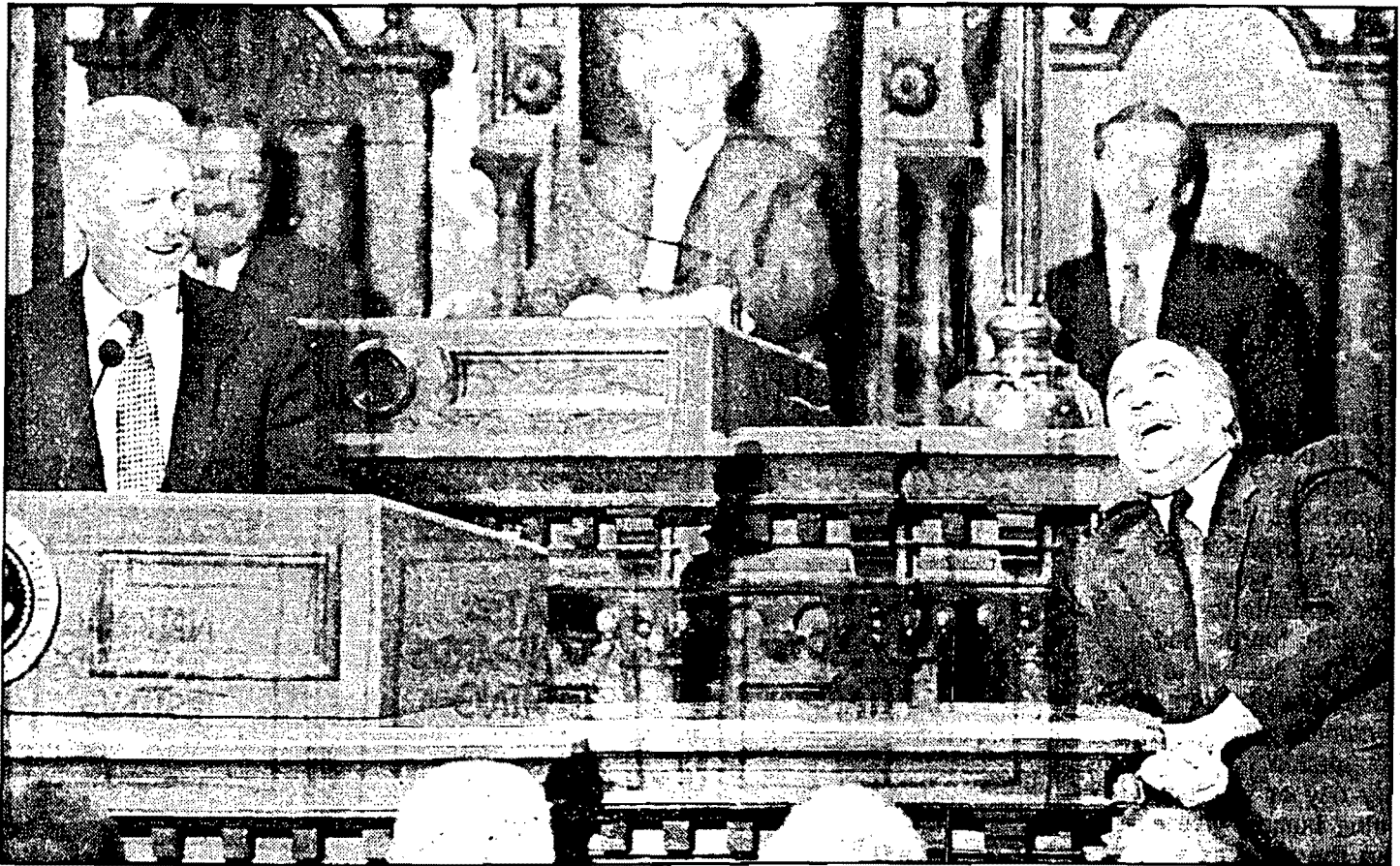
podium as he delivered his most emotional address on the topic. "Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work," he said.

Clinton was the first president in 90 years to address Michigan lawmakers.

Teddy Roosevelt appeared before the legislature in 1907. Clinton reiterated his belief that the nation is in a moment of transition that compares to Roosevelt's time.

"Roosevelt knew that you had to make the most of peace and prosperity and leadership. And he did," Clinton said.

The Michigan legislature is split along party lines: The House is controlled by Democrats, the Senate by Republicans.



Al Goldis ■ Times News Service photo

▲ President Clinton addresses the state Legislature Thursday to Gov. Engler's delight.

Some testy about national testing

■ Clinton, Engler push raising school standards

By Karen Schulz
TIMES LANSING BUREAU

LANSING — President Bill Clinton's call for national testing — and Gov. John Engler's offer to accept the challenge — comes at a time when tempers are hot in Michigan over standardized testing.

In his speech to a joint session of the Legislature Thursday, Clinton thanked Engler for offering Michigan as a pilot state for a national achievement test. The tests would be volun-

tary, but Clinton wants to make them all but impossible for states to resist.

"I want to create a climate in which no one can say no — in which (the test is) voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this," Clinton told the audience jammed into the House chambers.

But Air Force One hadn't even taken off at Capitol City Airport when critics started complaining.

"Do I need national tests to tell me how my kids are doing?" said Gary Wolfram, a Republican State Board of Education member. "Why do I need to compare my kid? I, as a parent, will decide what my child ought to learn."

And House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, added this: "I don't want to see a massive change of national government in education."

In remarks preceding Clinton's speech, Engler stressed the need for high standards. He said Michigan students would take a national test beginning with the 1997-98 school year.

"Where our children are concerned, our search is not for a strictly Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution," Engler said.

Not all children will succeed when taking the tests, but lowering standards doesn't help anyone, Clinton said.

"...When we see people in difficult circumstances, some-

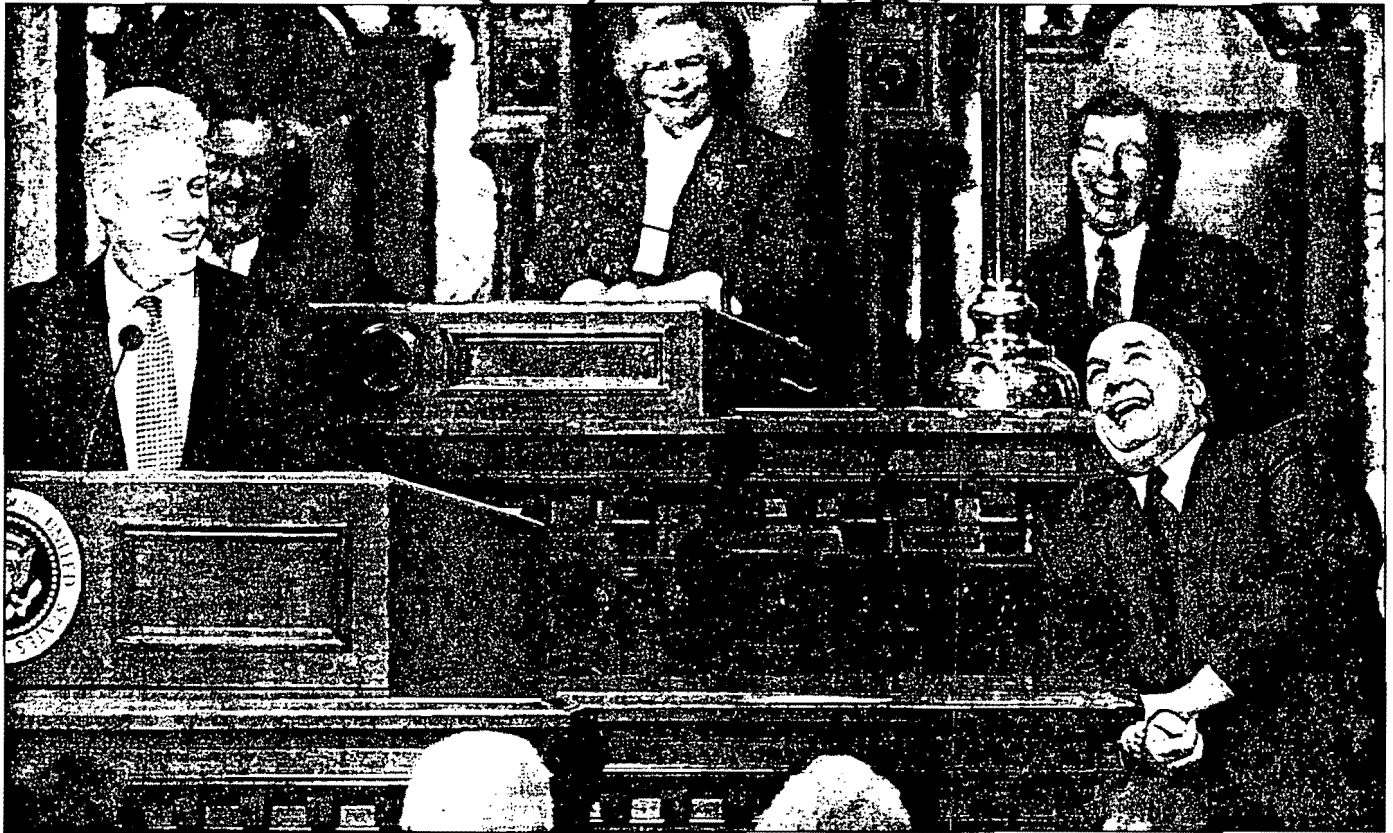
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Clinton's visit comes at a time when testing is a sore spot for many in the Michigan education community.

Consider the following:

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Associated Press

Gov. John Engler, right, laughs during President Clinton's address to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature at the State Capitol on Thursday. Seated behind Clinton and Engler are, from left, Sen. John Cherry, Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld and Sen. Dick Posthumus.

President pushes testing plan

Governor supports higher standards; others grumbling

By KAREN SCHULZ

Chronicle Lansing Bureau with local reports

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Please see TESTS
Page 2A



Associated Press

President Clinton waves to the joint session of the Legislature while House Speaker Curtis Hertel, D-Detroit, searches for a handshake.

Area lawmakers split on speech

By JOHN S. HAUSMAN

Chronicle staff writer

LANSING — The devil is in the details.

West Michigan lawmakers who heard President Clinton's speech to the Michigan Legislature agreed with him that "politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

In principle.

But in the real world of policymaking, nothing is quite that elementary.

Instant reactions from area officials leaving the House chambers after Clinton's bipartisan-toned speech were mostly warm. But lawmakers were also cautious, anticipating efforts by the Clinton administration to turn speeches into legislation.

"It all sounds good on the rhetoric," said U.S. Rep. Peter Hoekstra, a Holland Republican. "Let's wait for the details."

As a member of Congress, Hoekstra will have a vote on whatever specific bills the president might propose — unlike the state lawmakers who were Clinton's main audience. As a member of the opposition party, he is hedging his bets.

"He gave a speech I could give, a pretty nice Republican speech," Hoekstra said. Among other points, Clinton stressed a need for national testing, high aca-

Please see SPEECH
Page 2A

"I liked his approach. He talked about nonperformance in a very positive way."

— Rep. Jon Jellema, R-Grand Haven, who co-chairs a newly created GOP task force on improving schools

"I thought the lines could have been drawn more sharply on charter schools. ... The charter schools the president was backing are public charter schools. He was not talking about converting a private school to a public school, which is what we have here."

— Larry Owen, candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor

"I liked the part when he endorsed the idea of full-day, full-service schools."

— State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus, D-Detroit

TESTS

Continued from Page 1A

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Fearing failure, parents of some children have waived their children out of tests. Some lawmakers are talking about tightening the conditions under which students

may opt out.

Muskegon Heights school officials have been criticized for seeking waivers for students expected to do poorly.

