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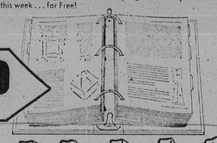

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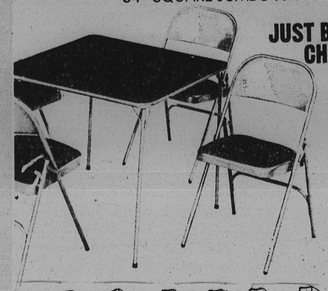

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General Assembly Report

Mandel Medicaid plan to save $6 million annually

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

ANNAPOLIS — Governor Mandel announced, Wednesday, the establishment of a proram designed to cut the cost of Maryland's Medicaid program by at least $6 million a year without reducing the availability or quality of health care for the medically indigent.

The new "cost review system," known as the Maryland Admissions Review Program (MARP), was adopted by the Board of Public Works at its March 7th meeting after receiving the approval of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland.

It is aimed at reducing the spiraling cost of inpatient hospital care resulting in many instances from what Del. John Douglass (D., 2nd Balto. City) termed "overutilized services," which account for nearly half of the total Medicaid budget.

In the past two years, the state Medicaid program has undergone increases totaling more than 54 per cent — from $118 million in fiscal 1972 to the proposed $182 million in fiscal 1974.

Under the plan, Del. Douglass indicated that certain "standards" would be developed setting limits for the length of hospital stays allowable for Medicaid patients undergoing various kinds of treatment.

Charges in excess o those stipulated under MARP agreement would be prevented by the action of a supervisory group (of physicians) charged with the responsibility of overseeing "cost review."

* * *

It is estimated that MARP will cost the state about $1 million for its first 15 months of operation with the state realizing a gross savings of at least $6 million annually according to official government figures.

Flip-top bill threatens jobs says Dalton

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

ANNAPOLIS — Sen. Robert L. Dalton (D., 2nd Balto. City) is leading a fight against a bill to ban "flip-top" bottle caps in the Senate because it would eliminate jobs in Maryland.

"The flip-top can means nothing to you," he said, "but it means jobs to me."

In discussing his bill with the AFRO, Sen. Dalton said "this is being painted as an employment vs. ecology issue. But we're not talking about irrepairable environmental damage. We're talking about people being careless about where they throw things away."

He suggested that the cost in jobs should outweigh the cost of picking up the litter or educating people not to litter in the first place.

The "flip-top bill" as it is known in the Senate, was lost in committee in 1971 and narrowly defeated last year after receiving preliminary approval.

It has never, however, reached the House where the Environmental Matters Committee in Sen. Dalton's words has earned a reputation as a "burial ground" for environmental legislation.

It has been revived this year by chapter president Roy Lincoln, vows "We will in no way compromise our position on equality and quality of education for all of the people in the community."

Elected board bill opposed by PG's NAACP

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

Annapolis — In a mid-week statement, the Prince George's County Chapter of the NAACP disclosed that it had voted overwhelmingly at its last meeting to oppose the "elected school board bill" now before the state legislature.

Strenuous objection to the bill has been raised by the chapter, as their statement indicates, on the grounds "We think that it is not in the best interest of all (sic) of the people of the county".

Further opposition to the measured termed "an effort to punish those advocates o total desegregation" by its opponents is based on the following considerations:

—It provides no fiscal authority to the board

— It lacks and is in "contradiction" to a program of "fiscal austerity" or it provides for a special election resulting in the expenditure of monies in excess of $30,000, at the same time providing stipends of $6,500 for regular board members.

"We consider it a direct slap in the face of the black community for it will virtually mean no minority representation on the board."

— The election is designed to take place at a time different from the regular election date which the NAACP statement alleges "is done in order to leave the Prince George's delegation and other elected officials free and clear from having to commit themselves on educational matters."

The statement signed by chapter president Roy Lincoln, vows "We will in no way compromise our position on equality and quality of education for all of the people in the community."

Mitchell bills to safeguard citizens

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

ANNAPOLIS—Sen. Clarence M Mitchell, III (D., 4th Balto. City) has introduced two citizen protection measures in the Maryland General Assembly.

One bill requires that all credit reports which have a reference to "Open Court Cases" be verified by the credit reporting agency if the report is used as a basis of acceptance or rejection of the extension of credit.

