

Mandel To Call Assembly

By Richard M. Cohen Washington Post Staff Writer

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Mandel To Call Assembly

Disclosure Bill Aim of Planned August Session

By Richard M. Cohen
Washington Post Staff Writer

Gov. Marvin Mandel plans to call the Maryland General Assembly into a one-day special session in August to re-enact a politically sensitive disclosure bill for public officials, his office said yesterday.

The exact date for the special session—and whether it will be held at all—depends on whether legislative leaders can agree on the outlines of a new disclosure bill and thus insure approval of the controversial legislation in one day, Mandel's press secretary, Frank A. DeFilippo, said.

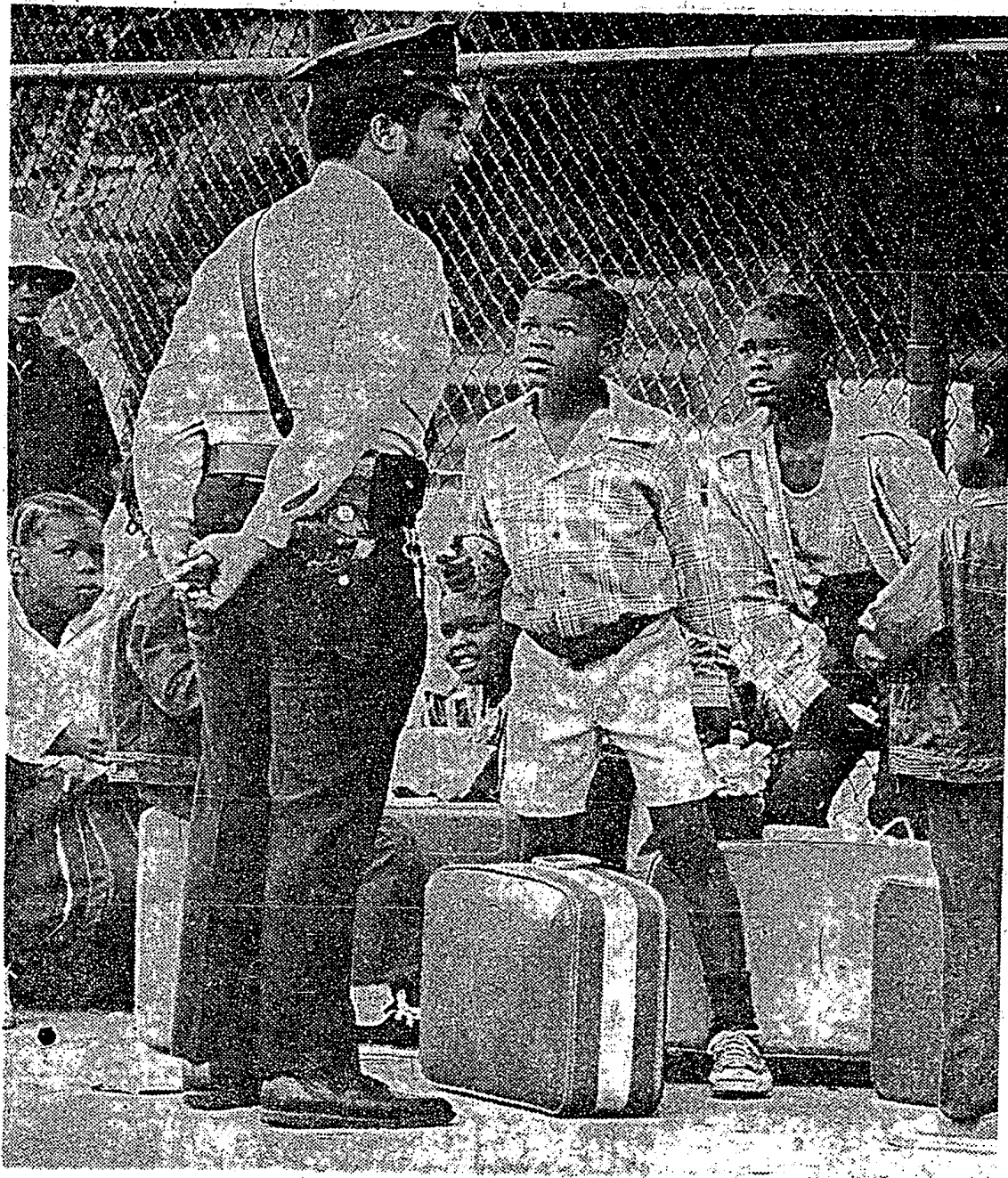
The proposed bill would replace the disclosure bill for public officials passed during the last regular session of the General Assembly. That bill, considered the broadest in the nation, has never been signed or vetoed by Mandel. Instead, he announced on June 1 that he would "hold" the bill and decide what to do with it after the legislature has a chance to enact a new one.

At that time, Mandel said he agreed with those who characterized the bill as unconstitutionally vague and an invasion of privacy. Having said that, however, Mandel clearly indicated that he might wind up signing the bill anyway, leaving it to the courts to make the final decision on the bill.

The governor emphasized that he favors the principle of disclosure and said that a veto of the bill would be tantamount "to a veto of disclosure." He said his office would work with legislative leaders in an attempt to draft a bill that would be both constitutional and strong enough to warrant the governor's signature.