Engler also wants the state to take over any school where 80 percent of students fail the High School Proficiency Test, or where dropout rates exceed 25 percent. The plan would require legislative approval.

Tough standards and rigorous testing will measure not only student success, but state success, many believe.

"The real reason for the testing is to have some test of accountability," said Sen. Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto. "If we have no tests of accountability, we don't know the schools are working."

For many, a major obstacle is deciding what percentage of students should pass the High School Proficiency Test. Should the test be a mark of achievement for all students, or simply designate varying levels of achievement?

"We're not writing a test where all students will pass, so what percent do we want to have an endorsed diploma for the state endorsement to have some meaning?" said Rep. Glenn Oxender, R-Sturgis.

The state's assessment coordinator said proficiency is the "ultimate goal," but likely won't be achieved by a majority of students

for 10 years.

"(The test) is a bugaboo," admitted Diane Smolen of the state Education Department, "and I'm sure it's been called worse than that."

Clinton said the U.S. Department of Education will support the development of new voluntary tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math.

Engler suggested that the test questions be incorporated into existing state tests, including the MEAP.

"I think it's great we have so much emphasis on education," said Kathleen Straus, Democratic president of the State Board of Education.

But she said she's not sure more testing is the answer.

Multiple efforts are under way in the Legislature and state board to review the tests or delay administration of future tests.

"A lot of people have said the (high school) tests were designed to show that public schools were failing," Straus said. Instead their purpose should be to point out where students need help, she said.

CORRECTION

Western Michigan Christian's Sarah Kelly, Stephanie Baar and Jane Abraham should have been included on Thursday's prep volleyball leader board. In 67 games, Kelly had 66 aces and Baar had 40 while Abraham had 111 digs.

SPEECH

Continued from Page 1A

demic standards and charter schools. "But we have not seen any of the proposals," Hoekstra added.

In particular, the 2nd District representative wants to see who develops the nationwide tests Clinton is proposing. "I don't support running those out of the Department of Education," Hoekstra said. "(Successful schools) are asking for more freedom, not Washington to take over the schools."

On the state level, no West Michigan lawmaker is likely to have as direct an impact on the specifics of school policy as state Rep. James G. Agee, a Muskegon Democrat.

Agee, formerly a career school administrator, is on the Democrat-controlled House Education Committee and is running for his party's 1998 nomination for governor. He is a frequent critic of education reforms proposed by Republican Gov. John Engler.

Agee's spin on Clinton's speech was its stress on academic standards — a chance for Agee to plug his own bill to restore a statewide "core curriculum" for all public school districts, a concept resisted by Engler.

"The president mentioned standards, standards, standards," Agee said. "The governor has said that, too, but then he turned around and dismantled them."

One reference in Clinton's speech provoked applause from Republicans, but few Democrats: his call for a "tenfold" increase in the number of charter

schools nationwide.

Tax-funded charter schools are a contentious issue in Michigan, with Engler and most Republicans supporting their expansion but many Democrats criticizing what they consider inadequate state control of the existing ones.

Agee — who didn't applaud Clinton's charter-school remark — later stressed the president's qualifying remarks: "You can stay open only as long as you do a good job," Clinton said. "That's what a charter is. ... We have got to have high standards, high expectations and high levels of accountability."

The president also added that all public schools — not just a few with charters — can and must be brought up to high standards.

Agee echoed those remarks. "The (Michigan) Democratic caucus supported charter schools," Agee said. "As (Clinton) said, they have to be accountable, with oversight, and not necessarily competing (with other public schools)."

State Rep. Paul T. Baade, a Roosevelt Park Democrat, also praised Clinton's speech. "I thought he was right on target with some of the things we are trying to do here," Baade said, stressing accountability and high academic standards.

Republican state Sen. Leon Stille of Ferrysburg also was supportive, although he expressed reservations over Clinton's call for national testing.

(2092)

Even politicians can be impressed

It pays to have an aisle seat. Or a second-from-the-aisle seat.

Reps. Lynne Martinez, D-Lansing, and Laura Baird, D-Okemos, were among the lucky ones Thursday. As Clinton made his way down the center aisle in the House chamber, shaking hands and exchanging greetings, the two were right at the rope-line.

Clinton had nearly passed Baird when she shouted out "Hey!" He turned and grasped her hand, shook the hands of some of the guests around her, then gave Martinez a full shoulder-clap and smile before moving on.

"Really major, major excitement," Baird said later.

"No matter how long you've been around and how jaded you can be, there are certain things that are still impressive," said Martinez.

Afterwards, state lawmakers and others lined up on the Capitol's first floor to have their picture taken with Clinton — Democrats and Republicans alike, with Gov. John Engler standing by to make introductions.

How giddy were people?

Conrad Mallett, chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, stood in his long black robe snapping pictures with a pocket camera as Clinton approached.

Hollister hears encouraging words

Good thing Lansing Mayor David Hollister works close to the Capitol.

Hollister greeted President Clinton at the airport Thursday, then was in the House audience as a guest of Rep. Lynne Martinez when Clinton gave his speech.

After the affair, he headed back to his City Hall office.

Not long after, word came that Clinton was inviting him to lunch in the office of House Speaker Curtis Hertel. Hollister hustled back to the Capitol, where he dined with Clinton, Hertel and several other lawmakers.

Connections give Democrats contact

Democratic activist Joel Ferguson joined President Clinton on the Air Force One flight back to Washington Thursday.

"I'm taking Engler's seat," he said. Gov. John Engler, who was in Washington for meetings on Wednesday, had flown with the president to Lansing.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, meanwhile, flew round trip with the president. On Thursday night, she was invited to the White House with other members of the congressional women's caucus for dinner.

Compiled by State Journal staff writers

Lansing State
Journal
LA 3-7-97

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Meeting the president makes kids' wait worthwhile

By Todd Schulz
Lansing State Journal

To those aboard Air Force One, Carlos Cosey must have looked like the perfect welcome for President Clinton.

The 9-year-old bundled in a black coat flashed a toothy grin and a yellow cardboard sign that read, "We love you Mr. President," as Clinton's plane taxied across the runway Thursday morning at Capital City Airport.

Minutes later, Cosey and nine other local students found themselves face-to-face with the leader of the free world.

"I'll remember it forever," said Cosey, a student at Mid-Michigan Public School Academy in

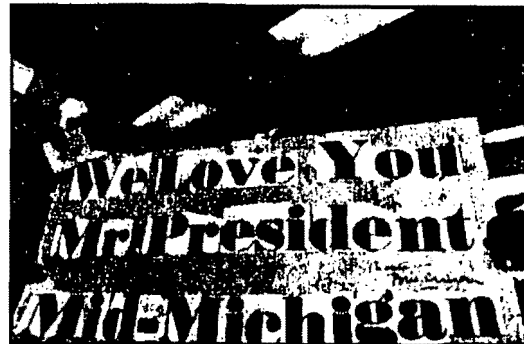
Lansing.

Same for the other students, who earned the chance to meet Clinton by writing essays and letters to the Lansing State Journal. U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow made the arrangements with the White House.

The group — ranging in age from 9 to 17 and representing 10 local schools — arrived at the airport about 9:15 a.m.

They spent about an hour watching Secret Service agents, reporters and police prepare for the visit before a White House staffer ushered them onto the runway to await Air Force One.

Darrell Crockett, a 9-year-old from El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz Academy in Lansing, pulled his



ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal

coat over his head and its sleeves over his hands to ward off the cold.

When Clinton emerged from the plane, he greeted local officials, in-

cluding Mayor David Hollister, and headed straight for the students, who were stationed near the presidential limousine.

Souvenir

smile: Carlos Cosey, a third-grader at Mid-Michigan Public School Academy, gets an autograph from Clinton.

"Thanks for waiting for me," Clinton said, his smiling face beet red from the frigid air.

The president spent about five minutes with the students, who were accompanied by Diane Spicer, a Grand River Elementary School fourth-grade teacher. He shook hands, collected gifts, signed autographs and posed for group pictures.

Katelyn Christensen and Ashley Thomas, both 9 years old, gave Clinton a notebook filled with some of the more than 700 letters written to the president by Lansing-area students.

A few more smiles, a few final waves and the president ducked

Please see **KIDS, 8A**

Kids: Visit was worth the wait

Continued **FROM 1A**

into the limo for the trip to the state Capitol to address lawmakers.

"It exceeded my expectations," said Brian Ngo, a 17-year-old senior from Holt High School. "It's a great experience to shake his hand and talk to him."

"When you see him on TV, you don't see him as a real person."

Ngo wasn't the only student who saw a new side of the president.

"I didn't expect him to be so enthusiastic," said Emma Tai, a 12-year-old from MacDonald Middle School in East Lansing. "I'm going to go back to school and all my friends will say, 'Oh, you're so lucky.'"

Tai said Clinton was taller in person than on television.

Meeting the president cleared up a different misconception for Cosey, who included a drawing of Clinton with his letter. The next time Cosey sets out to capture the president's image on paper, he'll use a different color crayon.

"His gray hair surprised me, I thought it was brown," he said with a smile.

STATE

Clinton, Engler agree on schools

■ President's speech puts some
state Democrats in awkward position

By TOM MURPHY

Of The Oakland Press

LANSING — President Bill Clinton and Gov. John Engler may agree that "politics should stop at the schoolhouse door," but Republicans and Democrats in Michigan remain divided on a host of educational initiatives.



Clinton

One of the thorniest issues in Michigan — charter schools — was hailed by Clinton in his speech Thursday to the state Legislature as a way to improve education by offering more choices to families.

The president said he wants to "increase by tenfold the number of charter schools we have by the year 2000. ... We want to say to them, 'You can stay open only as long as you do a good job.' That's what the charter means. That's what a charter is."

Clinton's stand puts state Democrats, who have been cool to the idea of charter schools, in a tough position. On Wednesday, Senate Democrats voted against a bill to lift the cap on charter schools in low-income areas. The issue passed in the GOP-held Senate, but its prospects in the Democrat-controlled House are uncertain.

"I think before I support it I need to look at it closely. I'm not ready to take from public educa-

SEE CLINTON/A-15

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CLINTON

FROM PAGE A-1

President's praise puts state Democrats in awkward positions

tion and give it to charters," said state Rep. Nancy Quarles, D-Southfield. "More emphasis should be put on public education so everyone has an opportunity to get a quality education."

Other Democrats were less willing to stand publicly in opposition to their president on the charter issue.

"We're not against charter schools," said state Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township. "It's a worthwhile experiment. We just need to be careful as we're moving forward."

Peters said he voted against the bill Wednesday because it would have allowed some charter schools to discriminate in admitting students, which would have cost the state \$80 million in federal funds. Republicans, including Sen. Dan DeGrow of Port Huron, called the argument "ridiculous."

While Clinton and Engler seemed to exude an air of bipartisanship on behalf of the nation's children, Rep. John Freeman, D-Madison Heights, said Republicans and Democrats in Michigan will continue to disagree on other school issues, including establishing a core curriculum and educational standards.

"I don't see everything as rosy as some people say," Freeman said. "The concept that a few charter schools will drastically improve schools is nonsense. We need to improve the schools that are now in place because the vast majority of kids will still go there."

In his 47-minute speech, Clinton repeated many of the themes in his state of the union address — at least two years of education past high school, Internet access for all children, schools of choice, teaching right and wrong in classrooms, additional money for school construction, a tutoring program to help children read independently, 100,000 more master's teachers nationwide and uniform national standards, particularly in reading and math.

Republican legislators, such as Sen. Mat Dunaskiss, R-Lake Orion, were largely supportive of the president's ideas, saying they had been pursuing many of the same proposals for more than 10 years.