Sen. Mitchell indicated

Sen itchell indicated that upon investigation of

Sen. Mitchell indicated that upon investigation of the many cases of persons who have come to him because they have been refused credit seemingly without cause it was learned that the "bad credit reports attributed to dit reports attributed to them actually belong to people with similar people with similar names."

The second Mitchell bill prohibits the arrests of citizens for the non-payment of trafic tickets unless a criminal ofense is connected with the ticket

"I strongly believe that citizens should be held responsible for their traffic fines," he said, "but I do not believe that a citizen should be subjected to the embarrassment o arrest embarrassment of arrest for non-payment."

Sen. Mitchell contends that this problem can be better handled by the Department of Motor Vehicles, which under the terms of the bill will be empowered to refuse to issue new license tags to those with unpaid tickets.

Two Senators favor limiting agency fees

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

ANNAPOLIS — Declaring that some employment agencies at times charge exhorbitant fees, Sen. Verda F. Welcome (D., 4th Balto. City) announced her support for a bill to limit their charges.

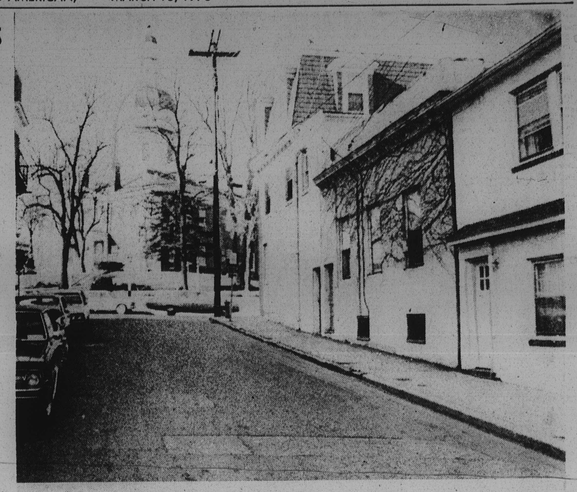
SB 483, introduced by Sen. Robert L. Dalton (D., 2nd Balto. City) is under consideration by the Senate in amended form.

Sen. Welcome pointed out that there are presently no limits on the charges these agencies can make "so they charge what tht traffic will bear".

"In one case charges of $565 were made on a girll for whom a job had been secured at $100 a week," she said.

Representatives of agencies testifying at a hearing held by the Economic Affairs Committee on the bill said that it would "put them out of business." This caused the committee to reduce Sen. Dalton's limit of 20 per cent for 5 weeks to 5 per cent for the first year's base compensation

Sen. Welcome indicated her preference for the original provision, but said that she would go along with the weakened, amended version in order to accommodate the agencies which claim that advertising and other expenses in placing an individual are sometimes so high as to make tighter controls unfeasible.



DOWN THESE STREETS — (above) Our legislators meet beneath the majestic wooden dome of the State House while (below) our children play on the narrow streets of colonial Annapolis.

Dean bills to aid Viet vets

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

ANNAPOLIS— Del. Walter R. Dean Jr. (D., 5th Balto. City) introduced, recently, three bills designed to assist "Vietnam Era Veterans."

The first bill will allow Vietnam veterans $1000 per year towards his expenses for tuition fees and textbooks if he pursues a degree in a state college, university or community college.

He said "for those veterans who are highly motivated to continue their college education it is not now possible for many of them to complete college without some form of financial assistance.

"The maximum of $1000 per year," continued Del. Dean. "will be a significant financial relief to veterans who enroll in institutions of higher learning."

The second bill authorizes an increase in the burial funds from $100 to $400 for Vietnam veterans.

"It is not possible to bury a person for $100," he said. "$400 is a more equitable amount towards the burial exenses."

The third bill is a technical bill designed to define the "Vietnam Era Veteran" based on federal legislation.

If the Vietnam veteran is to be assisted, he further stated, the state codes must be changed so hat there is no question as to their eligibility.

Hopkins ruling gives credit for college tests

Students who successfully complete the General Examinations of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) may now receive college credit through the Evening College of The Johns Hopkins University.

During previous years, students who were candidates for the A.A. or B.S. degrees could receive college credit only for the completion of the CLEP Subject Matter exams. However, a recent ruling by the Evening College has expanded the opportunity for students to earn credit through independent study

Governors on the march

By VAL HYMES

Just what did happen at that National Governors Conference in Washington?

