

19B

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Turkeys 2005

POLITICS IN MINNESOTA



• Kiffmeyer's Koan

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer's Web site says of absentee voting, "The easiest way to vote by absentee ballot is to do so in person..."

The Mark Dayton "Clear the Offices for Fear of Terrorists" Award to:

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, who sent a memo to 30,000 poll workers warning that they should watch for terrorists at the polling places. How do you identify a terrorist? They'll "appear nervous" standing in line, or will be "praying fervently" or "smelling" of "unusual herbal/flower water, or perfume," Kiffmeyer explained.

• What Was He Doing at That Web Site in the First Place?

Rep. Tom Emmer, from Delano, who was "shocked and disgusted" by explicit language on a gay-outreach Web site, has proposed ending all funding for the Minnesota AIDS Project.

Richard Nixon Is Alive and Active in Rochester

Rep. Bill Kuisle, of Rochester, sent an e-mail to fellow Olmsted County Republicans about an upcoming rally for John Kerry, asking, "If anyone can go and harass, it would be appreciated."

• What Accessorizes a Hoover Best? Jimmy Choo

Republican commentator Sarah Janecek points out that a *Star Tribune* photo revealed that state Sen. Michele Bachmann vacuums in her high heels.

Johnson to Minnesota: God Is On Our Side!

Senate Majority leader Dean Johnson said his party's polling showed that its approach to the budget stalemate was popular with voters and that "God and the stars are with us on this."

Kids: Save Your Lunch Money and Send It to Uncle Leon

Third-graders at Weaver Elementary School in Maplewood were given fliers advertising a political fundraiser for DFL legislative candidate Leon Lillie.

If Brad Learns Ethiopian in a Year, We'll Support His Bill

Rep. Brad Finstad, New Ulm, suggested a bill requiring new immigrants to learn English in a year or face the loss of their state benefits.

He Probably Meant Bibliophile

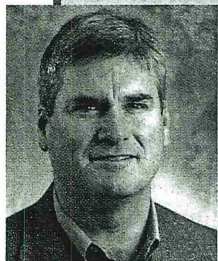
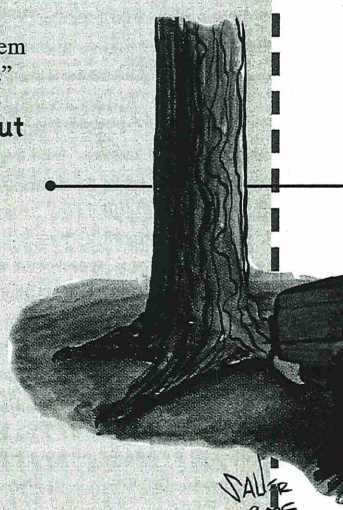
Jesse Ventura said of the press: "I view them with the same disdain as I do a pedophile."

Give Him a Ride, If You Want, But Don't Let Him Borrow Your Car

At an event organized by the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota, Gov. Tim Pawlenty accidentally crashed a new \$7,000 Polaris ATV into a tree, causing \$2,500 in damage.

After the Six-Pack's Consumed?

Says Rep. Marty Seifert, of Marshall, "I try to represent what Joe Six-Pack is thinking."



19B

Repetition can't change the truth

STAR TRIBUNE JUN 22 '05

By Tom Emmer ✓

Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

Repetition creates familiarity. Brand managers use repetition constantly to get consumers to accept their products. Repetition can even seem to create reality. Repetition works. Repetition sells. We begin to believe what we focus on. Our minds are very trainable.

But repetition does not change truth. Repetition may disarm an audience and soften its resistance to falsehood. But repetition does not, in fact, change the truth.

The day after the regular session ended, Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson said: "The time for difficult decisions will come. But that time is not here yet."

Dean Johnson said it loudly and he said it clearly. The time for difficult decisions had not yet come.

I was outraged by such a ridiculous statement from the president of the Senate. The time for tough decisions was actually during the regular session.

The time for negotiation was between Jan. 4 and May 23 when we were all present, engaged in committee meetings, operating within the regular session, and under the open scrutiny of the press.

Not one single media outlet bothered to report the truth behind Johnson's words.

He said — plain as day — that his party was not about to let the session end productively and with any sense of respectful compromise.

Every night, news anchors offered up talk of "government shutdown" and a so-called do-nothing Legislature. And every day, another constituent sends another nasty e-mail about how stupid and worthless all

legislators are and how we should all be thrown out of office for our idiocy. Repetition works.

It may not be the truth, but every day the media recklessly sell their woeful product, we lose more trust for our elected officials and the institutions they serve.

Remember, peace and productivity do not sell newspapers or garner ratings. Keep the public in a constant state of fear and loathing about our government, and the media moguls enjoy the windfall. We are enslaved to their redundant fault-finding criticism.

We are daily at risk of buying the gloom and doom that they are selling.

Don't be fooled.

My work as a state representative was for the most part done when the regular session ended. If you want to

We are a few short weeks away from government shutdown. I am as frustrated as anyone that the parties have not resolved the impasse.

At the end of the regular session, when the head of the Senate said, "The time for difficult decisions will come. But that time is not here yet," with the help of a silent media he quietly declared the beginning of the political theater season.

Folks, the lack of a resolution on the state budget and the impending government shutdown have absolutely nothing to do with what is good for Minnesota.

The reason that the DFL does not want to cooperate is simply because redundant negative political theatrics generate oodles of marketing spin for next year's campaign brochures.

There is no legitimate reason in

There is no legitimate reason that we've not concluded the business of the Legislature this year. But there are plenty of illegitimate reasons.

see what I did with my colleagues in the House, go to the House website and look it up. We got a ton of work done! I am proud of what we accomplished in the House.

As you consume the half-truths put forth by our media, please bear in mind that we are public servants and, contrary to what you hear on the news, most of us work our tails off. Our families make significant sacrifices to support us.

I am truly honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve my neighbors and friends. I have no complaints about the job itself, but the facts are what they are.

my mind that we have not concluded the business of the Legislature this year. But there are plenty of illegitimate reasons.

Political theater is the reason I find most reprehensible.

The time for difficult decisions has long since past. Our leaders and our media are not only playing with our money, they are playing with our minds. Be careful how much "activist journalism" you believe just because of the repetition.

Tom Emmer, R-Delano, is a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 28 '05

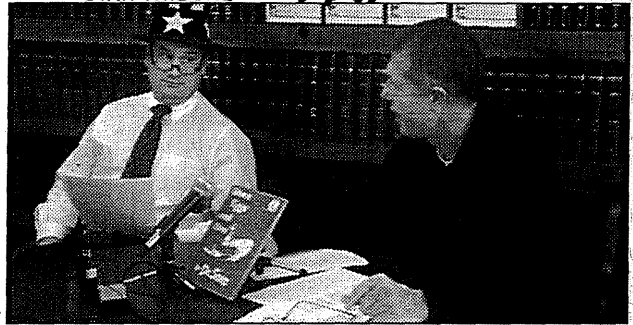


Photo provided by TPT

✓ Tom Emmer and Steve Sviggum at their reading.

Sviggum does Seuss

House Speaker Steve Sviggum and Rep. Tom Emmer delivered an inspired send-up of Dr. Seuss-style poetry for Capitol reporters last week. Their satirical poem entitled "An Ode to a Lack" focused on their contention that the DFL minority has no right to criticize the Republican majority's budget resolution without offering its own plan. Sviggum, R-Kenyon, read the reputed DFL lines, Emmer, R-Delano, the Republican lines.

An excerpt from the three-page poem:

GOP: *A plan is needed in both Houses
Not just concern about gay spouses*

DFL: *I have no budget in the house
I did not leave it with my spouse
I have no budget here or there
I have no budget anywhere
I just don't like your budget plan
I do not like it, RepubliCAN*

GOP: *Is your budget on the train?
Will it cause our families pain?*

DFL: *I'll hug a train
I'll hug a tree,
I hate your car
Please let me be!
We have no plan for outstate cities
We'd rather fight like two old biddies ...*

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The Star Tribune invited DFLers to provide a poetic riposte, but they declined to join in the fun. They offered examples of real-life victims of GOP budget cuts and this solemn response from Assistant Minority Leader Connie Bernardy, DFL-Fridley:

"What's going on in St. Paul at the Capitol is no laughing matter for most Minnesotans," she said. "The speaker obviously worked a long time on his poem. However, his time would have been better spent reaching across the aisle and finding common ground on the challenges facing our state."

Dane Smith

WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN
SATURDAY 16,927
MAY 21 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

FORUM

FARGO, ND
SATURDAY 51,694
MAY 21 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

RED WING REPUBLICAN EAGLE

RED WING, MN
SATURDAY 8,100
MAY 21 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

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Session's first major budget bill passed

By Don Davis
and Scott Wente
Capitol Correspondents

ST. PAUL — Minnesota legislators voted Friday to increase college and university spending in the first major budget bill to pass this legislative session.

The funding bill bumps up spending 11.7 percent in the next two-year budget for the University of Minnesota and 8.8 percent for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

The bill spends nearly \$2.8 billion in the next two years.

Even with the increase, legislators predicted tuition would increase anywhere from 5 to 10 percent each of the next two years.

The House passed the measure 81-52, followed a couple hours later by the Senate on a 49-18 vote.

"This is not a great bill, but a pretty good bill," said Sen. Sandy Pappas, DFL-St. Paul, the bill's Senate author.

Rep. Bud Nornes, R-Fergus Falls, the House author, said he did the best he could with the money available.

"Our goal was to treat both systems as fair as you could make it," he said.

Shortly after the higher education package was passed, the House approved a bill prohibiting people from legally buying or drinking alcohol during the first eight hours of their 21st birthday.

The measure, which already passed the Senate, is meant to deter young people from binge drinking during so-called Power Hour, the time after midnight on their 21st birthday.

Rep. Morrie Lanning, R-

Moorhead, said he was pleased the bill made it through this session. It still needs Gov. Tim Pawlenty's approval.

"I think this whole debate has heightened awareness about binge drinking," Lanning said.

A House-Senate conference committee was trying to wrap up a public safety spending bill that gets tough on sex offenders and methamphetamine users. The agreement will include life sentences without the possibility of release for the most serious sex offenders.

"I want the people gone the first time around," Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, said of violent, first-time sex offenders. He is the bill's House author.

Smith said the bill could be voted out of committee late Friday or Saturday.

The committee likely will reject a proposal to allow chemical castration of some sex offenders.

"This is just offered as a form of rehabilitation for that narrow group," said Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who sponsored the proposal.

Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, said the Senate never voted on Emmer's proposal. She is Senate author of the public safety bill.

"That's not anything I'm recommending," she said of Emmer's proposal.

As lawmakers rush to finish remaining bills, Gov. Tim Pawlenty is already signing some that have passed. The governor on Thursday signed a bill allowing parents to receive a birth certificate for stillbirths.

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WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN
TUESDAY 16,927
MAY 17 2005

BEMIDJI PIONEER

BEMIDJI, MN
TUESDAY 10,200
MAY 17 2005

DAILY GLOBE

WORTHINGTON, MN
TUESDAY 13,000
MAY 17 2005



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MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE



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Sex offender penalties discussed

By Don Davis And Scott Wentz • Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis.

Capitol Correspondents

ST. PAUL — Lawmakers plan to toughen penalties for sex offenders, but they said some proposals may not be viable.

Nearly every legislative leader made getting tougher on sex offenders and methamphetamine users their top two policy priorities. Late Sunday, top lawmakers and Gov. Tim Pawlenty agreed to a \$1.7 billion spending target for public safety during the two-year budget cycle beginning July 1.

Knowing its budget limit, a House-Senate public safety conference committee met Monday to sort through differences between their respective bills.

Committee members responded negatively to two controversial penalties for the most serious predators. They questioned the purpose of requiring Level 3 offenders to have special driver's licenses and vehicle license plates identifying them as predatory offenders.

• Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who drafted the proposals, said the intent is to protect citizens once offenders are released.

"It is not intended ... as a punishment," Emmer said. "This is a public safety issue."

Critics said offenders could simply avoid the requirement by not buying cars. They also cited problems if a relative drives a vehicle labeled as an offender's.

"Why would anybody operate a car with that on there?" said Sen. Wes

If the purpose is to keep the public safe, Republican Sen. Thomas Neuville of Northfield said the state should make each offender wear an electronic monitoring bracelet.

• Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, said it's not likely the committee will keep those license proposals in the final bill.

"I don't think that's the direction we want to go," said Ranum, who is co-chair of the conference committee.

The only other issue leading lawmakers and Pawlenty have settled was putting the worst sex offenders in prison for life, without the chance of release. The conference committee is left with the responsibility of defining who the worst sex offenders would be.

The original Senate bill would have allowed any offenders to be released if they met certain requirements. The House voted to keep violent sex offenders locked up for life.

• Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, the other conference committee co-chair, said he predicts the result will include around 100 offenders. The House plan would have affected more, he said.

"Some people are going to prison for the rest of their lives," he said.

All other provisions of the bill remain for the conference committee to decide. Both Smith and Ranum said they don't expect to take any votes until today at the earliest.

"We have finally come to the point of making Minnesota a safer place," said Rep. Kurt Zellers, R-Maple Grove, who has tried for two years to

toughen sex offender laws.

The issue arose in 2003 when Alfonso Rodriguez Jr. of Crookston was arrested in the disappearance of University of North Dakota student Dru Sjodin, who later was found dead. Zellers, who also attended UND, said the leaders' agreement was a good step to locking up the worst offenders.

"That was the ultimate goal — to keep the worst of the worst off the streets forever," Zellers said.

— optional copy —

Zellers said the public safety deal "was one of the easier ones," with about eight other budget conference committees waiting for tougher decisions.

• Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, said methamphetamine-related laws will be part of the public safety conference committee debate. Differences between House and Senate bills are not too great, he added.

"I think we can work them out pretty easily," Johnson said.

Meth-related sentences would be longer under both bills. They also both would limit access to pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient to meth and part of cold and allergy medicine such as Sudafed. A near total ban on pseudoephedrine products that the House passed is expected not to be part of the conference committee's final bill.

Overall, public safety spending would rise 16 percent under the agreement.

"We're trying to address in an aggressive fashion the public safety needs of Minnesota," Pawlenty said.

12-00 DU

FRONT PAGE

House passes sex offender penalties

By Don Davis

ddavis@forumcomm.com

ST. PAUL – Pedophiles should be castrated, the Minnesota House decided Thursday.

Representatives also voted to place labels identifying sex offenders on their driver's licenses and vehicle license plates and to send the worst sex offenders to prison for life.

Lawmakers adopted an amendment to a public safety bill allowing judges to order chemical castration and allowing offenders to volunteer for surgical castration. Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, said he wants his provision to apply to people who sexually abuse youths.

MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE



The amendment passed 80-54 over objections from representatives who said there are better solutions.

"Why are we castrating these people and letting them out?" Rep. Al Juhnke, DFL-Willmar, asked. "Put them in prison and throw away the key."

Emmer also won his attempts to label motor vehicle license plates and driver's licenses of Level 3 sex offenders, those

SAFETY: Page A4

FORUM

FARGO, ND
FRIDAY 51,694
APR 29 2005



WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN
FRIDAY 16,927
APR 29 2005



A4 Friday, April 29, 2005

19B

SAFETY: House bill doubles most offender penalties

From Page A1

most likely to re-offend, "predatory offender" so police immediately know there is a possible danger.

The decisions came as the House passed a public safety bill 123-10 that puts the worst sex offenders in prison for life without the chance of release.

The House bill doubles most sex offender sentences. Those who do not get mandatory life sentences would be released only when a new parole board feels they no longer present a threat to society.

Sex offenders would be sentenced to life if they commit the crime with torture, with kidnapping with a victim younger than 13 or older than 70 or with more than one victim.

The bill requires Minnesota law enforcement officials to notify the public when they learn about an out-of-state sex offender who moves to the state, just like they would if the offender had been committed in Minnesota. The bill also requires public notification when serious sex offenders are released from federal prisons.

The loophole in the state community notification act came to light when Moorhead police told lawmakers about sex offenders moving to their city from Fargo, and they could not inform the public.

Rep. Morrie Lanning, R-Moorhead, said there is a national problem because states are not required to tell other states when sex offenders move. North Dakota officials have been good about notifying Minnesota, he added.

Also in the bill is a Lanning provision restoring half of the \$1.2 million for crime victims services lost two years ago. Most of the money came from rural areas.

Senators plan to take up their sex offender bill Monday. It would not require anyone to be in prison for life, but offenders could remain behind bars for life if they do not make enough progress to be deemed safe for release. Differences between the House and Senate bills will be worked out in a

”

One of the things we are finding in rural Minnesota is our small resorts are having a hard time keeping open.

Rep. Dean Simpson
R-New York Mills

conference committee.

The House public safety bill also eliminates a \$217.50 per-bed fee for the fire marshal's office to inspect small resorts. Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, said small resorts already get a cost break compared to bigger facilities.

"This is still one-half of what the big folks pay to see that your folks don't die in a fire trap," Smith said.

Lawmakers representing resort areas said the businesses need all the financial help they can get.

"One of the things we are finding in rural Minnesota is our small resorts are having a hard time keeping their doors open," said Rep. Dean Simpson, R-New York Mills.

Added Rep. Larry Howes, R-Walker: "Here we go again – bureaucracy needs to find some money and they get a metropolitan legislator to try to get them some money from rural folks."

The state would spend \$1.6 billion for courts, prisons and public safety over the next two years under the overall bill. That is a 16 percent increase over current spending.

The bill also:

► Increases surcharges on criminal costs \$10 and parking violation surcharges \$1

► Makes it a felony to be involved in animal fights

► Allows grants to police officers up to \$600 to buy bullet proof vests

► Makes it illegal to use a device to change traffic lights to green except for emergency workers and other authorized people

Readers can reach Forum reporter
Don Davis at (651) 290-0707

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RED WING REPUBLICAN
EAGLE

RED WING, MN
FRIDAY 8,100
AUG 5 2005



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Chew these lesser-known ingredients

When a slew of new state laws went into effect this week, I took a moment to consider what actually got accomplished earlier this year amid the chaos in St. Paul.

After the final budget bills were passed July 13, Gov. Tim Pawlenty cited a sausage-making reference to describe the Legislature, of which he used to be a leading member. You've heard the analogy: the product is good but you don't want to know how it's made.

Or maybe you do. What follows is a small collection, in no particular order, of telling morsels gleaned by this jackal, who spent most of the 2005 legislative sessions — regular and special — reporting from the bowels of the state Capitol.



- **End the insanity** — House Speaker Steve Sviggum of Kenyon was tasked with keeping a tight hold on his GOP caucus and its slim 68-66 margin over the DFL minority. He really lost his grip only once when, despite more arm twisting than what you'd see at Wrestlemania, a handful of moderate Republicans bucked the party line and voted with Democrats to add a gasoline tax increase to a transportation bill.

After the vote, a frustrated Sviggum said he was thankful Pawlenty could veto the legislation: "He can put an end to this insanity." The governor promptly nixed the bill in a choreographed public ceremony. (An aide made sure the "veto" label on the stamp was visible to camera-wielding reporters.)

Scott Wente

Staff Writer



- **Ailing humor** — During an intense House floor debate, Rep. Jerry Dempsey tried to lighten the mood with a joke. Responding to a Democrat's claim that a particular proposal would be illegal, Dempsey quipped that his definition of illegal is "a sick bird." The Red Wing Republican's wisecrack flew over the head of some legislators and elicited polite applause from others.

- **Paranoia, party of one?** — Sen. Steve Murphy got riled up when Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau left a hearing of the Red Wing DFLer's Senate Transportation Committee before lawmakers could grill her about the Pawlenty administration's highway funding plan. An angered Murphy apparently wasn't privy to Molnau's previously arranged engagement as he then abruptly adjourned the meeting and stormed out of the room.

The transportation debate got ugly at other times. Murphy ended a different hearing by claiming that some lawmakers had been victims of borderline "political blackmail" at the hands of gas tax opponents. Asked if he threatened fuel tax supporters, Pawlenty jokingly suggested that Murphy might have a minor case of paranoia.

- **Mr. Seifert goes to St. Paul** — At one point, in a rarely seen tactic, most House Republicans

scattered off the floor to discuss in private how to block a vote that wasn't in their favor. They left veteran Rep. Marty Seifert to dazzle House Democrats with a 40-minute speech ranging from the history of transportation in Minnesota to the frozen delicacies sold by Schwan Food Co. headquartered in Seifert's hometown of Marshall.

- **Cheesy promotion** — During his quest to pass a law preventing people who get fat from suing the food industry, Rep. Dean Urdahl played a recording of Jimmy Buffet's "Cheeseburger in Paradise" and offered ice cream treats to lawmakers (Democrats and Republicans alike) at a committee hearing. The Grove City Republican sweetened the proposal but some lawmakers still had a bad taste in their mouths. The proposal didn't pass.