Richard Simonson, assistant superintendent of Oakland



The Associated Press/WILFREDO LEE

President Clinton receives an ovation from the Michigan State Legislature and Gov. Engler (right)

Schools, said he is not surprised that Michigan Democrats seem less enthusiastic about charter schools than their party's president.

"We have a pretty strong public school system, and there's a tradition in Michigan of strongly supporting public schools," Simonson said. "Polling data here shows most people think their public schools are pretty good, and any tampering with that is something that causes people concern."

State Rep. Tom Middleton, R-Ortonville, praised Clinton for saying that compassion is not the answer for schools if it means lowering expectations from young people.

"When I was raising my children, it was easy to let them off and drop the standards so you didn't have to keep hounding them," Middleton said. "But we need to keep that pressure on to get quality schools."

The president and governor pledged to work together on a system that prepares young people for jobs in a global economy

and trains adults on welfare to work for a living.

Engler said he and the president have had constructive talks about education, and that they share much common ground.

"We are focused on a significant challenge — improving the education of all our children. No challenge confronting our state and nation is more urgent," Engler said. "Where our children are concerned, our search is not strictly for a Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution. A solution that unites rich and poor, parents and teachers, principals and employers."

Marion Ginopolis, superintendent of Oxford Area Community Schools, attended the speech and said she was glad the nation's future was the emphasis rather than politics.

"As a local superintendent I didn't hear one thing that was said today that I wouldn't support for kids — high standards, high expectations, assessment of accountability," Ginopolis said.

2 of 2

Clinton touting school testing

Consensus on education sought



Clinton

■ **Charter schools:** State Senate passes bill to expand number. A3

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lansing - President Clinton and Gov. John M. Engler tried to find common ground on education as the president brought his campaign for school standards and national testing to Michigan today.

Clinton's scheduled speech on education to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature was preceded by some bipartisan showmanship.

The president arranged for Engler, who was in Washington Wednesday, to fly back to Lansing aboard Air Force One.

And Engler said Wednesday that

he backed Clinton's proposal to expand the nationwide school testing.

"I'm hoping (the testing) will start next year," Engler said while in Washington.

The president has proposed using the National Assessment of Education Progress to test students in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math to make sure students master key skills.

The tests now are given only in a random sample of school districts, rather than to all students. Engler said inserting the national questions

Please see **CLINTON, A11**

- President Clinton's proposals:
- Set national standards, with national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade math, and hold schools accountable for poor scores.
 - Set standards for teachers and help 100,000 master teachers achieve national certification.
 - Recruit 1 million volunteer tutors to help children read independently by the end of the 3rd grade.
 - Expand Head Start to cover more disadvantaged children and encourage parents to become involved in education.
 - Double funding to start charter schools so there will be 3,000 of them by the year 2000.
 - Make schools safer, drug-free and more disciplined with uniforms, character education.
 - Provide \$5 billion for repairing or replacing schools.
 - Give tax credits for college tuition costs.
 - Provide skill grants for worker education and training.
 - Connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and help all students become technologically literate.

CLINTON

Continued from A1

into the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test would let the state see how its students stack up against the rest of the nation.

"When you give your state-only test, everybody is above average. When you ask how they're doing individually, everybody is doing great," Engler said.

The Clinton administration gave the state a pat on the back in return. Michigan students improved 12 points on eighth-grade math scores compared to 1990 on the most recent NAEP tests.

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley said Michigan, North Carolina and Texas improved the most.

"They get my most improved player award. This is a big achievement," Riley said in a statement released by Engler's office.

In advance of Clinton's speech, state officials had plenty of ideas of what they wanted to hear.

Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint Twp., E-mailed the president to urge him to tout an experiment in Flint that has raised test scores by limiting to 17 the number of students in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms.

"I have told him that this is the way we ought to go in terms of re-

forming our public school systems, to make sure these kids can get a good chance, a good start," Conroy said.

Rep. Jim Agee, D-Muskegon, wanted to hear support for his idea of reinstituting core curriculum standards for state schools.

Michigan had adopted a requirement that districts follow standards of what should be taught in key academic areas at each grade, but Republicans repealed that.

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, said the focus on education is more important than the specifics of what Clinton says.

"Any time the president of the United States is here talking about a topic, that topic becomes important. That in and of itself is positive because of the attention (to education)," he said.

Kathleen Straus, president of the state Board of Education, said she hoped having the state's Republican governor appear with the Democratic president will change the tenor of the debate over education in Michigan.

"It might produce a more bipartisan spirit," said Straus, a Detroit Democrat.

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FLINT JOURNAL
3-6-97 1A

Republicans embrace Clinton's education ideas

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING — President Clinton declared Thursday "this is a rare time" that the nation should seize to forge a new bipartisan partnership for improving schools.

Clinton used his speech to a joint session of the Michigan House and Senate to push the education agenda he laid out in his State of the Union message, including more charter schools, national testing and letting parents choose which school their child will attend.

"This is not a partisan issue. There is no Democratic or Republican way to learn. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading, math is math," he said.

It was a speech that rang true to both Republicans and Democrats as members of each party read into it support for their own education visions. Lawmakers interrupted the president's 45-minute speech 24 times with applause, and got to their feet when he urged high standards for all students.

"... When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it," Clinton said to prompt the ovation.

One audience member deals with Clinton's subject every day as principal of Henry Paideia Academy, a public elementary school struggling in a poor, urban section of Grand Rapids.

"I couldn't hardly sit in my seat, he was so right-on with what he said," said Ruth Jones. "The children can do it. We can do it."

Gov. John Engler, who rode back from Washington aboard Air Force One with Clinton, told the crowd that he and the president had found common ground on education. The governor had earlier announced Michigan wanted to be the first state to volunteer to test fourth-graders in reading and eighth-graders in math, using the national tests Clinton has been promoting.

"I thought it was a tremendous speech," Engler told

reporters later.

The president urged:

- National testing in reading and math. Although it would not be required, Clinton said states should do it so they know how their students compare.

- Tax credits for college tuition costs.

- Federal funds to lower the costs of borrowing money to fix rundown schools.

- Hooking every school and library up to the Internet by the year 2000.

- More freedom for parents to choose which public school their children will attend.

- A tenfold increase in the number of charter schools in the country.

The governor said Clinton's backing of charter schools would make it hard for Democratic lawmakers to continue to oppose GOP efforts to remove the limit on the number of charter schools in Michigan.

"What's their argument? The president's wrong on that, too?" he said.

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, said Clinton endorsed the agenda Michigan Republicans have been pushing for years.

"I don't know whether to be worried or encouraged that I felt very comfortable with the president's speech — all of it," he said.

Democrats basked in the pleasure of having a sitting president of their own party in their midst, but they put a different slant on Clinton's charter school comments.

Rep. Sharon Gire, D-Clinton Township, chair of the House Education Committee, said Clinton emphasized a need for accountability and oversight, as Democrats in Michigan also have stressed, by saying they need to be held to national standards and should be closed down if they fail to meet them.

"That's not what we're doing here in Michigan," she said.

"He's not saying, 'Do anything called a charter school and we'll give you money.'"

Several Democrats took care to note that charter schools were not the primary focus of the speech.

"Though he had a line or two on charter schools, the majority of his speech was on high standards," said Rep. Jim Agee, D-Muskegon, a gubernatorial candidate and longtime critic of Engler's education policies.

Agee said he believes it's hypocritical of Engler to sign on to national testing without also endorsing mandatory content standards in the classroom.

To Rep. Gary Peters, the most exciting part of the speech was Clinton's announcement that Michigan would receive \$8.6 million for technological upgrades to its schools. The funds could be used to train teachers in new technology and to buy computers, software and Internet access.

"People are going to be left behind" without such help, the Pontiac Democrat said.

The president received a warm welcome when he arrived, 22 minutes late, for his speech to about 500 lawmakers, state officials and invited guests.

He worked his way slowly up the center aisle of the House chamber, careful to shake every outstretched Democratic hand on the left side of the aisle before turning to his right to shake the hands of Republican lawmakers, too.

At the front of the chamber, the president craned his neck to look at the ceiling as Engler pointed out the glass panel bearing the image of Arkansas' state seal, located right next to the panel bearing Michigan's state seal.

Clinton drew many parallels between his time and the era of the last president to address the Michigan Legislature — Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke to a joint session in 1907.

Peace and prosperity reigned in both periods, Clinton said, and that's what makes this a rare time when the nation can concentrate on such things as improving education.

Clinton lived up to his reputation as a skilled communicator with his earnest, conversational style, said Rep. Jon Jellema, R-Grand Haven.

"I liked his approach," Jellema said. "He talked about non-performance in a very positive way."

Oakland Press 5-7-91
A15

Nationwide test gets good marks

► Do you support President Clinton's call for national student tests? Ballot Box, D8.

MIKE THOMPSON
and KAREN SCHULZ
■ THE SAGINAW NEWS
and NEWS LANSING BUREAU

LANSING — President Clinton's call for national student tests is a good idea "as long as they do it right," says a veteran Saginaw School District specialist.

"How reliable is it?" asked Barry E. Quimper, the district's director of evaluation, testing and research. "Is it valid? Is it measuring what it's supposed to measure?"

Clinton spoke to state legislators Thursday in Lansing as part of his emphasis on education during the start of his second term.

He repeated his State of the Union proposal for national tests of fourth-graders

in reading and eighth-graders in math.

"It's not a new idea," Quimper said. "It's been kicked around for the past 20 to 30 years."

A form of national testing already exists, he noted, allowing analysts to compare the United States with other countries.

The difference is that the existing tests measure a sampling of American students. Clinton would score all pupils at once.

"National standards and a national curriculum would not be a bad idea," Quimper said.

"A lot of people oppose that because they say it would threaten local control, but if we are just talking baseline (minimum) requirements, I could support it."

Paul W. Lichau, president of the Carrollton Education Association, said he would back national tests if they are not used as a prop to compare one school with another.



AL GOLDIS/SAGINAW NEWS LANSING BUREAU

Gov. John Engler, right, responds during President Clinton's address to the state Legislature.

Gov. John M. Engler, who claims bipartisan common ground with Clinton on school issues, has issued annual state reports that compare scores among districts.

"So much of education depends on a student's circumstances," Lichau said.

"Anytime you try to compare one student against another, one district against another, one state against another, you run into circum-

stances among the students that are not the same."

Educators across Michigan have complained that Engler's emphasis on state tests is eroding time from classroom lessons.

For example, the new high school proficiency tests in reading, writing, math and science require a combined 11 hours.

National exams should combine with state tests in-

stead of duplicating them, Lichau suggested.

"I don't think we would want to add (national tests) to the many days of testing that we already do," he said.

Clinton's call for national testing, and Engler's offer to accept the challenge, come at a time when tempers are hot in Michigan over standardized testing.

PLEASE SEE TESTS — A2 ►

TESTS

Nationwide approach gets qualified OKs

▼ CONTINUED FROM A1

In his speech Thursday, Clinton thanked Engler for offering Michigan as a pilot state for a national achievement test.

Air Force One hadn't even taken off at Capitol City Airport when critics started complaining.

"Do I need national tests to tell me how my kids are doing?" said Gary Wolfram, a Republican State Board of Education member. "Why do I need to compare my kid? I, as a parent, will decide what my child ought to learn."

And House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, a Grandville Republican, added this: "I don't want to see a massive change of national government in education."

In remarks preceding Clinton's speech, Engler emphasized the need for high standards. He said Michigan students would take a national test beginning with the 1997-98 school year.

"Where our children are concerned, our search is not for a strictly Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution," Engler said.

Not all children will succeed when taking the tests, but lowering standards doesn't help anyone, Clinton said.