From what the taxpayer heard about it the whole splendiferous production with Maryland's own Marvin Mandel presiding was another example of a lot of talk and no action.

They sat in a sunken ballroom surrounded by their state flags and the press like a mini United Natiop

They dined on cherries jublee at the White House lunched on Capitol Hill and huddled by party and committee in between. They were all there, from Regan to Wallace, coastt o coast stars of state politics

The language they used came from bureaucracyland —jargon to Joe Taxpayer: impoundment, impact aid, sanctions, special revenue sharing, categorical grants, cutbacks.

It basically means the Nixon administration wants to shift the responsibility for spending the taxpayers' dollars from the "Great White Father" in Washington to the states and local governments. And it means cuts or the wipe-out of scores of programs.

* * *

The problem? How to prepare a budget during the transition—this shift of the President's "new federalism," when programs for low income pupils, for example, will no longer be funded by special grants but will be lumped with other programs under special revenue sharing.

All but a few of the governors must present their budgets for next year to their legislatures in the next few weeks. Some are due now. Not only is money cut or held back ("impoundment") from this year's already budgeted programs, but there is no way yet to know how much or when special revenue sharing arrives on the scene for next year.

At stake are millions of dollars for relocation, for schools near federal bases, for school library books, early childhood centers, special reading programs, lab equipment and remodeling.

* * *

Library construction will come to a halt. A new vocational rehabilitation center in Baltimore is finished, but may not be used to capacity. All communities are

The State of Things

By VAL HYMES

nished as are several rural and farmer-aid plans, like the REA loans, water and sewer grants for small communities and farm mortgages.

* * *

The Congress has already voted in at least one house to revive some of those programs, but the fear is that the president will merely impound those funds like he has for desegregating schools, water pollution, highways, libraries, urban renewal and low cost housing. Or that he will use the pocket veto, as he did for the Family Practice Act — now before the courts in a challenge long sought by local communities without doctors.

* * *

Some senators and congressmen have also taken to court the president's right to hold back funds appropriated and authorized by the Congress, Maryland received only $150,000 for Cambridge schools out of the $4.2 million promised by the Congress.

* * *

The only areas untouched, apparently, are law enforcement and crime control. Medicaid and welfare programs may not be cut, but new regulations called "impossible to observe" will keep millions from Maryland. Even the training of doctors and nurses, and emergency employment for veterans were gives the axe.

* * *

The administration insists that revenue sharing and special revenue sharing will cover the costs of these programs while letting the states and subdivisions control them. That argument is debatable, and the Congress and the President are fast approaching a power showdown on impoundment and the question of just who runs this country —the executive or legislative branch.

We don't want to be between the White House and Congress that leaves us out on a limb that is being sawed off", said Mandel and he emphasized throughout that the governors did not go to Washington to beg.

"We just want to do our planning," he said offering a proposal that the states could be guaranteed at least the same federal funds they received the year before.

* * *

The White House was noncommittal but the message seemed to get through that most of the governors —both Democrats and Republicans — will not support the special revenue sharing concept unless they know just what it is and soon.

* * *

And an irritated Congress will not go along with it without the help of the governos, because like state legislatures, they want to know how the money will be spent.

Mandel said he didn't get all the answers he went after but he was pleased pleased that the President confirmed that general revenue sharing is not supposed to fill in for the cutbacks. And that the plea for more information was heeded.

It was this emphasis on information, on the mechanics rather than the philosophy of the issues, that saved the conference from lapsing into partisan chaos.

"Mandel avoided three booby traps laid for him," said one observer. "He zeroed in on the uncertainties facing all governors and refused to attack the domestic policy, to cry poor mouth, or defend the Great Society programs."

* * *

Call it political art, governing skill or legal finesse, Marvin Mandel proved in Washington he could make a dandy living as a lobbyist, referee or even a ring

WEEK ENDING MARCH 9

Legislative Roundup

AFRO Annapolis Bureau

Highlighting last week's schedule was a Wednesday hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on a controversial non-fault divorce bill sponsored by Del. Frank M. Conaway (D., 4th Balto. City).

Recognizing that the disintegration of a marriage is a complex process rarely assignable to one cause or party, Del. Conaway said that the thrust of the bill is to make "parting sweeter sorrow."