- **Snip, snip** — A group of liberal House Democrats passed the time during a floor debate by wielding scissors any time freshman Rep. Tom Emmer of Delano stood up. Emmer, a conservative Republican, had sponsored a proposal allowing castration of some sex offenders. That bill, too, didn't make the cut.

So does this shed light on the routine happenings at the Capitol? Is this how the people's business is always conducted? Probably not. But it's some of the lesser-known ingredients in the legislative process.

Perhaps the sausage metaphor is right on. Tell me what you think — if you haven't lost your appetite.

Scott Wente can be reached at swente@republican-eagle.com or 388-2914, ext. 122.

Raising wages

Minimum wage increase awaits gubernatorial action

By BRETT MARTIN

Pay raises for minimum wage earners might be just a couple of pen strokes away.

Awaiting action by Gov. Tim Pawlenty is a bill that would increase the state's minimum wage by \$1 an hour for large employers and 35 cents an hour for smaller employers.

The House passed the bill 84-50 May 2, but not before debating amendments that would change the amount of the increase and which companies would be impacted.

The Senate approved the amended bill 44-22 the following day.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) and Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), HF48/SF3* would impact approximately 50,000 Minnesotans who currently earn minimum wage.

"The win today is for some of the lowest paid people," Rukavina said.

As approved, the bill would require employers with annual gross sales of at least \$625,000 to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour beginning Aug. 1, 2005. Current definition defines a large employer as one with at least \$500,000 in annual sales. The \$5.15 hourly rate has been in place since Sept. 1, 1997.

Minimum wage for employers with annual gross sales of less than \$500,000 has been \$4.90 an hour since Jan. 1, 1998. That would increase to \$5.25 an hour, beginning Aug. 1, 2005, for companies with less than \$625,000 in annual sales.

Employers would be able to pay an employee under 20 years of age \$4.90 an hour for the first 90 consecutive days of employment. The hourly amount is now \$4.25.

The federal minimum wage for covered, nonexempt employees is \$5.15 an hour, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

"This would have a huge economic boost to the state," Rukavina said.

Some Republicans argued that the minimum wage increase would force pay increases in other income brackets, which Rukavina welcomes.

"What's wrong with someone making \$7 an hour making \$7.50?" he asked. "It does have an effect, but I think that's a good thing."

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) worried that increasing the minimum wage would hurt businesses, which would result in job losses and lead to more jobs being outsourced.

"I have grave concerns over what you're proposing," he said. "We cannot be short-sighted."

Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) agreed, saying it would make Minnesota a less business-friendly state and would drive some small businesses, such as family-run restaurants, out of business.

"This is about denying jobs to our people," he said.

DFL members offered a different perspective. Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) said a wide gap exists between basic necessities and what minimum wage earners can afford, and

the bill would help close that gap.

"You want to make sure kids are fed and the mortgage is paid," said Rep. Cy Thao (DFL-St. Paul). Both of his parents worked minimum wage jobs.

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) said the increase would provide more financial freedom to workers.

"This minimum wage bill will attract more people to Minnesota who want to work," she said.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) offered an unsuccessful amendment to make it a "livable" wage by increasing the minimum pay to \$9.73 an hour.

"Let's do the whole enchilada," Seifert said. "You're only giving us half a taco."

He offered an amendment to change the \$500,000 gross sales limit that determines minimum wage pay rates to \$2 million. When that was defeated, he unsuccessfully offered another amendment to change it to \$1 million. A third amendment to change it to \$750,000 was orally amended to \$625,000 and approved.

An amendment by Rep. Tom Emmer

Continued on page 22

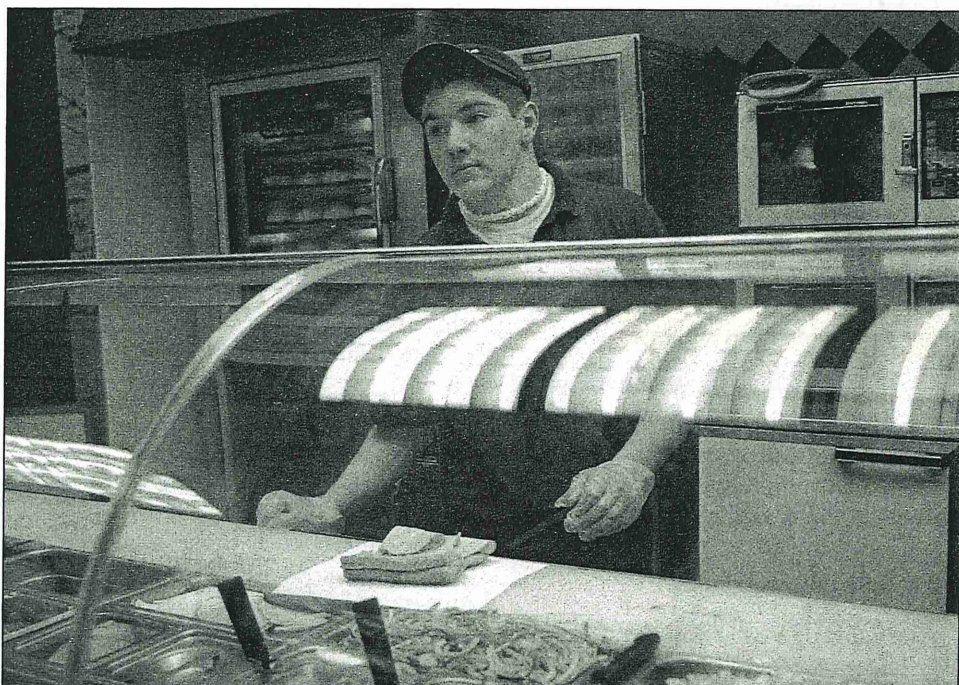


PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Tony Gomez prepares a sandwich at the Subway in Hugo. A bill that would raise the state's minimum wage for the first time since Jan. 1, 1998, would affect entry-level positions in fast food and other establishments.

Environment continued from page 14

and grant-in-aid trails in order to defray trail grooming and maintenance costs.

Under the bill, municipalities, golf courses and landscape irrigators would pay a surcharge on water used during the summer months, if the amount is greater than January consumption levels. The surcharge would not apply to agricultural users. The increased fee could promote conservation, proponents said.

Also under the bill, a fee would be established to cover the department's costs for managing state-owned minerals. The minerals management fee would be set at 20 percent of mineral revenues generated. Currently, the money comes from the General Fund.

Plan B

If the House fails to pass a gaming measure, Article 2 would become a reality in order to meet the General Fund spending target of \$274.48 million. "Uff Da, if we get Option A," said Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar).

"These cuts are pretty ironic or tragic when all we hear is the talk about cleaning up our polluted waters," said Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls).

Under that scenario, funding would be reduced for the following agencies:

- Department of Natural Resources (-\$8.31 million); however, reductions to the Reinvest in Minnesota program forwarded in the Article 1 funding plan would be canceled out by \$691,000;
- Board of Water and Soil Resources (-\$1.41 million);
- Department of Environmental Protection (-\$1 million);
- Minnesota Conservation Corps (-\$700,000);
- Metropolitan Council parks (-\$600,000); and
- Science Museum of Minnesota (-\$70,000). 🐾

Wages continued from page 15

(R-Delano), which was withdrawn, would have repealed the state's minimum wage altogether.

Seven states don't have a minimum wage requirement, and the 14 states with a minimum wage standard higher than Minnesota also have higher unemployment, Emmer said.

"It's proven that it does not work," he said.

• Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) unsuccessfully offered an amendment to hold the minimum wage at \$5.25 an hour for waiters and waitresses, and \$6.15 an hour for

employees at companies with annual sales of more than \$1 million.

"This is fair," he said. "I want to see the minimum wage raised to \$6.15 an hour."

Gunther argued that tipped employees don't need the raise because they average more than \$17 an hour. 🐾

Drive continued from page 16

a shared structure for the management of property and the use of shared technology for managing real estate. The system would include details such as rent, repair, maintenance and ownership.

Fourteen "custodial" agencies now manage more than 5,000 buildings on nearly 6 million acres, 880 leases totaling more than 4 million square feet and the budgeting and legislative processes are based on incomplete data, according to the report.

The governor's reorganizational order involves making uniform "programs and services related to the construction and building code licenses and regulation are being consolidated in the Department of Labor and Industry." Currently, multiple agencies oversee the building codes causing staff time to be spent on similar data collecting functions rather than enforcement activity.

The result would be, according to the report, "more efficient, effective, and less costly regulation of the construction industry," which accounts for nearly 20 percent of the state's economy.

Additional areas expected to be addressed later include: customer service innovation projects, such as consolidated contact centers, improvements on how the state handles financial transactions and combining human resource functions into a shared service.

Staff positions are expected to be reduced by about 1,300 with most of the reduction coming from attrition, rather than the "restructuring, relocations or layoff," which would happen over a five-year period, Badgerow said. 🐾

Barber continued from page 18

and Kevin will be graduating from cosmetology school this year.

Kirkpatrick's other shops, including one in the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and one opening in Stillwater, keep him busy. When he gets a chance, though, he enjoys getting outdoors.

"I do all kinds of fishing, and I do a lot of hunting trips." From Minnesota to Colorado and Wyoming, you'll find Kirkpatrick fishing for walleye and hunting elk, deer and antelope.

Kirkpatrick is a reservoir not only of skill and experience, but political secrets as well. "I know most everything that's going to happen before it happens," he said, but he'll never tell.

Then again, there is one thing Kirkpatrick thinks people should know: "This job is the best-kept secret in the world!" 🐾

War continued from page 19

combination of street smarts and luck, said Hornstein. Both his parents spent time in forced labor camps — much like those that Lieder helped liberate — where the able-bodied tended to be sent first. His parents met after the war while on a train to a camp for displaced persons.

Hornstein's mother died in 1998, and his father, Stephen, now lives in St. Louis Park. Last year, Hornstein invited Lieder to his family's Passover Seder meal where the two older men immediately began talking about their war experiences.

"The vets who defeated Germany and liberated the camps are heroes," said Hornstein.

A soldier's view

When he was young, Cybart knew a concentration camp survivor who lived down the street from his aunt in Michigan. The woman, who had a camp number tattooed on her arm, would talk about her experiences. "That made it real," said Cybart.

During a seven-year stint in Germany with the Air Force military police in the 1980s, he visited Dachau, a concentration camp near Munich. "It was a somber place and a horrifying part of history," he said.