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expect-

ing less of them," Clinton said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

Fearing failure, parents of some children have waived their children out of tests. Some lawmakers are talking about tightening the conditions under which students may opt out.

Tough standards and rigorous testing will measure not only student success, but state success, many believe.

"The real reason for the testing is to have some test of accountability," said Sen. Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, a Republican from the Grand Rapids area. "If we have no tests of accountability, we don't know the schools are working."

Engler suggested that questions on a national test could fit in with existing state exams.

"It's great we have so much emphasis on education," said Kathleen Straus, Democratic president of the State Board of Education.

But she's not sure more testing is the answer.

Many efforts are under way in the Legislature and state board to review tests or delay giving tests.

"A lot of people have said the (high school) tests were designed to show that public schools were failing," Straus said.

State tests should point out where students need help, she said. ■

President calls for national tests

■ Clinton makes history by outlining plan before state Legislature.

By Chad Selweski
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

President Clinton, in a historic appearance Thursday before the Michigan Legislature, called for national testing of students across America to establish an American standard in reading and math skills.

Gov. John Engler immediately took up the challenge, vowing that all Michigan fourth-graders will take the national reading test starting with the 1997-98 school year.

"It doesn't matter if your child makes the highest grade in the class if nobody gets over the standards bar," said Clinton, making the first presidential address to a joint session of the Legislature since Theodore Roosevelt in 1907.

"We need tests that say whether you crossed the threshold of what you must know to do well in the world of tomorrow."

Engler said he hopes to administer the National Assessment of Education Progress, or NAEP test, to all Michigan fourth-graders in the next school year. The NAEP test for eighth-graders, a math exam, will take more time to put into place, he said.

"We here in Michigan will be the first state to measure student achievement against the world," Engler told the legislators.

Clinton urged all states to embrace national standards for math and reading, with testing in the fourth and eighth grades.

The testing wouldn't be mandatory, he said. But the



President Clinton acknowledges the joint session of the Michigan Legislature as Gov. John Engler applauds Thursday in Lansing.

Macomb educators ready for national test

By Frank DeFrank
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Macomb County educators have a message for President Bill Clinton, who proposed a national assessment test for public school students: Bring it on.

"We could easily accommodate the national standards without skipping a beat," said Joanne Jacobson, assistant superintendent of curriculum for Fraser Public Schools.

"It wouldn't cause any consternation in this county or this state."

Clinton outlined plans to implement the National Assessment of Education Progress tests to Michigan fourth- and eighth-graders. The goal is

to provide a test that can accurately measure student achievement across the country.

Gov. John Engler promised to begin implementation of the national test this fall.

Jacobson is also president of the Macomb Association of Curriculum Administrators, which oversees what Macomb County school children are taught. She's familiar with the NAEP test, gives it high marks and predicted Michigan students will score above the national average.

"It's a good one," she said. "But it's not as high level (as the Michigan Education Assessment Program). It's not as difficult."

"I would assume we (Macomb County

Macomb Daily 3-1-97 17 (109-2)

Educators

Continued from Page 1A

students) would all do pretty well on it."

William Britt is deputy superintendent of Clintondale Community Schools, which earned accolades for its recent success on the MEAP tests.

Although unfamiliar with the NAEP, implementation of another assessment test is no surprise. Assessment is the buzzword of the '90s.

"We are certainly spending more and more time dealing with the assessments and the scoring of assessments," said Britt. "The internal assessment has become the outside evaluation."

That can be good or bad, Britt continued.

"Too much of it could turn out to be dangerous," he said. "If we rely too much on these tests to place a value on a school district, I think it's a mistake."

Superintendent James Avery of New Haven Community Schools has no quarrel with assessment tests. But he wonders if politicians, the media and the public are "assessment happy."

Assessment tests were designed originally as a tool for administrators to evaluate what they teach and how they teach it. Now, the tests have become scoreboards that don't

If we rely too much on these tests to place a value on a school district, I think it's a mistake.

**— William Britt
Clintondale Schools**

always accurately reflect a district's ability to educate students.

"For some reason, there is a need to compare ourselves to each other," said Avery. "We put a lot of undue pressure on kids, due to the manner we handle assessment tests."

While New Haven students may not fare as well as their neighbors on assessment tests, the superintendent said, "They do as well as anybody else when it comes to after high school."

Britt empathizes with his neighbor to the north. Assessment tests should be just one part of the education picture, Britt said. But Michigan is an "assessment-based reform state," and that's not likely to change any time soon.

"We probably sooner than others have accepted that philosophy," said Britt. "I'm not going to stand in the way of a tidal wave."

Clinton

Continued from Page 1A

president vowed to create a national climate in which any state would be "ashamed" if they declined.

Engler said portions of the NAEP reading test for fourth graders will be incorporated into the state standardized test known as MEAP, or Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

Establishing the NAEP math test for eighth graders, he said, will take more planning because the MEAP test is taken a year earlier, in seventh grade.

Currently the NAEP tests are administered in a small sampling of school districts across the nation.

Clinton said a new national test — measuring fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math, like NAEP — will be developed over the next two years.

The biggest applause of the day for the president came when he warned that all students, even those who struggle with academics, must be held to rigorous national standards.

"Sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them," he said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

The testing plan proposed by the president and embraced by the governor appeared to gain quick acceptance from educators — and from one Macomb County student who was a guest at the president's speech.

"Someone like me, I'm not a good test-taker. But if (the national test) can show students the points they need help with," said Jessica Chrzanowski, 17, a senior at South Lake High School in St. Clair

Shores.

Mount Clemens Schools Superintendent Blanche Fraser, who also attended the speech, said she welcomes the call for standards that place more scrutiny on the education system. Strong schools, she said, are necessary for a strong economy.

"The stakes have never been higher and the competition has never been greater, not only between states, but between nations," said Fraser. "Why should we (educators) be exempt from that competition?"

State Rep. Sharon Gire, chairwoman of the House Education Committee, said she doesn't believe the national test can be put into place for fourth-graders as quickly as the governor hopes.

A Clinton Township Democrat, Gire said it makes more sense to first establish state standards through a mandated core curriculum for all schools, as the House Democrats have proposed.

But Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus said the core curriculum plan will be "dead on arrival" in the Senate. A Republican from Alto, Posthumus said each school district should establish its own standards.

Engler and fellow Republicans were pleased by the conservative tone of the president's speech, including Clinton's call for a tenfold increase in alternative charter schools by 2000.

"I think we should work together to give parents more choices for what public schools their children attend all across America," said Clinton. "I think we should help teachers, parents, museums and others to create new public charter schools."

One speech, two views

LANSING STATE
JOURNAL
3-7-97
(1048)



ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal
President arrives: President Clinton leaves Air Force One upon his arrival Thursday in Lansing, followed by Gov. John Engler, U.S. Reps. John Dingell, D-Trenton, Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, and other dignitaries.

Reaction to Clinton's education agenda split along partisan lines

By Chris Andrews

Lansing State Journal

Republicans and Democrats seemed to hear two different speeches from President Clinton on Thursday — and both gave him rave reviews.

Republicans hailed Clinton's education address to the Legislature as unbridled support for their efforts to expand the number of charter schools in Michigan. Democrats fiercely oppose that effort, saying the existing charter schools aren't held accountable.

"Face it, Bill Clinton's for charter schools, the National Education Association is, John Engler and the

Senate Republicans are for charter schools for Michigan's future," said Sen. Bill Schuette, R-Midland.

"Michigan Democrats are out of sync with our president, their party's leader."

Democrats, on the other hand, latched

on to Clinton's call for strong standards, which they translated into a pitch for a mandated core curriculum. House Democrats are pushing to restore a mandate repealed by Republicans in the last session.

"He pointed out very clearly that educational reform is more than a one-dimensional challenge," said Senate Minority Leader John Cherry, D-Clio. "The president said we need to be committed to basic curriculum, and yet the Republicans have backed away from it."

Clinton's address — the second to a state legislature since his State of the Union message in January — is part of a campaign to place improving schools at the top of the national agenda.

In broad terms, he wants all 8-year-olds to be able to read independently, all 12-year-olds to be able to log onto the Internet, all 18 year-olds to be able to attend college and all adults to commit themselves to lifelong learning.

"He's got so much empathy, he just takes off."

David Hollister
Lansing
mayor

His 10-point "call to action" includes such things as more reading tutors, national testing and upgraded technology.

Although Clinton declared that "politics should stop at the classroom door," it was immediately apparent that there are sharp partisan differences in the Michigan Legislature.

After the speech, Republican leaders held a news conference to highlight the areas where they agreed with Clinton, focusing primarily on charter schools and national testing.

Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus challenged Democrats to take up a bill increasing the number of charters immediately.

But U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, said Clinton's and Engler's positions on school issues aren't as close as they seem.

"The words sound the same, the actions have been very different," she said. Clinton, for instance, emphasized lifelong learning, while Engler cut adult education spending.

State Rep. Laura Baird, D-Okeemos, said she believed Clinton succeeded in contrasting his position with Engler's.

"I think they have very different approaches. I think Clinton's strategy is more inclusive and bringing people along, rather than the kind of confrontational, in-your-face style we see in Michigan," she said.

Former Gov. James Blanchard, a friend of Clinton's since both were Democratic governors in the 1980s, said the president sought to be intentionally bipartisan.

"He wants to make sure the campaign for better education is bipartisan," Blanchard said. "I think he underscored that quite effectively by praising Michigan and inviting Gov. Engler to fly with us back here."

Lansing Mayor David Hollister, who has created his own blue-ribbon commission to study education in Lansing, said Clinton laid out his agenda effectively.

"I thought it was inspirational, I thought it was sincere," he said. "He's got so much empathy, he just takes off."

East Lansing schools Superintendent Daniel Keck, invited to sit on the House floor with state Sen. Dianne Byrum, D-Onondaga, said he was encouraged by the president's positive and upbeat challenge to educators.

"I wish our legislators would take a little lesson from what was said this morning," he said. "I think when someone comes into town and takes a very positive leadership approach to restructuring, it shows it will get us a lot farther than the blame game."

Staff writers Greg J. Borowski and Mark Mayes contributed to this report.

Dear Mr. President:

Local students meet president

Ten students from mid-Michigan schools met President Clinton Thursday. Nine were selected from more than 700 students who wrote the Lansing State Journal to share what they wanted Clinton to know about their schools. Aaron Keck is a reader member of the Lansing State Journal's Editorial Board. Teacher Diane Spicer of Lansing's Grand River Elementary chaperoned. She was selected based on a letter written by her student, Ashley Thomas.



Leslie Andrews
Age: 13
Kinawa Middle School,
Okemos
Eighth grade



Katelyn Christensen
Age: 9
Ralya Elementary,
Haslett
Fourth grade



Carlos Cosey
Age: 9
Mid-Michigan Public School Academy,
Lansing
Third grade



Darrell Crockett
Age: 9
Shabazz Academy,
Lansing
Fourth grade



Lauren Forbis
Age: 13
Otto Middle School,
Lansing
Seventh grade



Aaron Keck
Age: 17
Everett High School,
Lansing
Senior



Jens Michaelson
Age: 11
Beagle Middle School, Grand Ledge
Sixth grade



Brian Ngo
Age: 17
Holt High School
Senior



Emma Tal
Age: 12
MacDonald Middle School,
East Lansing
Seventh grade



Ashley Thomas
Age: 9
Grand River Elementary,
Lansing
Fourth grade



Diane Spicer
Grand River Elementary,
Lansing
Fourth-grade teacher

'Everything else stops' for Clinton

By Faith Johnson
Lansing State Journal

What exactly goes into planning a presidential visit?

On Thursday it took:

- One 12-year-old, explosives-sniffing German shepherd.

- A security listening device on airport telephones.

