

The bill also would also:

- allow candidates to form and control only one political committee, eliminating the numerous "friends of" committees, effectively ending the transfer of political contributions from one candidate to another;
- make unopposed candidates ineligible for public campaign subsidies; and
- add new public campaign subsidies for candidates who raise specified amounts of money and who agree to spending limits.

Other campaign reform bills have been introduced, but have not yet been heard in committee. A bill authored by House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (HF75) contains some provisions of the Common Cause proposal, but also bans caucus fund-raisers during legislative sessions.

"When we get done with this [reform], it's going to be near perfection," Sparby said, noting that parts of his bill do need refining.

"I just hope you won't have to be here another 17 or 18 years from now [lobbying for campaign reform]," Berg added wryly.

"I will not be here," Sparby deadpanned. "That I can assure you."

—Jim Anderson



AGRICULTURE

Buying time for farmers

Farmer suicides, rural family violence, and assaults on bankers were some of the grim by-products of a battered farm economy in the mid-1980s.

A state program that sprang from that upheaval, farmer-lender mediation, is due to expire this summer. But members of the Agriculture Committee were told Feb. 15 there is a clear need to keep it going.

"The stress out in rural Minnesota is as great, or greater, than ever before," said Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls), chair of the Agriculture Committee.

The bill (HF210), sponsored by Rep. Syd Nelson (DFL-Sebekka), seeks \$400,000 to fund the program through July 1, 1995, and Gov. Arne Carlson has included that amount in his proposed budget.

Farmer-lender mediation, managed by the Minnesota Extension Service and run by a network of trained rural volunteers, brings together farmers imperiled by fi-



Sen. Ted Mondale gave tribute to his friend, former Rep. Gloria Segal, during a ceremony in her honor at the State Capitol.

Gloria Segal honored for service in House

A champion of human rights and social justice was honored at the State Capitol Feb. 18 as Gov. Arne Carlson proclaimed "Gloria Segal Day" in Minnesota.

Legislators of both political parties testified on the House floor about how the former DFL representative from St. Louis Park had touched their lives and the lives of her constituents.

Segal could "play with the big boys on business and economic development," Speaker of the House Dee Long said. A woman "with a great heart," Segal personally visited her constituents to console them in troubled times and exhibited an indomitable spirit when she fought for what she believed in, members said.

Segal, a businesswoman and real estate developer, was first elected to represent District 44B in 1982. Last November, she won election to a sixth term by a two-to-one margin, but poor health compelled her to resign Dec. 14. She underwent surgery to remove a cancerous brain tumor last September.

During her decade of service in the House, Segal acted on her "dedication to social justice and a desire to give voice to those less advantaged and often powerless," the governor's proclamation states. She was particularly noted for her advocacy of the rights of the mentally ill, a concern borne in part from the illness of one of her own four children.

Segal was a co-author of the hate crimes bill. She also sponsored a bill in 1987 that launched a statewide cancer surveillance system that would monitor cancer "hot spots," a matter of special concern in St. Louis Park where possible carcinogens were discovered in the groundwater.

Women's issues — from equality in girls' sports to pay equity — also got Segal's special attention. Recently, she has been in the forefront of a national fundraising drive to endow an Anita Hill chair at the University of Oklahoma Law School.

"I miss her very much, but I don't miss the work she did," said Rep. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick), who described herself as an early "Gloria groupie." From health care access to new economic development, the evidence of Segal's work is visible throughout the state, Lourey said.

"Long after she's gone, that work will live on in the lives of Minnesotans."

93, Feb. 19

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SESSION WEEKLY

Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ February 19, 1993 ♦ Volume 10, Number 7

LEGISLATIVE RELEASE
FEB 19 1993



Session Weekly is a publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. During the 1993-94 Legislative Session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and upcoming committee meeting schedules, and provides other information. The publication is a service of the Minnesota House. No fee.

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Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Second Class postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Session Weekly**, Public Information Office, Minnesota House of Representatives, 175 State Office Building, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.

SESSION WEEKLY

Minnesota House of Representatives • February 19, 1993 • Volume 10, Number 7

Flashback

They may look like mere laws to the average person, but not to Stanley E. Bourassa of Edina. Wearing a camouflaged hunting jacket, his face bright red from this week's subzero temperatures, the 86-year-old Bourassa popped in to the House Public Information Office to set the record straight.

Although former Sen. Don Frank got all the attention for passing a mandatory seat belt law, Bourassa said he was actually the first to get such a law on the books in Minnesota. That was 30 years ago, and what a fight it was, he recalled. "I was a lone wolf in the woods. They [legislators] sat there and fought me all the way through."

To the high priests of *Minnesota Statutes*, the subject in question is M.S.169.685, subdivision 1. But to Bourassa and many others like him, the passage is evidence that there is a very human and oftentimes colorful story behind virtually every paragraph in those exceedingly dry texts. It started back more than 60 years ago with the formation of the Minnesota Safety Council and the 1930 election of Gov. Floyd B. Olson, "a friend of mine." Bourassa said he, with the help of every governor but one between 1930 and 1963, campaigned to promote public safety. And seat belts weren't the only safety device he was pushing back then.

"Mud/fender flaps" were high on his agenda as well. "They call me 'fender flap Charlie' around here," said Bourassa, a former auto parts salesman who once struck a deal with lawmakers. A former committee chair put it to him like this, he said: "You promise me that you won't carry a line of fender flaps and we'll pass the bill. . . . The result was we got fender flaps."

Like Sen. Frank, Bourassa wanted a mandatory seat belt law. And like most people who have an idea for a law, Bourassa had to compromise. What he got was the statute still on the books that requires most motor vehicles registered in the state to have front seat belts. But back then there was no requirement to wear them. He would have to wait until 1986 for that to happen and another two years before a \$10 fine was imposed (in 1991, it was raised to \$25).

"You never always get what you want," said Bourassa. "Some of the boys who never heard of anything like that weren't about to jump on [in support of the bill]." Although former Rep. Roy Schulz, chair of what was then called the Motor Vehicle Committee, was listed as the House sponsor of the bill, let the record reflect that it was really Stanley E. Bourassa's idea. In those days, the Legislature operated a lot differently, recalled Bourassa. "If I had a bill, I'd just walk in there and find a chairman of a committee and he'd say, 'What do you got?' "

—Grant Moos

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On the cover: Former Rep. Gloria Segal is shown speaking during a session prior to her retirement last December. The House of Representatives held a ceremony at the Capitol on Feb. 18 to commemorate her 10 years of service. The governor proclaimed the day "Gloria Segal Day." (See story, page 4.)

—photo by Tom Olmscheid