Cybart has tremendous respect for the "Greatest Generation" of World War II and the sacrifices they made. Through his wife, who is from Zell, Germany, he's talked with many Germans and heard their war experiences.

Retired a few years ago after 20 years of active duty, Cybart first met Lieder when he was seeking sponsors for a bill involving veteran's benefits.

"I have the utmost respect for what he went through," said Cybart.

Cybart feels strongly about honoring veterans and the sacrifices they made for the country. He's organizing the Memorial Day commemoration in Apple Valley this year.

"If we don't honor these people we forget their sacrifices and I don't want that to be forgotten." 🐾

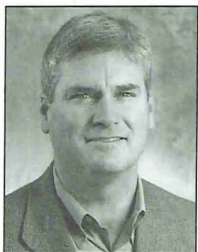
If you have Internet access, visit the House's Web page at:
<http://www.house.mn>

A call to public service

Emmer takes time to know the people and the process

By **BRETT MARTIN**

When Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano) moved just west of the Twin Cities metropolitan area after graduating from law school in 1988, he had



Rep. Tom Emmer

no idea the move would lead him into politics. In fact, he purchased the Old Shady Beach Resort Hotel, the last privately owned resort in Hennepin County, to enjoy rural life.

"I wanted to go somewhere where I could

hunt in the front yard and fish in the backyard," he said. The country didn't stay country for long. Developers came to Independence to start building, and a new road was slated for construction in front of Emmer's home. This called for removing 300-year-old trees. Emmer contacted the mayor and saved the trees

the night before they were to be cut down.

"That's the way the process is supposed to work," he said. "Then the public service part took hold of me."

The call to public service prompted him to run for city council. He served eight years on the Independence City Council and then moved up the road to Delano, where he served another two years before being elected to the House.

His city council experience gave him firsthand knowledge of the needs and expectations of the people he now represents. Because the area is experiencing rapid growth, Emmer said constituents are looking for a better transportation system.

"The city is exploding, so the issues we're facing at home and the issues we're facing here are the same," he said. "The transportation infrastructure needs serious consideration. There are a lot of people moving into the area, and they need to be able to get around. They

DISTRICT 19B

2002 Population: 36,729
Largest city: St. Michael
Counties: Hennepin and Wright
Top concerns: Education, transportation

"The transportation infrastructure needs serious consideration. There are a lot of people moving into the area, and they need to be able to get around. They need access."

— Rep. Tom Emmer

need access."

Emmer serves on the House Civil Law and Elections, Ethics, Health Policy and Finance and Regulated Industries committees.

"What I'd prefer to do, as a new legislator, is to get my feet on the ground and learn as much as I can about the people and the process," he said.

A trial attorney, Emmer compares serving as a new House member to serving on a jury. "You want to get all the information, get the facts, then make an informed decision," he said.

A solid foundation

Hosch uses business, local government background

By **MATT WETZEL**

Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph) ran for the House because he believes some members of the Legislature had grown shortsighted.



Rep. Larry Hosch

"I was frustrated with some of the things that were happening," he said. "There were many cuts that saved money in the short-term but didn't look to the long-term implications."

Hosch, who co-owns a home construction and remodeling business, is one of the youngest House members at age 27, but is not short on experience, having served as mayor of St. Joseph for four years. Despite working hard at his business and being involved in the community, some residents didn't take him seriously because of his youth.

"I wanted to make St. Joseph my home," he said. "I was tired of complaining."

He sees education funding, paying for health care and jobs as the key issues facing his district.

"We have schools in the state that have declining enrollment. Operating referendums just aren't working. We need the state to step in," he said. Voters in the Rocori School District rejected three different levies, and now a fourth-grade class there has 33 children. He believes schools should be better supported by the state so students have equal access and equal opportunity.

Like children learning to play together, Hosch said legislators must do the same. If he could have offered the first bill of the session, it would reflect that value. "A mandate that we all have to work together," he said. "There's so many things that I want to do."

Hosch has to balance two messages in his

DISTRICT 14B

2002 Population: 36,834
Largest city: St. Joseph
County: Stearns
Top concerns: School funding and health care

"We have schools in the state that have declining enrollment. Operating referendums just aren't working. We need the state to step in."

— Rep. Larry Hosch

district, with the St. Cloud area "exploding," but the western half being predominantly rural.

Rural Minnesota and its needs are crucial, but sometimes rural folks have a hard time getting together and presenting a united front, he said. "I think really the most important area we have to deal with is jobs."

Hosch serves on the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs, Local Government, and Rules and Legislative Administration committees.

AT ISSUE: GAMBLING

Power to the people

Bills would let voters decide if casino comes to their cities

By **BRETT MARTIN**

Before a casino can set up operations in a city, it may have to win over the city's residents.

Two bills heard by the Gaming Division of the House Regulated Industries Committee on Feb. 23 would prohibit the location of a state-operated or state-licensed gambling facility in a city unless the city's voters approve the facility in a referendum.

Reps. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) and Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake) are sponsoring HF463 and HF1208, respectively. Both bills would require voter approval in a general or special election called for that purpose, with the city picking up the expense for the election.

Vandever's bill would exempt racetracks from being considered a gambling facility unless it also conducts casino games. Lenczewski's bill doesn't have the exemption.

Lenczewski said it's important to let the voters decide if a casino can open in their communities because the host towns would be impacted by factors not addressed by the state, such as local costs, congestion and smoking bans.

"A host community would have a long list of issues the state would not consider," she said.

Vandever said the bills are in sync with the governor's pledge that he would not force a casino in any given area.

"In Minnesota, we like to have the people make decisions, and that's what this legislation does," he said.

Although Lenczewski concedes that casinos may be able to sway voters' opinions through marketing blitzes, she said the bills would slow down the process of building a new casino and give legislators time to work out a good deal with the gambling facility.

She points out that the tribal gaming compacts have not been beneficial to the state.

"Let's not rush too quickly to make another bad compact," Lenczewski said.

Currently, there are no legislators stepping forward with bills to bring a casino to their cities or towns, which Lenczewski finds ironic. She said legislators have fought for prisons, nuclear waste and sex offender housing in their districts, but not one representative is courting gambling facilities.

Both bills were held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill. A companion for Vandever's bill (SF1106), sponsored by Sen. Michele Bachmann (R-Stillwater), awaits action in the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee. Lenczewski's bill does not have a Senate companion.

The governor's budget proposal called for a \$200 million one-time casino license fee. Under the governor's plan a new casino arrangement,

Let the duckies race

For years, groups across the state have raised money by racing rubber ducks on Minnesota lakes. However, by doing so, they were violating the law.

But they may not remain that way for long. Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) is sponsoring HF803, that would redefine a raffle under charitable gaming laws to include games in which chances are represented by shares or other certificates of participation.

That modification would make the famed duck races legal. Under current law, raffles require tickets.

On Feb. 23, the Gaming Division of the House Regulated Industries Committee heard, and occasionally jeered, a bill that would legalize the rubber duck races. It was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

A companion bill (SF759), sponsored by Sen. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), awaits action in the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee.

(B. Martin)

which could include a partnership with interested tribes, is expected to generate more than \$100 million in state revenues beginning in 2008.

Although net revenues at Minnesota tribal casinos are unknown since casinos don't have to disclose them, they have been estimated to be between \$1 billion and \$2 billion a year, according to the Minnesota State Lottery. Illegal gambling in Minnesota is estimated to be in excess of \$2 billion annually.

A 2004 survey conducted by the Minnesota State Lottery and St. Cloud State University found that 83 percent of adult Minnesotans had gambled during the previous year, and an additional 11 percent had gambled at some point in their lives.

According to the survey, the average Minnesotan has bet on six different gambling activities in his or her lifetime and three within the past year. The state lottery was the most popular form of gambling with 60 percent of the state's adults having purchased a lottery ticket in the year prior to the survey.

Legal gambling in Minnesota includes charitable gambling, pari-mutuel horse racing, the state lottery, card rooms and tribal casinos. Utah and Hawaii are the only states that do not have some form of legal gambling.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

A pair of bills would require voter approval before a state-operated or state-licensed gaming facility could open in a city.

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STAR TRIBUNE, JUN 26 '05
Enough political theater

✓ Rep. Tom Emmer's diatribe about Democrats and political theater ("Repetition can't change the truth," June 22) would be humorous if it were not such a sad display of our dysfunctional political process.

Here is a freshman Republican who authored a bill promoting castration of sex offenders as his contribution to our civil discourse, and he is complaining about political theater! Perhaps if the far-right-wing ideologues who have taken over the Republican Party could get over their fascination with castration and gay marriage, there would be less political theater in St. Paul.

Tom Salkowski, Buffalo, Minn.

Stop playing politics

I was disheartened to read about the bickering between Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Attorney General Mike Hatch (Star Tribune, June 23).

In the face of a potential shutdown, I don't believe this is the time for constant partisan arguing or posturing for the 2006 gubernatorial race.

As a employee of the Minnesota Historical Society — which is facing possible shutdown — I know that unless the bickering leads to a solution that will allow me to pay my bills, neither one will get my vote.

Jessica Tarbox, St. Paul.

I recently saw a T-shirt with the expression, "Your lips keep moving, but all I hear is blah, blah, blah ..." I am reminded of this every time I read a commentary from a state legislator such as the June 22 commentary piece by Rep. Tom Emmer ("Repetition can't change the truth") and others that have appeared recently.

When I see the letters "R" or "DFL" at the end of a piece, I know that it's going to be an article blaming the opposite party for the gridlock and potential government shutdown.

It seems like the top priorities for elected officials are posturing, holding rigidly to a particular ideology and making the other party look as bad as possible as a runup to the next election. Doing the job they were elected to do — serve the best interests of the state and its people — is way down on the list.

If they spent half as much effort doing their jobs and working for real compromise, rather than fighting among themselves and spewing partisan bilge, we would have a budget and the various state agencies would not be planning for a shutdown.

Joe Fishbein, West St. Paul.

STAR TRIBUNE JUN 24 '05 We have long memories

If there is a way to impeach Gov. Tim Pawlenty for fiduciary negligence and mismanagement, I think it's time to start considering it. Ditto for Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson and House Speaker Steve Sviggum. Shame on them for holding the people of Minnesota hostage with their little game of chess.

We pawns will remember this when election time comes.

John Joachim, Taylors Falls, Minn.

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Gov. Tim Pawlenty, House Speaker Steve Sviggum and Democratic Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson cannot put partisan politics aside and find compromise in government. The bums.

Remember to vote every one of them out next time around.