- Partial shutdown of Interstate 496 and some Lansing streets.

- Police officers from at least four departments.

- Two umbrellas and ... some duct tape.

"One of the Secret Service guys asked for the umbrellas and duct tape," said Richard Kettles, president of General Aviation at Capital City Airport.

The umbrellas were a precautionary measure for cloudy skies that eventually sent scattered snow showers.

"I don't know what he wants with the duct tape," Kettles said.

Neither did the other 30 or so Secret Service agents who shied away from the media as they stood, feet spread apart, talking into their sleeves while listening for instructions through a visible earpiece.

Security measures for President Bill Clinton's visit to Lansing got under way last weekend and culminated Thursday.

At 9:15 a.m., three Secret Service men walked behind vans, parked on the east end of the terminal, with Arnold, a brown Irish setter-mixed German shepherd, from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

Arnold sniffed the area for explosives. Had any been found, the dog would have sat down, the dog's keeper said. Arnold stayed on his feet.

Inside Capital City Airport, two Secret Service agents asked politicians, reporters and other guests to open their coats, turn around and place equipment on the floor while they ran a metal detector up and down each torso, after patting pant legs and outstretched arms.

Becky Kettles, General Aviation's office manager and Richard's wife, said she had never before seen such tight security.

"They called us last Saturday, and we met them out here on Sunday," she said about Clinton's security force. "They wanted to be able to search the building and find out the access points."

Becky Kettles said the airport has about 30 rooms.

"They put antennas on the roof and all our telephones are bugged in case we get any weird calls," she said. When Air Force One landed, around 10:15 a.m., police cars from Lansing, Ingham County, Clinton County, Eaton County and State Police posts lined the airstrip.

Inside Lansing's city limits, Interstate 496 — near South Cedar Street to Interstate 96 — was closed about 15 minutes.

"When the president moves, everything else stops," said Lansing Police Chief Jerome Boles, who let one of his captains handle the logistics of Clinton's visit.

Capt. Andrew George said Lansing called in about 35 extra officers Thursday.

George said the department received instructions from the Secret Service last week but developed emergency routes and decided which streets to close on Monday.

"Part of Ottawa and Walnut streets were closed for about 30 minutes when the president was coming through," George said. "Our main objective was to provide security while he was in the city of Lansing and we were successful."

Sue Benjamin, a clerk at the 7-Eleven food store on Waverly Road, had to contend with angry customers who entered the store while traffic stopped before noon and again about 2:30 p.m.

"I've had to deal with customers screaming all day about 496 being blocked off," Benjamin said. "I told them I can't do anything about it."

When Clinton left the airport at 2:40 p.m., waving to a small crowd from Air Force One, some weren't shedding tears.

"We're glad he came and now we're glad he's gone," George said.

CLINTON VISIT: LESSON FOR LEGISLATORS



DOUG ELBINGER/for the Lansing State Journal

Hello, at last: Leslie Andrews, 13, an eighth-grader at Kinawa Middle School, shakes the president's hand Thursday. Leslie, daughter of State Journal political editor Chris Andrews, reported from Clinton's 21st Century Express train trip through Michigan in August, but didn't meet Clinton until Thursday.

"I was hoping to meet the president — and Chelsea, but she wasn't on the train."

"I made a little button that said, 'It's my birthday, and I want to see the PRESIDENT' as a hint."

"Someone told me he would come by, but instead he listened to the first lady's speech. By the time it was over, we had arrived in East Lansing."

"Maybe next time." — Aug. 28, 1996

I finally got to meet President Clinton on Thursday, exactly six months and one week after my first try.

It was my 13th birthday last August, and my dad and I were riding on the 21st Century Express train with Clinton as he campaigned across Michigan to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He was going to come and shake my hand, but at the last minute his plans changed.

This time, however, I wasn't going to let him miss me. I, along with

other local students who wrote "Dear Mr. President" letters to the State Journal, met President Clinton at Capital City Airport on Thursday.

A huge plane labeled "The United States of America" landed on the runway, and many political figures emptied out. Among them were Debbie Stabenow, Gov. John Engler and President Clinton. Clinton walked off Air Force One and into the line the 10 of us formed.

He walked around shaking everyone's hands and calling us by our first names.

That was a totally unexpected gesture to most of us. When it was my turn, I was both nervous and excited.

In a tiny voice, I said "Can I have your autograph?" to the tall man with a friendly smile. "Yeah, in just a minute," he replied.

Then, we got a group picture with Clinton, each of us edging as close to him as possible.

Next, we huddled in a group



Leslie Andrews

Teen columnist

fighting the photographers to get closer to the center where Clinton was signing autographs.

I wanted Clinton to sign the article I wrote about my train trip with him.

I pushed my article above heads and Clinton took it while looking at my face.

To my surprise, he stopped and read the article while many were waiting out in the freezing cold for their turn.

I was shocked again when he wrote "Leslie — This is a fine arti-

cle. Congratulations. Bill Clinton 3/6/97," rather than what he wrote on most people's: "President Bill Clinton 3/6/97."

Then, as he was leaving, he said "Bye Leslie, bye Carlos..." in such a familiar and casual way that you'd have thought we had been longtime friends.

Lastly, as we walked over into the press area, reporters swarmed around us trying to get the scoop on what the president was like. The way Clinton left me feeling was that if he could, he'd go to every single person in the United States and talk to them individually.

He seemed like he loved the public. He also treated everyone like his friends.

I have come to the conclusion that we have a great man leading our nation into the 21st century.

Leslie Andrews, 13, is an eighth-grader at Kinawa Middle School in Okemos. She is the daughter of State Journal political editor Chris Andrews.

(6 of 8)

5

Crowd gathers for presidential glimpse

By Betsy J. Miner
Lansing State Journal

From abortion protests to the Hokey Pokey, the scene outside Michigan's Capitol Thursday was anything but ho hum.

A crowd of about 300 huddled there — most hoping for a glimpse of the silver-haired southerner in from the nation's capital. A few others merely wanted to make a point.

Each had their own reason for skipping school, work and other obligations to be part of Lansing's own presidential drama.

Larry and Linda Cummins of DeWitt were certain that if President Clinton was going to meet the town's folk, he would seek out those close to him.

So they bundled up for the 26-degree day and traipsed out onto the Capitol's snow-dusted lawn — holding a large flag from Arkansas. They figured the mostly red banner might earn them a handshake.

"We thought the president could use a friendly face," Linda Cummins said, gripping the flag bought in an old Arkansas gas station a few years back.

Larry Cummins grew up in Paragould, Ark. So Clinton is a hometown hero for him: "My mother voted for him when he was just a boy — for governor."

Across the way, a group of fifth-graders from Holland brainstormed ways to beat the biting wind chill.

"You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around. That's what it's all about," they sang, jumping in unison. The kids trekked to town from Holland's Vanderbilt Charter School to let President Clinton know they love the way they learn.

"We get more schooling, less recess," Peter Szymczak said. "That's a good thing. We're learning about justice and virtues."

If he had the chance — which he didn't — Szymczak said he would tell the president charter schools are the best.

"He should support them all that he can," he said.

Jim Pouillon of Owosso also had a message. His 4-by-5-foot sign, bearing a gruesome photo of a mangled fetus, told everyone he's against abortion.

Pouillon, a member of Operation

Lifesaver, said the picture triggered some negative response from the dozen or so schoolteachers there with their classes for the morning.

"They said it was offensive," he said. "I told them it offends me too, that's why it should be illegal."

"Our president is in favor of this. The blood of innocent babies is on his hands."

A black stretch limousine pulled up to the Capitol's north entrance and the cluster of people shifted, cramming into a taped off area hoping to see Clinton.

Joy Wallace of Lansing was first in line. She leaned against a light post and beamed at the black vehicles that lined up in the driveway.

"I have a flower for you," she said, holding out a single purple iris, carefully wrapped in clear cellophane.

The card attached read: "Thanks for all you do."

"He's doing a good job as our leader and our president," she said. "I just want him to know that."

But the president never came into view, let alone close enough to accept Wallace's gift.

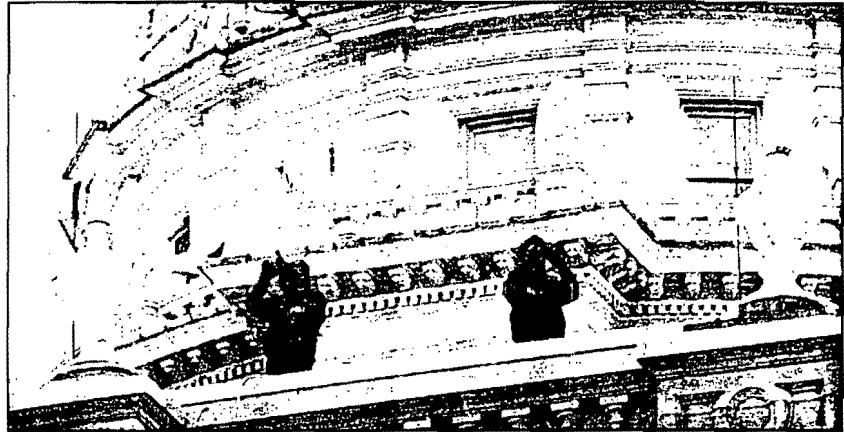


DAVID OLDS/Lansing State Journal

Motorcade greeting: Morgan Goossen (left), a fourth-grader at the West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science in Walker, waves as Clinton's motorcade passes. The academy is a charter school, a concept pushed by Clinton and Gov. John Engler.

A peek at the prez: Tom Safer and Sharon Cadey watch the president's arrival from the third floor of Lansing City Hall. Their vantage point: a window at the City Assessor's Office.

MARGIE GARRISON
Lansing State Journal



Protective watch: Security staffers use a perch on the Capitol building to scan the surrounding area

DAVID OL
Lansing State Jour



DAVID OLDS/Lansing State Journal

Capitol arrival: The limousine bearing the president and his official seal pulls into the parking lot of the Michigan Capitol. Clinton's arrival put the national spotlight on Michigan and education, but also created some traffic hassles for Lansing residents, blocking main highways and streets.