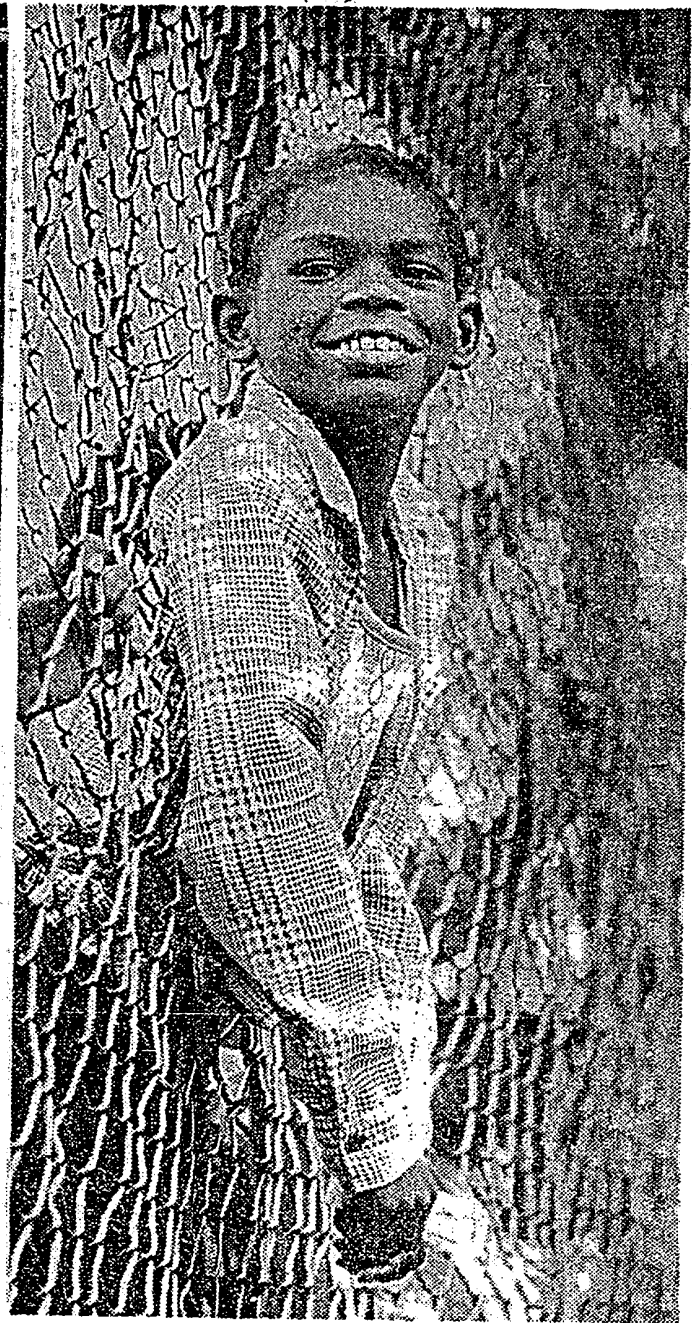
Legislative leaders thus far have shown no urgency in handling a bill. At a meeting of the leaders of the House of Delegates and the Senate yesterday, for instance, the disclosure bill was not mentioned, according to one participant, and the first scheduled meeting between Mandel and the legislative leadership

See SESSION, C5, Col. 1



OFF TO CAMP—Bright and early yesterday, 100 boys gathered at Stewart Junior High School, 5th and E Streets NE, to board buses for the Metropolitan Police Boys Club summer camp in

Scotland, St. Marys County, Md., for two weeks of summer fun. At left, Officer Hubert Geter fields some questions, while the camper at right looks out for the buses. Each summer



By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

about 2,000 District boys and girls get a free holiday at the camp, which is supported by donations. The drive for camp funds will continue in the District for another two weeks.

Mandel to Call Assembly To Re-Enact Disclosure Bill

SESSION, From C1

on the bill will not take place until next week at the earliest.

In the meantime, DeFilippo said, Mandel has instructed members of his staff to begin drafting a new disclosure bill on their own. The assignment has been given to John C. Eldridge, Mandel's chief counsel. He could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Thomas Hunter Lowe (D-Talbot) said yesterday that he was opposed to a special session just to consider the disclosure bill.

"A special session called for disclosure is foolhardy to me," Lowe said. "A law that has not existed for 200 years is not an emergency."

Lowe pointed out that any attempt to pass a bill in a single day would require both houses of the legislature to muster a two-thirds vote for suspension of the rules. He said he doubted if that many pro-disclosure votes were available in the House of Delegates.

The Mandel administration, however, is counting on the legislature to enact a new bill rather than take the chance the governor will sign the one passed during the last session. That bill would require most of the state's public officials—including judges and members of Congress—to disclose all their financial assets, from stocks and real estate down to household furnishings.

The bill also provides that public officials disclose the

financial holdings of spouses and dependent children.

The measure, passed in the last day of the session in a moment of confusion, has put both Mandel and the legislature on the spot. With the cause of disclosure gaining public support and Mandel calling for open government in the wake of the Watergate scandals, neither the executive nor the legislature believes it can afford to turn its back on a disclosure bill.

But there are growing indi-

cations that legislative leaders resent Mandel's handling of the enacted disclosure bill, especially his failure to act and take the General Assembly off the hook.

"I personally resent the executive branch pressuring the legislative branch," said one key legislative leader who asked that his name not be published. The resentment, he said, is running "very quiet and very deep" and he pointed out that a legislative committee has already begun to draft a constitutional amendment forbidding the governor to hold a bill without taking action.

Meanwhile, Senate President William S. James (D-Harford) said yesterday that he would continue to study the question of whether Mandel can refuse to act on the bill and make his decision known next week.

If James decides that the bill has been properly presented to Mandel, the governor might be forced to act. As it is now, the bill is the only one of the 999 enacted by the legislature this year that has neither been signed nor vetoed.

DeFilippo, meanwhile, emphasized the governor's intention to submit a disclosure bill to the legislature regardless of whether he gets the cooperation of legislative leaders.

"We will have a bill," he said. "The administration will have a bill."