Harold Kleven, Big Lake, Minn.

Use the 'I' word

I'd like to thank Rep. Irv Anderson for his June 22 letter "Defending the status quo."

I agree that investing in our schools and other services helps to make Minnesota more prosperous in the long run. Investing needed money for the purpose of future prosperity sounds kind of conservative, doesn't it?

If Gov. Tim Pawlenty is not willing to invest in Minnesota's future prosperity, then what does that make him? He's sounding less and less conservative and more and more reckless. Instead of calling a tax a "fee," maybe Pawlenty could start looking at what it really is: an investment. If he's a true conservative, then that is something he should find appealing.

Joseph Lex, Minneapolis.

ST. CLOUD TIMES

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Editorial

Castration summons important questions

A freshman legislator's proposal to require certain Minnesota sex offenders to be chemically castrated raises many questions that need to be answered if the Legislature is serious about pursuing this option.

Chemical castration, or administering drugs or hormones to remove sexual desire and aggression, is not a new idea. Starting with California in 1996, about 10 states have adopted a variety of measures relating to it. A handful of European countries have used chemical or surgical castration even longer than that.

Analyzing results from these measures will go a long way toward determining whether Rep. Tom Emmer's "asexual rehabilitation" plan is a humane, effective and efficient way to treat repeat pedophiles. Emmer's bill, House File 1131, reads in part:

Asexualization would be applied when the person has sexual contact or commits a sex crime with a person younger than age 13 and aggravating circumstances include the crime:

- Being especially serious, atrocious or cruel.
- Resulting in significant physical injury to the victim.
- Was committed upon one victim by the defendant two or more times within a 24-hour period.
- Was committed upon one victim by two or more persons, acting in concert with the defendant.

■ Was committed by a person while serving a sentence for a sex crime conviction, or while subject to any provision of a deferred prosecution agreement, suspended sentence, or post-imprisonment supervision for a sex crime.

■ There was a prior juvenile delinquency adjudication for a sex crime.

■ Or there was a prior conviction for a sex crime in this state or another state.

Under the bill, chemical castration would be in addition to other punishments, and it could be ordered as a condition of release. It also allows any person convicted of a sex crime to voluntarily consent to the procedure.

Rep. Dan Severson of Sauk Rapids signed on as a co-author Thursday. The bill awaits action in the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee. There is no companion bill in the Senate.

Proponents of chemical castration tout its success at reducing recidivism. Some European studies have shown these rates to fall to as low as 3 percent, while other approaches — imprisonment, counseling, even shock therapy — still yield recidivism rates of 17 percent and more.

Many of the larger studies that proponents cite are based in Europe and involve preferential pedophiles, or people who prefer sexual relations with children. Situational pedophiles are people who have had adult sexual relationships, but will have sex with children because of drugs or alcohol, or because needs are not otherwise being met, according The Associated Press.

Opponents argue chemical castration is cruel and unusual punishment and not allowed under the U.S. Constitution. They also say the use of drugs implies pedophilia is more of a disease than a crime, and question whether that's the right message to send. In addition, they ask about long-term effectiveness. Chemical castration lasts only as long as drugs are administered, plus it does nothing to address the defendant's mental capacities. Does that mean recipients are to stay on the drugs their entire lives?

Clearly, Minnesota needs to look at all these questions, as well as results from other states' laws, in helping determine whether this is an appropriate approach.

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EDITORIAL

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Castration is not the answer

One of the top stories on the WDAZ 10 o'clock news last night told about 52-year-old Reinaldo Vasquez, who's spent the last seven years in a North Dakota prison for raping a male co-worker. During that time, he lost an eye and experienced the harsh realities of prison life. Now, the co-worker has recanted his testimony, saying he made the whole story up. Because his testimony was what got Vasquez convicted, it's likely Vasquez will soon be freed.

Flipping to KVLV, one of that channel's headlines was the proposal by Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, to grant judges the ability to sentence pedophiles to chemical castration through sex-drive-suppressing drugs in certain cases such as an extremely cruel crime, a physically injured victim or a repeat perpetrator. Emmer's bill also includes an option for physical castration, upon request of the perpetrator, of pedophiles who've preyed on preteens.

Under Emmer's bill, a case such as Vasquez's could possibly meet the criteria for a chemical castration sentence, depending upon how the judge construes it. Let's assume for a minute that Vasquez is sentenced in Minnesota under the same circumstances, and the judge orders him to be castrated in addition to his lengthy prison sentence. Seven years later, oops, the guy who sent him to prison says he lied. Vasquez is released from prison and tries to get his life in order, which is next to impossible after experiencing several brutal years in prison.

Then, to top it off, he doesn't get to have sex the rest of his life.

Presumably, most people sentenced to castration are guilty and probably deserve to be deprived of their sex drives, but juries have, time and again, convicted innocent people, and being castrated is a huge price for the innocent to pay so the guilty can be punished.

The effectiveness of castration (physical and chemical) as a deterrent to sex crimes has long been debated. While it might work for some predators and repeat offenders, the experts acknowledge it is by no means a cure-all. And many so-called sex crimes are more about control, violence or drug-induced rather than sexual urges. How can we know which ones it would work on until it's too late?

Is castration cruel and unusual punishment? You be the judge. To remove the use of a body part that was used in a crime - well, do we cut off or paralyze the arms of thieves? Do we lobotomize computer hackers and other white-collar criminals? Do we purposely break the legs of those fleeing from custody? Of course not, those amount to cruel and unusual punishment.

Castration is an invasive medical procedure. Medical procedures don't belong in court-ordered sentences. And while both types of castration can be reversed, there could still be lasting effects on the recipients of these procedures. If the convicted offender chooses to be castrated completely on his own, without the incentive of a drastically reduced sentence, certainly, no one would deny him that right.

While no one can argue that something needs to be done about the most extreme sex offenders, castration is not the answer. Emmer's bill should be shot down before it gets anywhere. Although nine other states have laws allowing castration, Minnesota doesn't need to join them. There are too many reasons not to.

Natalie J. Ostgaard

CROOKSTON DAILY TIMES

CROOKSTON, MN
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Minnesotans for Responsible Government says the current campaign finance system is 'a bad joke' ^{x-1}

St. Paul Legal Ledger 5-19-05

BY CHARLEY SHAW
Legal Ledger Staff Writer

A campaign finance watchdog group says \$3.5 million in independent expenditures was spent on state House races for the 2004 election.

The per candidate amount of expenditures for certain House races exceeded the amount allowed under state campaign finance laws, according to Minnesotans for Responsible Government (MRG). The group's leaders called the current system "a bad joke."

"We need special interests to participate but not to determine like they do today," spokesman Joe Marble said.

Marble, along with co-founder David Hoch and Hamline University political science professor David Schultz, unveiled a large "for sale" billboard in front of the state Capitol on Tuesday morning.

The independent expenditures included \$1.54 million from the DFL Party, \$1.2 million from Republicans and \$750,000 from special interest political action committees, the group reported.

MRG supports campaign finance legislation currently before the Legislature and is hoping for a floor vote this week in the House on a bill that

increases disclosure requirements of contributions and expenditures.

Campaign finance legislation was originally sponsored by Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, and Sen. John Hottinger, DFL-St. Peter. The House bill was amended into a bigger bill.

In the bill, an individual, political committee, political fund or political party that spends an aggregate amount in excess of \$500 on "electioneering communication" such as television advertisements to affect the outcome of a state election must report expenditures within 24 hours. Those requirements would be in effect 60 days before a general election and 30 days before a primary. Each expenditure over \$100 would have to be reported to the state Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board along with the name the candidate identified in the ad.

So-called independent expenditures would have to be reported within 48 hours.

"This is the most progress made on any real campaign finance reform in over a decade," said Schultz, a former president of Common Cause Minnesota.

Marble said campaign reform is needed before the next campaign season kicks off.

"The time for reform is now," Marble said. "Once the 2006 election cycle begins, you can forget about it."

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Meth the topic of Senate discussion this week

By Jennifer Rogers
Tribune staff writer

FRONT PAGE



This week at the state capitol:
Meth bills
A Senate committee moved Thursday to slap restrictions on sales of cold medicine that can be turned into methamphetamine, one of three bills dealing with the fast-spreading drug to get the thumbs up.
The Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee endorsed a bill that would put a two-pack-age limit on purchases of medicine containing pseudophedrine and would require buyers to show identification. Retailers would have to keep that medicine behind a counter and maintain a purchase log.
The bill, sponsored by Sen. Linda Berglin, DFL-

Minneapolis, now awaits a full Senate vote.
Advocates argue that meth makers will be leery about leaving a trail of their purchases. But privacy advocates are troubled by the logs, which they say are too intrusive for the general public.
The other two bills have more committee stops to make.
One, sponsored by Sen. Julie Rosen, R-Fairmont, ratchets up penalties for making and selling meth as well as reclassifies the drug as a narcotic par with

See Update, Page 3A

ALBERT LEA TRIBUNE
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Update From Page 1A

cocaine and heroin.
For instance, selling meth could land offenders in prison for 10 years for a first offense or 15 years for a repeat offense - more than triple the current maximum terms.
Some lawmakers, however, worry about some of the penalties being too strict. Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, said some meth offenders should be considered for treatment instead rather than automatically being put in prison.
No-fault auto insurance
Promising to shave 20 percent off car insurance premiums, three Republican lawmakers unveiled a proposal Wednesday to eliminate no-fault auto insurance in Minnesota.
Rep. Tim Wilkin, Sen. Geoff Michel and Sen. Mady Reiter made the announcement in a civics classroom at St. Bernard's Catholic High School in St. Paul, where juniors and seniors studied the state's auto insurance system and recommended the change.
"We as teenagers pay so much a month and we didn't think this was right," said Missy Bohland, a senior. "This personally would save me \$380 a year."
Minnesota is one of 10 states to require no-fault insurance. The state's drivers pay an average of \$800 a year for insurance, compared with \$609 in Wisconsin and \$533 in North Dakota.
Wilkin, R-Eagan, said the state's no-fault system has led to unreasonable costs because the system doesn't limit medical claims, even for minor injuries. Eliminating no-fault insurance would bring premiums more in line with surrounding states, he said. The legislation would require a 20 percent reduction in premiums, saving Minnesota drivers an average of \$160 a year.
Lowering premiums would probably reduce the number of