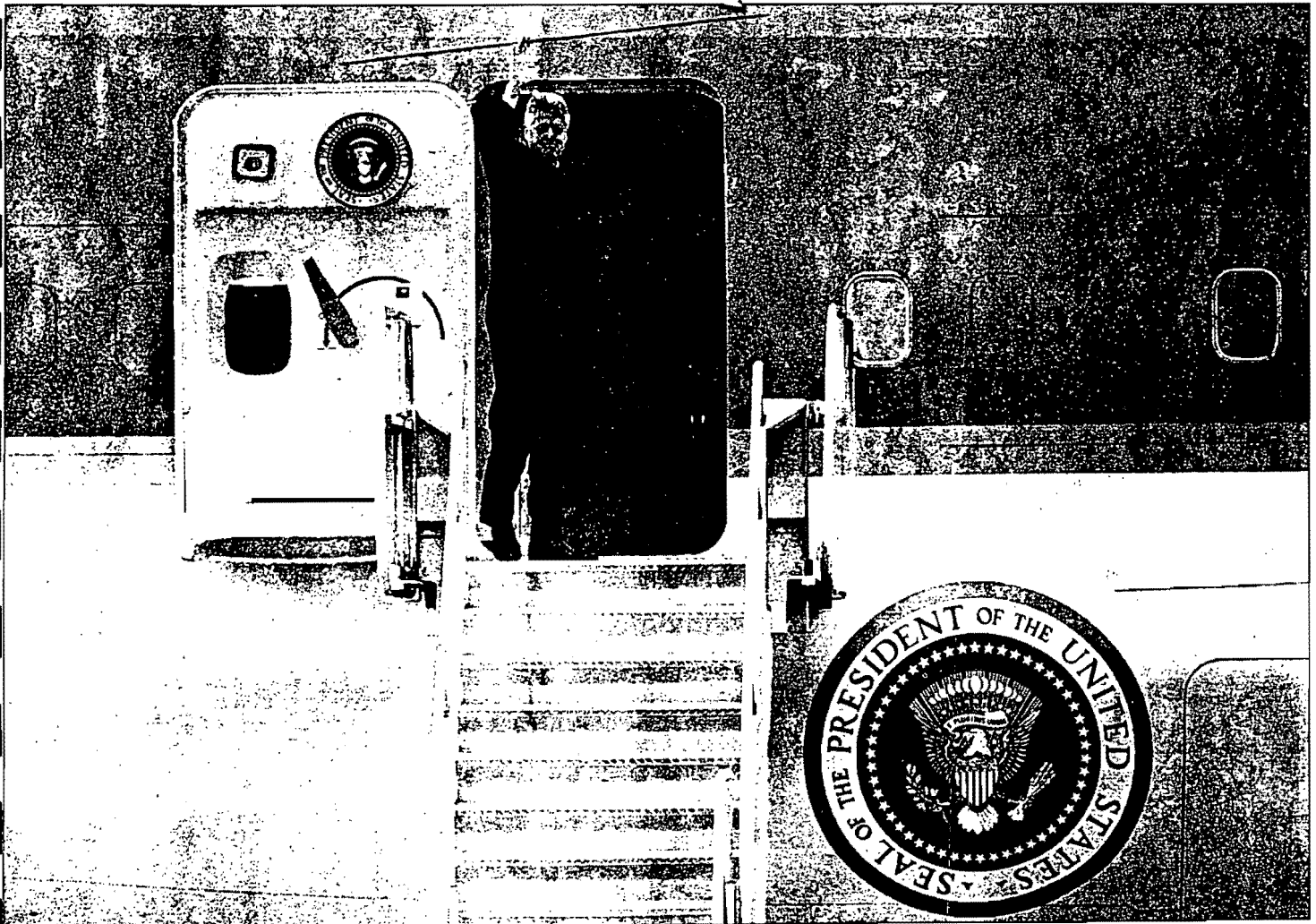
GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

Applause for Engler: President Clinton applauds Gov. John Engler's opening remarks to lawmakers Thursday. Between them is House Speaker Curtis Hertel, D-Troit.



GREG DeRUITER/Lansing State Journal

Tuned In: Lansing Mayor David Hollister (center), Rep. Lynne Martinez, D-Lansing, and East Lansing Schools Superintendent Dan Keck listen to President Clinton's address to the Legislature about improving schools.



ROD SANFORD/Lansing State Journal

Goodbye: President Clinton waves as he boards Air Force One at Capital City Airport after spending about three hours in mid-Michigan.

Bill Clinton's Excellent Adventure II

Striding into the state House, confidently pulling himself through the crowd by a vigorous series of handshakes that left other officials trailing behind, a bouyant President Bill Clinton leapt onto the state House Speaker's rostrum yesterday to address the Michigan Legislature. After short introductions and some brief remarks by Gov. John Engler, Mr. Clinton, speaking from only a few notes, stood before the microphone and boldly told the nation — well, what *did* he say?

He clearly liked the renovations made to the capitol building. And he delivered a not-terribly-informative summary of the education initiatives he presented during his State of the Union address in February. Aside from this, the speech seemed like a pleasant, but eerie lull in the stream of new campaign fund-raising scandals that dog the president almost daily.

Consider, for instance, what President Clinton didn't do.

An increasingly high-profile dispute over charter schools (alternative, less bureaucratic public schools) is simmering between Gov. Engler and Lansing Democrats, who claim the governor's charter school views are fundamentally different from those of the president. Mr. Engler, with good reason, has challenged this, but it appeared the president might use his speech to back the Democrats and put Gov. Engler in his place.



President Clinton

Fueling the fire Wednesday, the Republican-dominated state Senate passed a bill that would remove the current cap on the number of charter schools in school districts where 2,000 or more students qualify for the federal school lunch program. (Not a single Democrat voted for it.) Also on Wednesday, in an improbable confluence of events, oral arguments were heard before the state Supreme Court on Michigan's controversial, original charter school law, which lower courts have ruled unconstitutional.

The stage was set, and stepping into the breach, the president said ... nothing new. "He gave his Maryland speech," one Lansing insider told us, referring to the president's address to that state Legislature on Feb. 10. "I sat reading it along with him."

Perhaps we should be thankful the president painted by the numbers. Gov. Engler, presumably, can claim victory by default. And Mr. Clinton might have proposed new federal education programs similar to the plans he discussed for national exams, national standards and increased teacher certification.

These ideas are problematic at best. Gov. Engler's difficulties in getting students to take state exams, the battle over adopting a state core curriculum and many politicians' desire to *decrease* teacher certification requirements are clear evidence of how difficult command-and-control reform can be. Federal initiatives are likely to be even more contentious than in-state battles.

How Mr. Clinton would deal with this, he did not disclose.

Yesterday's New York Times presented two front page stories on new political fund-raising scandals, one involving the first lady. Mr. Clinton, in contrast, ensured Lansing politicians some photo-ops and himself some nice headlines by saying his piece — and not much else. Perhaps not much else needed to be said.



Bipartisan truce nice while it lasts

Talk about a love-in. It was as if Air Force One, Bill Clinton at the controls, had made a low pass over the Capitol on Thursday, drenching it with ... well, some form of high-powered tranquilizer spray.

Oh, sure, it wore off after awhile.

But while the prez was in town ... well, it was as if civility, collegiality and galloping bipartisanship had suddenly seized all the hot-bloods and ideologues who normally infest the Capitol and turned them all into cherubs ... or maybe political eunuchs.

Gov. John Engler, who flew from Washington with the president and welcomed him warmly in front of the joint legislative session, beamed, smiled, nodded and applauded all through the president's 45-minute speech (about education and welfare reform) and, afterward, told reporters it was "tremendous."

Former Gov. Jim Blanchard, who'd flown in on the same plane (He and Engler chatted amiably aboard but didn't sit together. "It's a big plane," Blanchard deadpanned.) labeled the speech superb and said it outlined an essentially bipartisan agenda. "There is absolutely no reason for Democrats or Republicans not to agree on it," he said.

And state Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, seemed to summarize the prevailing legislative reaction when he said later: "I feel very comfortable with the president's speech — all of it!"

And so it went for the three hours or so the president was inside the Capitol.

Oh, sure, not everything was perfect.

Immediately following the speech, national press types accompanying the president engaged in a venomous, 15-minute give-and-take with Clinton spokesman Mike McCurry over the latest revelations of White House/Democratic Party fund-raising hanky-panky.

But that was away from the House floor where warmth and camaraderie were still the rage.

And, yes, state Sen. Jim Berryman, D-Adrian, an announced 1998 candidate for governor, engaged in what he later termed a "personal protest" against Engler and legislative Republicans (but not, he emphasized, against Clinton) and watched the speech on television in the near-empty Senate chamber.

He accused the GOPers of hypocrisy for claiming to embrace Clinton's education reform agenda while, he charged, turning their backs on such reform in Michigan.

Also, there were quiet groans from some Democrats, who complained about Clinton's praise for Engler and Engler-style charter school reforms. And, of course, there were similar groans from some Republicans who thought Engler, instead of welcoming the president, should have told him to get lost.

Still ...

Well, look. This was — as has been well-publicized — the first address by a sitting president to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in 90 years. It was an event, a SPECTACLE! And not many of us are likely to be around the next time.

So, why not behave ... at least for a few hours, eh?

Footnotes

THE ETERNAL GENERAL: Engler brought down the house, when he referred to Theodore Roosevelt's address to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature in 1907. Then, pointing to Michigan's venerable attorney general, Frank Kelley (35 years in office and counting), remarked: "Attorney General Kelley tells me it was quite an occasion."

(Note: House GOP leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, later told reporters that Kelley had predicted Engler might use such a line.)

DETROIT FREE
PRESS

3-7-97

6A

TEACHER CLINTON

President makes important points on schools, tests

The substance of President Bill Clinton's speech to the Legislature Thursday was a yawner: a rehash of his education initiatives, with some juvenile-justice and welfare talk sprinkled in. Yet he did well in expressing what may be his most motivational message: "We can do this."

The president has great skill at making his listeners feel included in, and even warmed by, his rhetoric. That talent shows to its maximum effect when he is making a nonpartisan plea, as with his repeated urging to state lawmakers to have politics stop at the schoolhouse door. Infusing his talk, too, was a core optimism that he believes everyone can succeed.

Mr. Clinton's delivery was so low-key that some of his best points weren't good fodder for TV news clips. He likened schools to army units, with leadership that can be taught and trained to build troops that — no matter where they are based or what their specialty — meet a standard the

country can rely on in wartime. Similarly, he said, schoolchildren can be led to "succeed and triumph in the modern world."

He extended his confident, inclusive tone to student testing, stressing that having a high test score means nothing if no one can meet basic standards, and that having a low score is irrelevant if everyone can get over the standards bar. And he noted, comfortingly, that Americans may have to live with initially dreary results, as has been the case with Michigan's new High School Proficiency Test.

Mr. Clinton's support for nationwide pupil testing ought to help reinvigorate the case for testing here. He was speaking about state governors and lawmakers, but he could just as well have been addressing parents and school administrators when he said of test-taking: "I want to create a climate in which no one can say 'no.' ... It's voluntary, but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids a chance to do this."

Shortly thereafter, he delivered his biggest applause line: "By expecting less of them, we are selling their future right down the drain."

That combination of high expectations and an underlying belief in everyone's ability to succeed is a big part of what the president communicated so well in what was essentially a pep talk to Michigan's lawmakers. If his address was not history-making, it brought home an important theme in an important way.



WILFREDO LEE/Associated Press

President Clinton acknowledges the joint session of the Legislature while Gov. Engler applauds.

Clinton brings his fight for education to Lansing



Robin Buckson / The Detroit News

President Clinton and Gov. John Engler catch a glimpse of the windows in the Capitol dome Thursday and laugh as the president notices that panes representing Michigan and Clinton's home state of Arkansas are side-by-side. Clinton visited Lansing to campaign for school reform.

The president tells the Legislature to set aside politics to get the job done.

By Mark Hornbeck
and Kenneth Cole
The Detroit News

LANSING — President Clinton cajoled Michigan lawmakers Thursday to leave politics at the schoolhouse door and demand tough education reforms.

"Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are not equipped for the new world of work," said Clinton, turning up the pressure for standardized school exams. "Today, our national security depends upon our ability to develop the capacities of all our people, so politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

Clinton's address was the first speech by a sitting president to the Michigan Legislature since Teddy Roosevelt in 1907. It was part of his national campaign to persuade all 50 states to establish a common set of performance standards and tests that measure students' ability to compete in the world.

"Some of our children won't do very well at first," he conceded. "Sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

The president's 45-minute address repeated points made throughout his re-election campaign last year and focused almost exclusively on his education agenda: classroom standards, expanded national testing and charter schools, and free public



The highlights

In his address, the president called for:

- Expanding national testing to all students in fourth grade (reading) and eighth grade (math).
- Doubling spending on charter schools to \$100 million, creating 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.
- Offering free public education to students through two years of community college.
- Connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

Inside

Weeks: Times have changed since the last president came to Lansing.
Page 2A

Please see CLINTON, Page 2A

CLINTON

Continued from Page 1A

education through the first two years of college.

While in Lansing, he announced that Michigan will receive \$8.6 million from the federal government to buy school computers and train teachers how to use them in the classroom.