His bill would reduce the grounds for divorce from seven to two-incurable insanity and irretrievable breakdown while eliminating "fault" from divorce proceedings

Unlike similar measures before the legislature, Del. Conaway's bill eliminates the 6-month to one year waiting period as a reuirgement for divorce.

* * *

In another development a bill sponsored by Del. Troy Brailley (D., 4th Balto. City) met with seeming committee approval when heard Monday before the House Committee on Economic Matters.

Del. Brailey's bill would remove the existing requirement that an unemployment insurance recipient once denied benefits be returned to income earning status until he had again earned ten times the amount of a weekly subsidy.

Del B.railey had earlier explained that unemployment compensation is made available in instances were there is a "lack of work" not because a person has lost a job due to resignation or firing.

* * *

In a police department related measure a bill to transfer the appointment authority of the Police Commissioner for Baltimore from the Governor to the Mayor was heard before the House Judiciary Committee.

Its sponsor, Del. Kenneth Webster (D., 5th Balto. City) indicated that the importance of the measure would be to remove political influence of the city police department to local authorities who most often are faced with the problems of the department.

* * *

In a similar crime prevention measure Del. Calvin Douglass (D., 4th Balto. City) has sponsored legislation which would increase the penalties for manslaughter from its present three-year sentence to ten years.

His bill mandates a ten-year sentences for persons convicted of certain crimes.

* * *

In Senate hearings last week two of Sen. Clarence W. Blount's (D., 5th Balto. City) consumer protection bills were heard Thursday before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

* * *

Speaking in suport of Sen. Blount's bills were several members of the state's consumer protection agency and members of the Baltimore City Council, including council president, Walter R. Orlinsky.

* * *

One of Sen. Blount's bills seeks to establish a new Division of Consumer Protection as a part of the Department of Licensing and Regulation abolishing the existing division under the office of the Attorney General.

In a related measure S. en Robert L. Dalton (D. 2nd Balto. City) has a bill pending which would reword state laws to include leasing of dwellings in the definition of "service" under the consumer protection laws.

* * *

In three bills aimed at corrections reform heard Wednesday before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, Sen. Verda F. Welcome (D., 4th Balto. City), the bills' sponsor, may have touched upon a sensitive area of continuing approval for the parole of prisoners serving life sentences.

A second authorizes the head of a correctional facility to grant an emergency leave for good cause not to exceed six hours to inmates on work release or pre-release programs on the condition that inmates agree to waive their right to contest extradition.

* * *

A bird bill would provide for two additional positions on the Board of Parole and to require that persons sentenced to five years or less imprisonment shall have a parole interview every six months and those sentenced to imprisonmen over five years an annual review.

* * *

In her legislative development D.el. Joseph Chester (D., 2nd Balto. City) announced recently that his office had been able to provide several members of his constituency with "high paying" federal jobs.

No further details were released at that time.

HOW calls for more hearings on ERA

The Maryland chapter of Happiness of Womanhood, Inc. (HOW), a national organization formed to protect traditional rights of women, has called for resumption of hearings on bills introduced in Annapolis to implement the equal rights amendment to the Maryland Constitution.

Mrs. Barbara M. Morris, Maryland co-chairman for HOW stated, "It would appear there is a determined effort to temporarily sweep these bills under the rug.

"These people knew that passage of the equal rights amendment would adversely affect laws relating to women, and I think their concern is phony.

"I believe there is a deliberate effort to hold off action on the worst of these bills so that states that have not ratified the equal rights amendment cannot see the detrimental results of passage of the measure."

Commenting on some of the more undesirable bills that have been introduced, such as S.B. 396 which would repeal the protection of a wife's property from the debts of her husband, Mrs. Morris explained, "This is a Constitutional protection which if eliminated, would cause hardship to many families.

"Under the present Constitutional protection, a man can go into business and be assured that if the business fails, his family would not be wiped out to satisfy his creditors."

Mrs. Morris also noted S.B. 457 which would allow female prison inmates, who are physically able, to be put to work on road construction.

Also noted was S.B. 287 which makes it mandatory that all able bodied citizens shall constitute the militia and shall be available for military duty in case of war, insurrection, invasion or imminent danger thereof with no exemptions for mothers of small chil-