uninsured drivers on the roads, currently estimated at about 15 percent, Wilkin said.
When lawmakers adopted no-fault insurance in the 1970s, they intended to prevent minor accidents from ending up in court, but the lack of limits on medical claims has led to some health providers overcharging for services, said Bob Johnson, executive vice president of the Insurance Federation of Minnesota.
Castration for pedophiles
Drug-induced castration should be among the punishments for sex offenders who victimize children, a state legislator said Thursday.
Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, proposed allowing judges to require pedophiles to take sex-drive-suppressing drugs as part of their sentences in cases where the crime was extremely cruel, the victim was physically injured or the perpetrator had previous offenses. Emmer also would let pedophiles volunteer for physical castration on the operating table.
"We can't assume that we can keep building bigger and bigger buildings" to house sex offenders, said the first-term legislator, who said he was prompted to write the bill after hearing hours of testimony on proposals to contain sex offenders.
He cited studies showing that castration significantly reduced repeat crimes by sex offenders motivated by sexual urges. "That would control the urges that they cannot control themselves," he said.
Nine states, including Wisconsin, have chemical castration laws for some sex offenders. Chemical castration involves men taking female hormone drugs to suppress the sex drive. Offenders in Texas, California and Florida can opt for surgical removal of the testes instead.
A member of the Governor's Commission on Sex Offender Policy - whose recent report to the governor recommended creation of a nonpartisan board to oversee sex offender policy - said castration needs a closer look before legislators jump on board.
"There's no magic bullet - that's why we need a holistic, comprehensive approach," said Carla Ferrucci, executive director of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "We need to deal with all sides of the issue."
...Castration is a solution after there's already many, many victims. We want to look at the front end."
Minnesota quarter
The first Minnesota-themed quarters will arrive at the state capitol in April in a TCF Bank-arranged armored truck.
TCF beat out two credit unions Thursday to be the host bank for the April 12 quarter rollout. It's all part of the U.S. Mint's 50-state commemorative quarter program.
The Minnesota quarter features a loon, two anglers in a boat, a pine-lined lakeshore and an outline of the state with the words, "Land of 10,000 Lakes."
As the host bank, TCF has pledged \$15,000 for the event, said Education Department spokesman Bill Walsh. The department provided assistance to the panel that designed the quarter.
Walsh said TCF was chosen because of its strong Minnesota presence, its promotional plan and its suggestions for educational tie-ins with the event.
At the event, school children will be able to get free quarters and everyone else can buy \$10 rolls.
Next month, a state contingent will travel to the Mint in Denver where they can watch the first Minnesota quarters being made.
For more information on happenings at the capitol go to www.house.mn and www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/.

Contact Jennifer Rogers at jennifer.rogers@albertleatribune.com or at 379-3439.

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House approves crime bill aimed at sex offenders

STAR TRIBUNE APR 29 '05
By Conrad deFiebre
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Thousands of sex offenders would be imprisoned for life and some would be chemically or surgically castrated under a sweeping crime bill overwhelmingly approved Thursday by the House.

Additionally, the most dangerous sex offenders who are released would have to drive cars bearing special "predatory offender" license plates. They also would be barred from meetings called to notify neighbors of their presence in the community.

With memories of the November 2003 slaying of North Dakota college student Dru Sjodin still fresh, legislators spared practically no effort to crack down on those dubbed the "worst of the worst."

CRIME continues on B7

CRIME from B1

Senate set to take up its version of bill on Monday

Life sentences for serious sex offenders — without possibility of parole for rape with force, weapons or bodily harm — have been under consideration in the House for more than a year despite official projections that they could eventually double Minnesota's inmate rolls and require construction of seven new prisons.

"It's going to cost \$100 million to \$200 million a year," said Rep. Michael Paymar, DFL-St. Paul. "Your children and your children's children are going to pay for it."

Short-term costs of the sentencing increases make up a relatively small portion of the entire \$1.7 billion omnibus crime bill, which was approved

on a vote of 123 to 10. But House sponsor Steve Smith, R-Mound, acknowledged that the tab for taxpayers will rise steeply in later years. "It's an issue down the road," he said. "The next session will have to face that."

On Monday, the Senate will take up its own crime bill, which would also lock up sex offenders for life, but many fewer than in the House plan and all with a chance of parole. It's expected that a conference committee will work out a compromise between the two positions.

Conferees probably also will have to deal with the castration and license-plate provisions that were adopted after they occupied much of the seven-hour debate. Both amendments

came from freshman Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano.

"I apologize if it's sensitive to some folks," he said of the castration proposal, which would apply to a small group of child molesters, who would pay for the procedures out of their own pockets. "But the issue is, how do we help these people help themselves?" The amendment passed on a bipartisan vote of 80 to 54.

Bigger majorities approved Emmer's twin amendments to mark license plates and drivers' licenses of released Level 3 sex offenders with "predatory offender" markings. Offenders would pay a \$10 surcharge for the special plates.

Critics said the markings would do little more than make it harder for ex-offenders to re-enter society, but Emmer said they would "help police protect our kids."

In other action on the bill, the House:

➤ Approved without debate an amendment from Rep. Dan Larson, DFL-Bloomington, to bar sex offenders from notification meetings about them. The move followed a recent meeting in Bloomington where an offender did show up.

➤ Rejected an amendment by Rep. Judy Soderstrom, R-Mora, to reinstitute a state parole board that could release nonviolent first offenders from prison after they had served only half their normal terms.

➤ Buried, on a vote of 20 to 111, an effort by Rep. Phil Krinkie, R-Shoreview, to strip out a 25-cents-a-month increase in telephone bills to pay for 911 emergency phone service. Krinkie called it a tax; supporters, including Gov. Tim Pawlenty, regard it as a fee that is vital to maintaining a backbone of public safety and homeland security efforts.

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IN SESSION

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Crime bill aims at sex offenders

BY TONI COLEMAN

Pioneer Press

PIONEER PRESS APR 29 1985

Sex offenders were targeted for new punishment, from chemical castration to a special license plate that identifies them to the public, as the Minnesota House passed a bulky crime bill Thursday.

The bill of more than 300 pages gave lawmakers plenty to chew on. The House spent nearly seven hours Thursday debating more than 30 amendments before passing the bill 123-10.

The \$1.68 billion bill sets the public safety budget for the state courts, prisons and law enforcement agencies for the next two years and represents a 16 percent increase in public safety funding. If the Senate approves its version of the bill wending its way through the committee process, which provides more money for tracking and treatment of sex offenders, a conference committee will have to work out a compromise.

The bill approved by the House locks up violent sex offenders for life, doubles jail time for other sex offenders and creates a sex offender review board, which is appointed by the governor and allows supervised

release and develops professional standards for treatment. The bill also boosts resources to fight methamphetamine, including funding for 10 more meth agents.

"We believe the worst of the worst should be incarcerated for life," said Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, chairman of the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee.

Although the bill enjoyed wide bipartisan support, Democrat-Farmer-Labor members noted what they considered weaknesses, such as sentences for first-time sex offenders being longer than those for killers.

DFLers also complained that the bill raises taxes in the name of fees. For example, the bill raises the state surcharge by \$10 on traffic offenses and \$1 on parking tickets.

"This bill raises taxes. This bill raises \$28 million of new taxes for the state of Minnesota," said House Minority Leader Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul.

"The so-called 'no new taxes' pledge is ... really a 'Let's pretend we're not raising taxes while we raise tens of million of dollars in taxes,'" Entenza said, adding that property taxes may

"We believe the worst of the worst should be incarcerated for life,"

Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, chairman of the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee

rise as counties assume new duties under the bill.

Representatives spent several hours debating substantial changes in public policy that hadn't been presented in or didn't survive the committee-vetting process, including a provision that subjects convicted pedophiles to chemical castration to reduce their sex drives.

Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who lead the castration charge, also successfully got the body to approve special license plates and driver's licenses marked "Predatory Offender" that identify convicted sex offenders who are considered the most at-risk to re-offend.

Although he voted for the ID requirement, Rep. Al Juhnke, DFL-Willmar, argued the license plate was a feel-good measure that lacked functionality.

"These folks will never, ever, ever put these plates on their

cars and drive them around. They're just not that stupid," said Juhnke, who argued offenders would elude detection by cycling through several cars or borrowing cars of friends. He added the license plates would unfairly label a family member driving the offender's car as a predator.

The bill also:

- Requires that health care facilities and treatment centers be notified if they're housing a sex offender.

- Commissions a study on re-establishing a parole board that would grant early release to some offenders.

- Suspends the driver's licenses of people who steal gas.

- Waives filing fees for restraining orders if the petition alleges sexual misconduct.

- Establishes a DNA database of felons and those arrested for felonies.

- Prohibits sex offenders from attending their own community notification meetings.

- Exempts people who beg on the street or tell fortunes from the vagrancy law.

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QUOTES FOR THE DAY

"I came in one Monday morning and I said, 'I just figured it out. If I don't have all these bills heard in the next two weeks, I'm out of luck.'" he said.

First-term Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, on adapting to committee hearing deadlines while learning the inner workings of the Legislature. Emmer introduced 29 bills this year and had about 60 percent of them heard.

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"I believe in every bill that I bring. But I recognize that some have greater opportunities of being heard than others."

Second-term Rep. Joe Atkins, DFL-Inver Grove Heights, who said three of the 12 bills he's authored this year have received hearings.

St. Paul
Legal Ledger
4-7-05

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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Bills die by the thousands as committee deadlines pass

STAR TRIBUNE APR 17 '05

By Conrad deFiebre
Star Tribune Staff Writer



Reiter

If T.S. Eliot never studied the Minnesota Legislature, he had no idea how cruel a month April can be.

But Sen. Mady Reiter, R-Shoreview, knows. She tried to breathe life into her bill to keep police and fire departments from prohibiting U.S. flag pins on their members' uniforms, but ran smack into April legislative deadlines for committee action on such measures.

Never mind that a companion bill unanimously passed the House. Reiter's bill never got a hearing and is dead in the Senate after a party-line procedural vote last week kept it from getting to the floor.

A final deadline for bills to clear policy committees in both houses passed last week, leaving legislation great and small with little hope of passage this year.

Remember Delano Republican Rep. Tom Emmer's bill to castrate sex offend-



Emmer



Koering

ers? It didn't make the cut. Ditto Minneapolis DFL Rep. Keith Ellison's push to allow convicted felons to vote once they get out from behind bars.

It's a common story. More than 4,600 bills have hit the hopper this session, but only a few hundred were heard, and even fewer will make it into law.

Still, many committees worked overtime last week to keep some bills alive, leaving little time for significant floor action. The lone exception came as the House debated for hours before a party-line vote approved a Republican budget plan.