Republican Gov. John Engler, who rode with Clinton aboard Air Force One from Washington, D.C., to Michigan, warmly greeted Clinton after the president entered the House chamber to loud applause and offered an exaggerated bow to Engler's wife, Michelle.

"Your visit is a significant event because we are focused on a significant challenge: improving the education of all our children," Engler said.

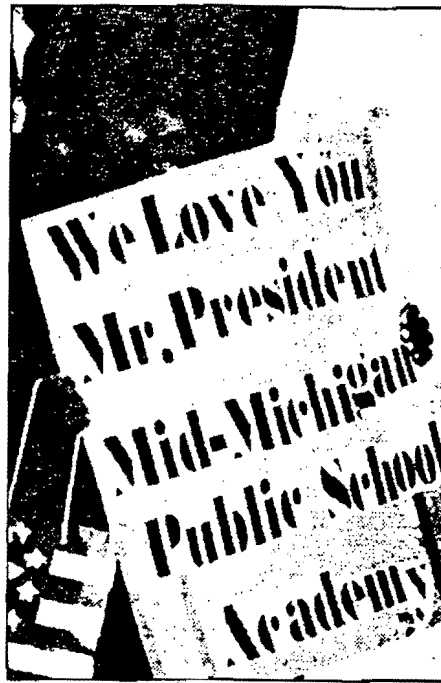
The governor, who made Bob Dole's short list of possible vice-presidential candidates last year, endorsed Clinton's call for education standards and testing.

"Michigan accepts your challenge," Engler declared. He later told reporters: "I thought it was a tremendous speech."

Clinton's one-day trip did little to deflect attention from his mounting fund-raising troubles, coming on the heels of the revelation that Hillary Rodham Clinton's top aide accepted a campaign check from a donor in the White House. Aides wondered privately why Maggie Williams didn't simply send the donor to the Democratic National Committee.

When asked aboard Air Force One about the fund-raising problem, Clinton answered reporters by saying, "Tomorrow." He has a news conference scheduled for today.

"I'm doing great," he said and added he doesn't feel his message was obscured by the controversies surrounding him. "I thought my message got through fine.



David Coates / The Detroit News

Carlos Cosey Jr., a third-grader at Mid-Michigan Public School Academy in Lansing, greets President Clinton on Thursday at the Capital City Airport.

They got it," the president said.

Michigan leaders of both political parties agreed with Clinton's call for expanded national testing of reading in fourth grade and math in eighth grade. But they interpreted his comments on charter schools very differently.

Republicans said Clinton was urging legislators to lift the limit on charter schools, currently at 100. The state Senate on Wednesday voted to do just that.

"The president has given all of us the opportunity for more charter schools, more and bolder choices for kids and parents," said state school board member Clark Durant, R-Grosse Pointe, who said

he'll introduce a resolution at the next board meeting to strike the cap.

What the president actually was saying, said Democrats, was that charter schools — public schools that have additional curriculum freedom — must be closely monitored before the limit is eased.

Many Democratic leaders have been reluctant to embrace charter schools, fearing they will undermine traditional public education.

"He talked about accountability for charter schools," said state school board President Kathleen Straus, D-Detroit. "We can't create more until we're sure the ones we have are doing the job they're supposed to do. And some of them aren't doing so well on state tests."

Clinton is asking Congress to double startup money for charter schools to \$100 million next year so there can be 3,000 of the alternative, independent public schools by the turn of the century. Michigan, which has 77 charter schools serving 12,000 students, already has applied for \$24 million of the federal cash.

Engler said Clinton's backing of charter schools would make it hard for Democratic lawmakers to continue to oppose GOP efforts to remove the limit on the number of charter schools in Michigan.

"What's their argument? The president's wrong on that, too?" he said.

Republicans and Democrats also had different interpretations of Clinton's call for tougher standards.

Republicans said it means local communities should demand more of their schools. But Democrats interpreted Clinton's remarks as support for state-required core classes, which they support. House Democrats expect to pass a mandated core curriculum as soon as next week.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Clinton is a big hit

State legislators applaud his call for academic standards



GABRIEL B. TAIT/Detroit Free Press

Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld, rear, looks on Thursday as President Bill Clinton and Gov. John Engler admire state seals on the state House ceiling.

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF
AND TRACY VAN MOORLEHEM
Free Press Staff Writers

LANSING — President Bill Clinton on Thursday urged lawmakers to put aside political differences to make schools better by demanding higher academic standards.

In a speech enthusiastically applauded by the Legislature in a joint session at the Capitol, Clinton sought to make education a high-profile issue that will not only be his hallmark, but overshadow a political landscape dominated by campaign-finance scandals led by Clinton's use of the White House to reward big donors.

He heavily promoted national testing for fourth- and eighth-graders. He repeated his call for 3,000 charter schools nationwide, more federal funds to keep schools open later and giving parents more choice of where to send their children to school.

He said government has a duty to raise expectations of schools, and also of welfare recipients,

who he said should work but also get more government help in finding jobs.

"Every state must put political differences aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, test our children in the same rigorous way," Clinton said, twice adding a line from his State of the Union address: "Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door."

Clinton said if some students struggle at first, it shouldn't result in lowering test standards.

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time," he said.

That line brought the only standing ovation of the speech from those assembled to hear the first presidential address in the Legislature in 90 years.

"Everybody got on their feet because in their

Please see CLINTON, Page 6A

►CLINTON SUGGESTS

- Every child should read by fourth grade and do basic math and algebra by eighth grade.
- Voluntary national tests to assess how students meet the goals.
- Increasing by tenfold the number of charter schools by 2000. Michigan has 75.
- Using federal grants to get every classroom and library on the Internet by 2000. Michigan recently received an \$8.5-million grant for technology upgrades and training.

Inside:

ARRANGING FOR MORE Michigan students to take a national test might not be easy. 6A

CLINTON'S VISIT to the Capitol was a political love-in, says Hugh McDiarmid. 6A

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... Sorry Askew
Highland Park
hoped to see
Clinton. "We
have something
in common. ...
I'm the
president of my
school."



STEPHANIE SINCLAIR/Detroit Free Press

Clinton seeks academic standards

CLINTON, from Page 1A

heart of hearts, that's correct," said House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville. Sikkema praised the speech as a special event that could bring both parties together to improve schools.

Former Gov. James Blanchard said Clinton wants to be the president who improved education as the nation heads into the 21st Century.

"I know this guy. He's not content with being president," Blanchard said. "He wants to be governor of America as well. He was governor of Michigan for a day" and Gov. John Engler "was lieutenant governor for a day."

Clinton also made several key statements about welfare.

He called for giving tax credits of up to 50 percent of a welfare recipient's salary, up to \$10,000 a year, for businesses that hire them.

He also said he will push to repeal a portion of the reforms he signed last year that deny aid to legal immigrants.

"This is a great nation of immigrants," he said. "I think this is unworthy of us and I'm going to try to change it."

His speech prompted "as big a love-fest as you'll see around here for a long time," said House Floor Leader Pat Gagliardi, D-Drummond Island. "Some of the Republicans tried to tell me he sounded like a Republican. I told them they're sounding more and more Democratic."

Even Rep. Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, who'd snarled earlier in the week about the Clinton visit, saying how how much she disliked him, stood and applauded and said afterward, "I do not disagree at all."

Engler, who was among a dozen or so Michigan officials who flew

from Washington, D.C., with Clinton aboard Air Force One, called the 45-minute address "a tremendous speech" that endorsed many of Engler's own ideas, including charter schools and broader use of the National Assessment of Education Progress test, which Clinton promoted.

But amid the talk of cooperation, partisan political differences erupted after Clinton posed for photos and flew back to Washington. Democrats and Republicans used selected portions of the speech to point fingers at one another.

■ Sikkema, Engler and other Republicans challenged House Democrats not to oppose lifting the cap on charter schools allowed in Michigan — a limit Democrats have called necessary to avoid opening shoddy schools. In his speech, Clinton said charter schools should stay open only if they do a good job.

"What's the argument, the president's wrong, too?" Engler said, adding that Clinton's speech would make it harder for Democrats to oppose unlimited charter schools in Michigan.

Democrats said charter schools should have strict standards before they're allowed to proliferate — standards they said the president surely would agree with.

■ Democrats said Clinton's speech proves the need for a mandated core curriculum. Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto, said if that ever comes to the Senate, "it's dead on arrival."

Sen. Dan DeGrow, R-Port Huron, a leading GOP voice for public schools, said: "For Michigan, this was a Republican speech. Michigan Democrats are more liberal and union-oriented than in other states."

The speech seemed to offer something for just about everyone. It was

upbeat and chatty, holding the 400 lawmakers, lobbyists, judges and other dignitaries rapt.

Clinton dwelled on the significance of the last presidential visit to the Capitol in 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt came by train to an effusive welcome. Now as then, Clinton said, the nation is in a time of peace and prosperity that beckons for new ideas rather than complacency.

Clinton devoted a good portion of his speech to promoting national tests to measure fourth-graders' reading ability and eighth-graders' math skills.

While most Michigan educators applauded voluntary national standards, some questioned the need for additional testing.

"I have three children. Do I need them to take a national test to see if they can read? No. Any observant parent already knows that," said Gary Wolfram, a Republican member of the State Board of Education.

Wolfram said Clinton's 10-point education plan sounds reasonable, but is a recipe for growing federal intrusion.

But Kathleen Straus, president of the state board, said voluntary standards are harmless. "We are one country," she said. "The standards are voluntary, and if we don't like what's going on, we can do something about it."

Even if politicians can leave politics "at the schoolhouse door," that doesn't mean national testing will improve education, some educators said.

Robert West, a testing consultant for the Macomb Intermediate School District, said there has been no research into whether Michigan's own statewide tests "can predict a student's success on the job or in college."

2af 2

National testing plan hit by critics

Engler says state's students will take Clinton-proposed test next school year.

BY KAREN SCHULZ
GAZETTE LANSING BUREAU

LANSING - President Bill Clinton's call for national testing and Gov. John Engler's offer to accept the challenge come at a time when tempers are hot in Michigan over standardized testing.

In his speech Thursday to a joint session of the Michigan Legislature, Clinton thanked Engler for offering Michigan as a pilot state for a national achievement test. The tests would be voluntary, but Clinton wants to make them all but impossible for states to resist offering.

"I want to create a climate in which no one can say no, in which (the test is) voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this," Clinton told the audience jammed into the House chambers.