Meanwhile, Minnesota got its first openly gay Republican legislator when Sen. Paul Koering of Fort Ripley revealed his sexual orientation — without losing his sense of humor. A day after coming out to a few media outlets, he greeted other reporters thus: "Is this a good time to announce for Congress?"

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LEGISLATURE

House OKs 'union' ballot

Amendment would define marriage

PIONEER PRESS APR 1 '05
BY RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER
Pioneer Press

After more than three hours of debate about morals, religion, laws and judicial activism, the Minnesota House Thursday voted to let voters decide whether the state constitution should define marriage as only the union of one man and one woman.

Despite the 77-56 vote in the House, the amendment still is far from becoming part of the constitution. The Minnesota Senate rejected a similar measure last year, and the measure's fate this year is

unclear.

Backers in the House Thursday said they simply want to preserve the traditional and sacred institution of marriage.

"This bill is about defining marriage. This bill is about stopping activist judges. ... This bill is about the voice of the people being heard," said chief House sponsor Rep. Dan Severson, R-Sauk Rapids. "The people of Minnesota want to vote on this issue."

Opponents saw more hateful intent in the measure. They said it was vaguely worded, would ban not only gay marriage but also civil unions, and was designed only to discriminate against gay people to promote socially conservative politics.

"Why can't we see the dark cloud that is over the Capitol today?" asked St. Paul Rep. Michael Paymar, a Democratic-Farmer-Laborite. "There is going to be a vote ... because of politics. I understand that, but it saddens me."

In the GOP-controlled House 13 DFLers voted for the proposal and three Republicans voted against it.

A Senate version of the amendment has not yet begun its legislative journey this year. Its chief sponsor did not request a hearing on the bill until Thursday evening.

Even if the House and the Senate pass the measure, it could not be placed on an election ballot for Minnesota voters until 2006. The amendment would be added to the constitution if the majority of those voting in the election approve the question.

On the House floor much of the debate centered not on the amendment's language dealing with marriage but on three other words in the 34-word constitutional question.

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT 6B

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Marriage amendment

(continued)

Those words say that marriage and "its legal equivalent" are limited to one man and one woman.

Opponents said the "legal equivalent" language would ban not just gay marriage but civil unions and potentially

the ability of local governments and businesses to offer health and other benefits to employees' domestic partners. That may mean, they said, that gay people may not be able to visit their partners when they are sick or dying in the hospital.

For hours, opponents of the

measure questioned those on the other side regarding those words. An effort to remove them was defeated by nine votes.

"As far as I know, I am the only one on the floor for whom this is a real life-changing proposal. This is not a matter of semantics," said Rep. Karen Clark, DFL-Minneapolis. She is the only openly gay member of the Minnesota House.

If voters approve the constitutional amendment, she said,

she fears she might be unable to receive health benefits through her partner's plan or receive visits from her partner should she become hospitalized.

"What is it about my committed loving relationship of many years ... What is about it that is so threatening to your marriage or any other marriage?" she said.

To Clark, Severson said, "This is not about you. This is not about me. This is about the

people of Minnesota asking to vote on this issue."

Supporters said their measure is simply about marriage and would not take away anyone's rights.

"This proposed ballot question could not be more clear," Rep. Tom Emmer, R-DeLano, said.

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Bill proposes castration for some sex offenders

STAR TRIBUNE FEB 18 '05
By Conrad deFiebre
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Serious sex offenders who prey on children in Minnesota should be subject to court-ordered castration — surgical or chemical — a group of Republican legislators proposed Thursday.

"At first glance that may seem to be a little overboard," said Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, chief sponsor of a bill introduced in the House to promote what he called "asexual rehabilitation" for pedophiles. "But it would control the urges that they cannot control themselves."

Scientific research in Europe has shown that chemical castration with regular injections of antiandrogen drugs such as depo provera can reduce recidivism by child sex offenders to near zero, said Emmer, a lawyer and freshman legislator who has seven children in school.

Sex offender treatment professionals, however, downplayed the effectiveness of such an approach in most cases.

"It's of limited utility to a very limited population," said Patricia Orud, who oversees sex offender treatment in Minnesota

prisons. "It has gained popularity with the public, but the professionals are careful to apply it only in the correct cases."

A 1991 Star Tribune Minnesota Poll found support among 56 percent of the public for surgical castration of repeat sex offenders and 51 percent backing for administering "drugs to make them impotent." The same poll showed 37 percent support for the death penalty for child sex abuse.

Emmer's proposal was greeted with caution at the State Capitol.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty "wants to gather more information, but he's willing to explore the idea," said his spokesman, Brian McClung.

Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Chairman Leo Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids, said he knew nothing about the proposal and expressed doubt whether he would have time to hear it in committee. So far, no Senate version of the bill has been introduced.

A California first

About 10 states, including Wisconsin and Iowa, have laws allowing castration of certain

sex offenders, the first enacted in California in 1996.

Emmer gave no count of offenders who have been castrated nationwide or in any state. And he said he did not know how many "preferential pedophiles," child sex abusers not motivated by rage, anger or special circumstances, would fall under his bill in Minnesota.

Following conviction for sex abuse of a child under the age of 13, offenders would face an evidentiary hearing before a jury to determine whether aggravating factors exist to warrant castration. The factors would include prior sex crimes, repeated assaults on one victim, significant injury to the victim and crimes deemed "especially serious, atrocious or cruel."

If such factors were found, a judge could order either surgical or chemical castration. DNA proof of the offender's guilt and automatic review by the Minnesota Court of Appeals would have to precede the surgery.

"I understand the need to be protective of constitutional rights, even for this type of convicted criminal," Emmer said. "I feel we've drafted a bill that

protects society while preserving civil liberties."

The bill also allows for castration of adult inmates who request it in writing. Orud said a handful of Minnesota sex offenders have volunteered for chemical castration, which is eventually reversible if treatments are discontinued.

But Orud and Gerald Kaplan, executive director of Alpha Human Services, the state's only licensed sex offender treatment center, said that common antidepressants such as Prozac are often just as effective as the antiandrogens in dulling deviant sexual urges.

Antidepressants also produce fewer side effects such as extreme weight gain, high blood pressure and heart problems, they said. And Kaplan said no castration drug is a cure-all for pedophiles.

"If they're interested in children, it's not going to make them interested in adults," he said. "It may slow them down, but it won't change the direction of their arousal patterns."

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Hats go into ring; plans go onto table

STAR TRIBUNE FEB 20 '05

By Conrad deFiebre
Star Tribune Staff Writer

When legislators weren't launching campaigns for higher office last week, they found time to advance long-delayed state capital investment plans and lay out some juicy red-meat policy proposals.

Freshman Rep. ~~Tom Emmer~~'s bill to castrate child molesters was the prime slice of steak tartare, but the Delano Republican had competition from Rep. Dean Urdahl, R-Grove City, whose "cheeseburger bill" would ban suits against the food industry for making people fat.

More on the soyburger side of the menu was Sen. John Hottinger's call for a rollback of Ventura-era income tax cuts to balance yet another state budget deficit. The St. Peter DFLer was backed by an ecumenical phalanx of clerics led by Roman Catholic Archbishop Harry Flynn, but their against-the-grain initiative may need divine help to gain ground.

Then again, maybe not. Top legislative leaders of both parties teamed up last week to propose big increases in services for the disabled. They didn't say how they'd handle what an administration official called the plan's "pretty hefty price tag."

Realpolitik came to the fore as House Republicans and DFLers joined forces to speed an \$817 million capital bonding bill to a floor vote set for Tuesday. Gridlock doomed this major legislation last year, but Thursday night the Ways and Means Committee approved it on a vote of 33 to 4, with only Republicans opposed.

Meanwhile, Minnesota's big debate over gambling rolled on with three twists: 1) Gov. Tim Pawlenty's suggestion that Indian tribes could diversify their casino businesses by selling low-cost prescription drugs from Canada; 2) the Mall of America's proposed megacasino in Bloomington and 3) final Minnesota Racing Commission approval of a harness track in Anoka County.

Finally, it's more than 20 months until the next statewide election, but don't tell that to GOP legislators Michele Bachmann of Stillwater, Jim Knoblach of St. Cloud and Jeff Johnson of Plymouth. Sen. Bachmann and Rep. Knoblach jumped into a race for Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kennedy's seat in Congress as Kennedy sets his sights on the Senate, and Rep. Johnson said he's running for state attorney general.

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CORRECTIONS SEX OFFENDERS

Chemical castration proposed

Measure makes it a sentence for pedophiles whose victims are younger than 13
PIONEER PRESS FEB 18 '05

BY RACHEL E.
STASSEN-BERGER
Pioneer Press

Some convicted Minnesota pedophiles could be sentenced to chemical castration under a measure introduced Thursday.

The measure, which would allow judges to sentence pedophiles to chemical castration, would only apply to sex offenders who have abused children younger than 13.

"At first glance, folks would say that seems to be a little overboard, that seems to be a little aggressive. Folks, it is very serious legislation," said Rep. Tom Emmer, the first-term Republican from Delano who is sponsoring the measure. Emmer said chemical castration works to dramatically reduce the sex drive for pedophiles.

The proposal is the latest in

a flurry of attempts by lawmakers to address sex offender issues in the state. Last year Gov. Tim Pawlenty suggested the death penalty in cases where rapists kill their victims, but that proposal received little legislative support.

Chemical castration is a sentencing option in eight states, including Wisconsin.

Among Minnesota lawmakers, no strong voices immediately decried the concept, but some raised concerns about the details. Pawlenty said through a spokesman that he was open to it.

"Governor Pawlenty wants to gather more information but he is willing explore the idea," said press secretary Brian McClung.

Historically, opponents have raised constitutional objections to chemical castration, according to law journal articles,

because the procedure could be considered cruel and unusual punishment.

Chuck Samuelson, head of the Minnesota branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, told the Associated Press he was not comfortable with the idea of chemical castration because it might be unconstitutional and difficult to administer.

On Thursday, Emmer acknowledged such concerns.

"As a lawyer, I understand the need to be protective of constitutional rights, even for this type of convicted criminal," he said. "I feel we've drafted a bill that protects society while preserving civil liberties."

His measure would call for an automatic appeal for anyone sentenced to chemical castration and would require the Department of Corrections to

pay for any medical costs of the procedure. It would require DNA proof in any chemical-castration case.

It would also allow some pedophiles already in the corrections system to choose to be chemically or surgically castrated.

Chemical castration would require the offender to take a pill or receive a shot periodically to control his hormones and is reversible. Castration by surgery is not reversible.