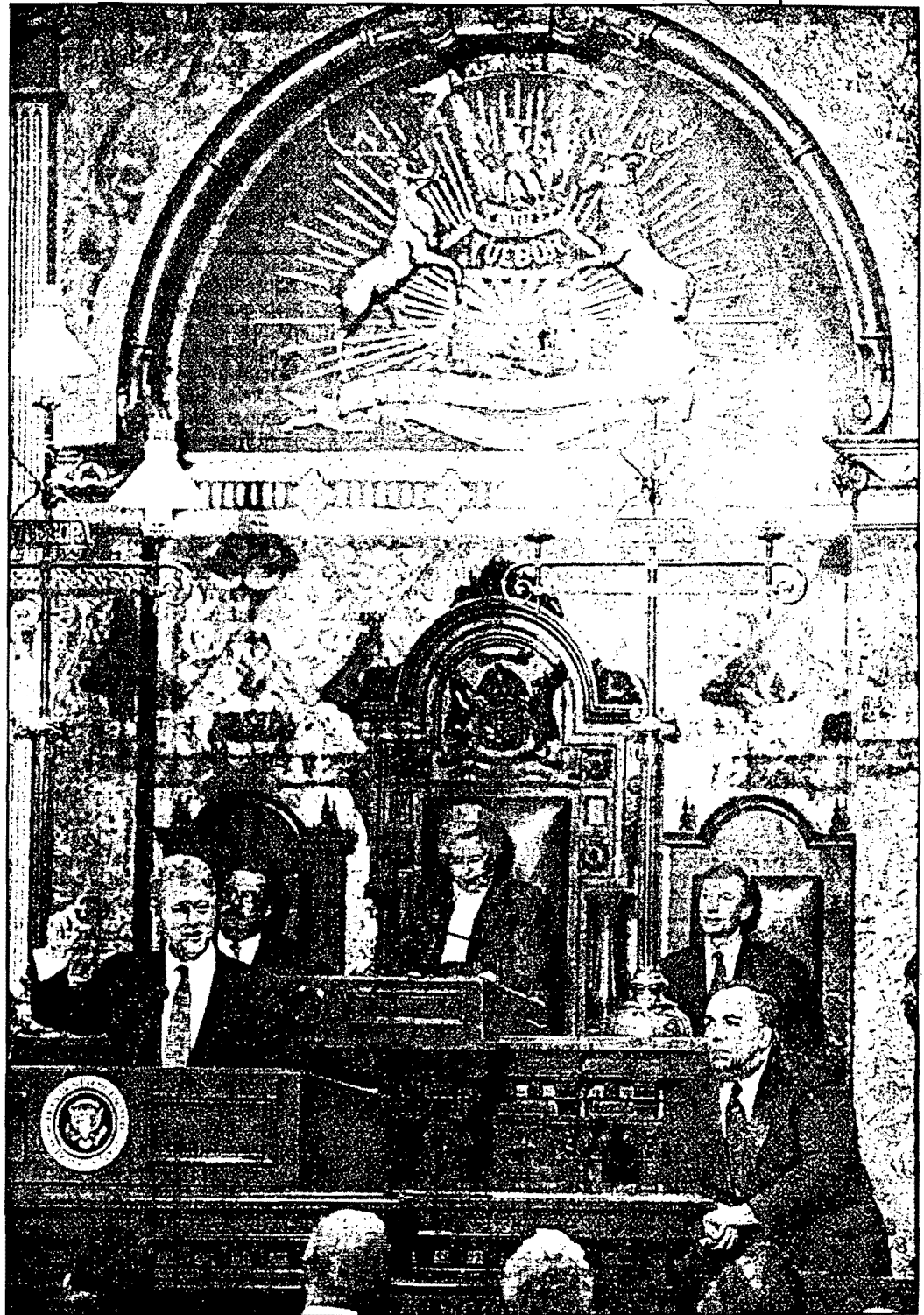
But Air Force One hadn't taken off at Capitol City Airport when critics started complaining.

"Do I need national tests to tell me how my kids are doing?" said Gary Wolfram, a Republican State Board of Education member. "Why do I need to compare my kid? I, as a parent, will decide what my child ought to learn."

House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, added, "I don't want to see a massive change of national government in education."

In remarks preceding Clinton's speech, Engler stressed the need

Please see **CLINTON, A2**



AL GOLDIS / GAZETTE NEWS SERVICE

President Clinton addresses a joint session of the Michigan Legislature Thursday at the State Capitol. Seated at the right is Gov. John Engler.

CLINTON

From Page A1

for high standards. He said Michigan students would take a national test beginning with the 1997-98 school year.

"Where our children are concerned, our search is not for a strictly Republican solution or a strictly Democratic solution, but an American solution," Engler said.

Not all children will succeed when taking the tests, but lowering standards doesn't help anyone, Clinton said.

"When we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them," Clinton said. "And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it."

Testing controversial

Clinton's visit comes at a time when testing is a sore spot for many in the Michigan education community. For example:

- Less than half of the Michigan high school juniors who took the first High School Proficiency Tests last year earned proficient scores.

- Results of the Michigan

Educational Assessment Program tests last fall show that 60 percent or less of fourth- and seventh-graders earned satisfactory scores in math and reading.

Fearing failure, parents of some children have waived their children from taking the tests. Some lawmakers are talking about tightening the conditions under which students can be excused.

Engler also wants the state to take over any school where 80 percent of students fail the High School Proficiency Test, or where dropout rates exceed 25 percent. The plan would require legislative approval.

A measure of success

Tough standards and rigorous testing will measure not only student success, but state success, many believe.

"The real reason for the testing is to have some test of accountability," said Sen. Majority Leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto. "If we have no tests of accountability, we don't know the schools are working."

For many, a major obstacle is deciding what percentage of students should pass the High School Proficiency Test. Should the test be a mark of achievement for all students, or simply designate varying

levels of achievement?

"We're not writing a test where all students will pass, so what percent do we want to have an endorsed diploma for the state endorsement to have some meaning?" said Rep. Glenn Oxender, R-Sturgis.

Voluntary tests

Clinton said the U.S. Department of Education will support the development of new voluntary tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math.

Engler suggested that the test questions be incorporated into existing state tests, including the MEAP.

"I think it's great we have so much emphasis on education," said Kathleen Straus, Democratic president of the State Board of Education, but she said she's not sure that more testing is the answer.

Multiple efforts are under way in the Legislature and state board to review the tests or delay administration of future tests.

"A lot of people have said the (high school) tests were designed to show that public schools were failing," Straus said. Instead, she said, their purpose should be to point out where students need help.



PETER LUKE

President gives lesson unlearned

► *The Legislature quickly forgets Clinton's message on school reform — assuming it ever sunk in.*

Washington-bound Bill Clinton was back on Air Force One telling reporters that his plea for Michigan lawmakers to set aside party differences and work together on school reform had sunk in.

"They got it," said the chief repairer of the breach.

Hardly.

Clinton hadn't even left the Capitol when his call for bipartisan problem-solving was drowned out by more of the same partisan bickering and finger-pointing.

Lost was the essence of Clinton's message: We are selling a scandalous number of children down the river because we can't teach them to read or compute. We've been doing it for years, and without major change, we'll do it for years to come.

The president came to the Michigan Legislature and suggested that unless lawmakers agree on a course for education reform, nothing will change.

Republicans and Democrats retreated to their old scripted arguments about why the other side doesn't care one whit about those kids. Which, of course, is an obvious sign that neither side much does. Democrats were fretting that Clinton had endorsed the only substantive school idea on the Republican plate — charter schools.

It's only an experiment

Hysteria over the alternative public schools consumes Democratic lawmakers. Their claim that charter schools pose a financial threat to public education is just as baseless as Republican claims that the schools represent revolution.

Charter schools in Michigan have 12,000 students, vs. the public schools' 1.6 million. The academies are an experiment that may lead to broader change — maybe not.

Democrats can't abide Clinton's endorsement of charter schools and resented hearing it from him because it's favorable to Gov. John Engler, the charter school champion.

Senate Republicans who applauded Clinton's speech wasted little time in declaring that one key Democratic initiative wasn't even worth consideration. House Democrats next week will likely pass a bill that mandates the development of a statewide core curriculum, a model outline of basics that schools would be required to follow.

At a press conference after the speech, Senate Republicans, who believe the state has little business telling schools how to function on day to day, said don't bother. The bill is "dead on arrival." Topping it all off, Democrats who control the state Board of Education marched into court Thursday afternoon to challenge Engler's peculiar brand of bipartisan problem-solving. After years of Republican board control ended with the November election, Engler decided the panel had too much power. So he stripped it. For the moment, an Ingham County judge has ruled he exceeded his authority.

It's all so small and petty, a chattering chorus that made the sincerity of Clinton's speech resonate all the more.

Back to basics, guys

At the root of all this is government's role in guaranteeing basic human rights.

One of the chief arguments against human cloning is that every individual has a right to his own genetic identity.

Yet decades pass and the right of thousands of Michigan children to develop emotionally and intellectually goes unacknowledged. They're ill-prepared to start in schools that are ill-equipped to help them make up ground lost during their early years.

After they are pushed out of elementary school without basic skills, they are lost for good.

So until the politicians in both parties "get it" and treat this stuff as the deep and complex issue it is, the kids who have already been lost — and those being lost today — won't be the last.

EDITORIALS

Let school board rule state schools

President William Jefferson Clinton came to Michigan Thursday to speak to the state Legislature about the need for standards and national testing for schools. Gov. John Engler indicated Michigan could do the latter by inserting questions from the national test into the existing Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) tests given to fourth- through eighth-graders.

Engler will probably do this by executive order. He seems to think that where state schools are concerned, his word is akin to God's.

There's no doubt the governor is passionate about schools and education. And while his passions may run counter to the plans of the Michigan Education Association, its teachers and even many local school board members, you can't fault the man for feeling so strongly about education. Our state would be a lot better off if more of its leaders had the same passion for education.

Unfortunately, Engler's passion lately has gotten in the way of good common sense. He's decided to sidestep the elected state board of education in order to impose his own will upon the state's education system. It doesn't matter if what Engler wants to do with education is right or wrong, the method he's using is wrong.

We elect officials to do a job. The state school board was elected to oversee the state's schools. Engler was elected to be governor. As elected officials, the governor and the members of the board are expected to do their jobs and get along, even when they disagree. At no time is the school board supposed to issue commands about how to fix the roads, for instance, even though the state of Michigan's roads plays a role in education simply by determining if kids can even get to school. By the same token, Engler wasn't elected head of the school board too. He's the governor. They're the school board. He can't just take their power and responsibilities away with the stroke of a pen.

If Engler truly wants to be a force for change in education, better he do it within the confines of the law and while respecting other elected officials. The last thing he needs to do is lose all credibility by trying to become the school bully or a tyrant. Besides, any change will be more palatable if it is generated by the bi-partisan government than if it is delivered from high by the governor.

Education underscores Clinton's address

By JESSI DE LA CRUZ
STATE NEWS STAFF WRITER

LANSING — Following President Clinton's Thursday address before the state House and Senate, both GOP and Democratic state lawmakers are praising the president's agenda on education and welfare reform.

Clinton's speech to a joint session of the Legislature emphasized the importance of improving education nationally and also touched on welfare reform. Clinton is the first president to address the two bodies since 1907 when President Theodore Roosevelt spoke to lawmakers.

Charter schools, Internet knowledge and increasing parental involvement in children's education also are issues Clinton discussed.

Although Clinton received sporadic applause throughout his speech, both Democrats and Republicans gave Clinton a standing ovation when he talked about having bipartisan effort on education issues.

"Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door," he said. "Sometimes we show (children) our compassion by expecting less of them and we are selling their future right down the drain."

Clinton emphasized that the

country is in a "rare time" for making changes in education and welfare reform.

"We have an even greater opportunity and a greater responsibility," he said. "If we seize the opportunities now, there's no telling what could happen."

Rep. Laura Baird, D-Okemos, said she was pleased with Clinton's speech.

"I like this president very much," she said. "He's very practical."

Baird said Clinton delivered a bipartisan speech and was glad he talked about making charter schools accountable and making sure jobs are available for people who pull themselves off of welfare.

"Those are two keys elements missing from (Gov. John) Engler's agenda," Baird said.

House Minority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, agreed that Clinton put party politics aside in his speech.

"It was not only bipartisan, but almost nonpartisan," he said.

Clinton called for tough standards, accountability and more options and flexibility at the local level in terms of education. Sikkema said the Legislature and Clinton are on the same mind set on that issue.

"Education is primarily a state



State News/ELIZABETH CONLEY
President Bill Clinton waves before speaking Thursday to a joint-session of the state Legislature during his visit to Lansing. Clinton focused his speech on education.

and local matter," he said. "(Clinton) recognizes these issues have to be done at a local level."

Although Sikkema praised

Clinton for his bipartisan speech, he said House Democrats should heed Clinton's message.

"The House Democrats need to

refocus their efforts based on what their president told them today," Sikkema said. "It is their president that laid out that agenda."