Emmer said studies have proved castration is very effective with some sex offenders.

But castration, chemical or otherwise, would do nothing to prevent sex offenders from hurting people in nonsexual ways, skeptics point out. Also, Emmer's measure does not offer offenders sex therapy, which some studies have shown to be effective.

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Strict smoking-ban bill diluted in House panel

STAR TRIBUNE JAN 28 '05

By Mark Brunswick
Star Tribune Staff Writer

A bill that would impose a virtually complete ban on indoor public smoking in Minnesota was significantly scaled back Thursday when a House committee voted to prohibit smoking in restaurants but amended the proposal to exempt other businesses such as bars and the lobbies of hotels.

The bill, considered to be one of the most controversial of this legislative ses-

INSIDE

➤ *Some state laws still use demeaning terms in referring to disabilities, but a remedy is in the works. B4*

sion, is expected to face scrutiny — and maybe more amendments — as it makes its way through the lawmaking process. While Gov. Tim Pawlenty has said he would sign a bill banning smoking, and the proposal has bipartisan support, diverse groups from bar owners to doctors are weighing in. A Senate version has yet

to be heard in committee.

"This has value in terms of continued dialogue on an important topic. There is reason and room for compromise," said Rep. Fran Bradley, R-Rochester, chairman of the House Health Policy and Finance Committee, which passed the scaled-back bill by a voice vote.

"This issue is too important to see it die in this committee," Bradley said.

SMOKING continues on B4:
— *Is it not enough or too much?*

SMOKING from B1

Amendment exempts private clubs, some bars

The measure, proposed by Rep. Doug Meslow, R-White Bear Lake, is known as the Freedom to Breathe Act of 2005. It would have prohibited smoking in public places and adds places of employment (including bars and restaurants), public transportation and public meetings to the list of areas where smoking is prohibited.

But an amendment from Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, stripped the bill of everything except prohibitions at restaurants. Abeler argued that the compromise would advance the bill but recognize the competing interests of personal health and the viability of business.

Under Abeler's amendment, bars where less than 50 percent of revenues are generated by food sales, and private clubs such as VFW halls and fraternal or civic organizations, would not be affected by the ban. Cities or counties could pass their own ordinances for enacting

and enforcing stricter bans if they chose.

The committee held a day of hearings on the proposal before voting, hearing from members of the medical community who argued that secondhand smoke was a health care issue for workers in the service industry, from representatives of bars and restaurants who registered

concerns about the impact of a ban on business, and from local elected officials, concerned about the costs of enforcing the ban.

Even during debate on Thursday, clear battle lines were drawn.

"It's either not enough or it's too much," Bradley acknowledged.

Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, questioned whether civil liberties were being damaged by such legislation.

"Where does it end? Next is it going to be cell phones? Next is it going to be computers? Peanut

oils? Salt? Cheeseburgers?" he asked.

Rep. Ron Latz, DFL-St. Louis Park, one of the authors of the bill, said civil liberties were at issue; but more for those people who don't want to feel the impact of secondhand smoke.

"If we smoke in a room when other people are in that room, everyone in that room is smoking with us," Latz said.

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"The average person doesn't care if we get done in June or July. They would rather see it get done correctly than have shoddy work done at the last minute."

Rep. Matt Dean
R-Dellwood

He also learned the ugly side of political debates and found it's sometimes better to not say anything than to be drawn into an argument.

"Early in the session, I took the bait and got into partisan bickering. I wish I wouldn't have done that," Moe said.

A coach and an educator, he found himself getting a firsthand lesson in government.

"These past five months have been the greatest learning experience of my life," Moe said. "You learn about people, public policy and yourself."

One concept that new members seemed to have grasped quickly is making their voices heard.

Hortman was one of five members who introduced bills to fund the Northstar commuter rail corridor project, which ended up in the bonding law.

"I'm thrilled that the Minnesota Northstar project got passed. I feel directly responsible for that," Hortman said. "We've made a lot more progress than they did last year, and I'm proud of that."

Indeed, Hortman and fellow freshman Rep. Denise Dittrich (DFL-Champlin) worked hard for the project, which helped them win their seats since their predecessors opposed the rail system.

Reaping rewards

Hortman worked in Washington, D.C., for former Sen. Al Gore and Sen. John Kerry, so she had a good understanding of the government process, but working for senators didn't prepare her for the excitement of serving in the Minnesota House.

"It was 10 times as wonderful as I thought it would be," she said.

"It's probably not the right thing to call it fun, but I'm having the time of my life. The challenges are invigorating," agreed Charron. "I'm really soaking it up with a sense of

but watch out on the next one."

The freshmen typically met once a month during session to get to know each other better, and some of them are planning a summer trip together to Coors Field in Denver to see a Colorado Rockies baseball game.

Emmer had the honor of filling in as House speaker during several floor sessions; a duty he performed like a seasoned leader.



"The whole freshman class is focused on the issues, not politics. Those marching orders came from the voters."

Rep. Melissa Hortman
DFL-Brooklyn Park

"That is amazing. It's an incredible experience," Emmer said. "It is not only an unbelievable experience, it's truly humbling. It can be an intimidating place to be."

Representing constituents in the State Capitol gives members such as Moe a feeling of pride for his district.

"What has happened more in this session is that I've grown so much more protective of the district that I represent," Moe said. "The paternalism I feel for my community is greater



"I most enjoyed those moments when we forged coalitions across geographic and political divides and worked together on solutions to issues big and small."

Rep. Diane Loeffler
DFL-Mpls

than at any time in my life."

If this year is any indication, the new members will provide plenty of excitement and ideas during the second half of their first terms. They enjoy serving the state, which Dean said makes this class special.

"We thought servility was still cool," Dean said.

delight."

He especially enjoys the camaraderie of House members. "The kind of characters here — you can't make this stuff up," he said. "You can have a good, spirited debate and then walk off, pat each other on the back and say, 'You got me on this one,

House veterans are impressed

As the newest House members came into their own this session, they faced scrutiny not only by their constituents, but also by veteran legislators.

The senior members liked what they saw.

"This state is fortunate to have such great public servants," said Rep. Mike Jaros (DFL-Duluth), now serving his 15th nonconsecutive term. "A lot of them have had previous public service experience and have worked in different professions. I think we need that experience."

Jaros said that experience and the level of knowledge about issues that the freshmen class brought to the House distinguished them from previous classes.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), now in his 17th year of service, commended the Class of 2005 for bringing new ideas and perspectives to the Legislature.

"There are a number of outstanding freshmen here on both sides of the aisle," he said. "This is one of the strongest classes I've seen in a long time. They put aside partisan politics to a large extent."

House Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), now in his sixth term, agrees.

"This new group of Republicans and Democrats had a big impact on the House," he said. "They are particularly articulate and had helped move forward significant legislation. I believe we passed a great bonding bill because of the new members."

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), first elected in 1978, was impressed that many freshmen jumped right into the process.

"They're certainly a good group that got involved in legislation right away. The message that their citizens gave them was to cooperate and get the job done. Some have followed through in that direction; some have not."

Many new members said they made a conscious effort to be nonpartisan, and Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls), who has been serving nonconsecutively since 1964, observed that to be true. "They are more bipartisan in their approach."

(B. MARTIN)

First-term members

Rep. Mike Charron	Rep. Leon Lillie
Rep. Lloyd Cybart	Rep. Diane Loeffler
Rep. Matt Dean	Rep. Frank Moe
Rep. Denise Dittrich	Rep. Joyce Peppin
Rep. Tom Emmer	Rep. Neil W. Peterson
Rep. Patti Fritz	Rep. Sandra Peterson
Rep. Pat Garofalo	Rep. Jeanne Poppe
Rep. Paul Gazelka	Rep. Maria Ruud
Rep. Rod Hamilton	Rep. Brita Sailer
Rep. Rick Hansen	Rep. Bev Scalze
Rep. Melissa Hortman	Rep. Steve Simon
Rep. Larry Hosch	Rep. Andy Welti
Rep. Tina Liebling	

Freshmen legislators proud of successes, bipartisanship

With their first session now under their belts, the 26 new House members can look back upon a highly charged year of major legislation. They weighed in on a widely praised bonding law and the various funding laws for the 2006-07 biennium.

Still, 14 new DFL members banded together to try and save the state money by signing onto a bill (HF1102), sponsored by freshman Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph), which would prohibit per diem expenses for legislators for a special session that is called within 60 days of regular session's adjournment. The bill did not receive a committee hearing.

"Frankly, I didn't know what to expect," he said. "Back in February, I felt like it was the second quarter and I'd just gotten the rules."

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Life without parole for violent sex offenders in safety bill at the capitol

by T.W. Budig
Capitol reporter

Life without parole for violent first-time sex offenders, the creation of new judgeships in the 10th and seventh judicial districts and tougher methamphetamine (meth) laws are some of the highlights

of the public safety bill passed by the Legislature May 23.

The public safety bill slates about 16 percent more toward public safety over the next two-year

budget cycle than the current — about \$1.7-billion in total.

The bill toughens laws for sex offenders.

Tougher laws include

lifetime sentences without parole for violent sex offenders, with the provision applying to first-time, first-degree and second-degree criminal sexual conduct cases.

Lifetime sentences can be applied if the crime includes two or more heinous factors, such as mutilation, torture and others.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty and House Republicans pushed for lifetime sentences without parole.

The legislation also

includes provisions for indeterminate lifetime sentences for sex offenders.

Under this sentencing provision, sex offenders, if showing desirable behavior and with the approval of a sex offender review board, could be released.

Safety/page 9AD

Safety

Continued from 3AD

The legislation permits the use of polygraph on imprisoned sex offenders and requires all released Level-3 sex offenders to carry photos updated every six months.

It also has a provision requiring community notification when a sex offender from elsewhere moves into the state.

In the area of methamphetamine, the bill increases the maximum penalty for possessing certain products with the intention of cooking meth — from four years to 15 years for repeat offenders, for instance.

Stealing, possessing, purchasing anhydrous ammonia with the knowledge or reason to know it will be used to make a controlled substance falls under a new crime, a felony, with a maximum five-year prison term.

In related legislation, the House earlier this session passed meth legislation outlaw-

ing the sales of precursor drugs like Sudafed, used in cooking meth.

But the Senate language, which places restrictions on the sales of precursor drugs, prevailed and will go into effect July 1.

The outright ban was thrown out.

Four new judgeships are created by the legislation: two in the 10th Judicial District, which includes Anoka County, and two in Seventh Judicial District.

"We did a sound job in funding for the courts," said Sen. Leo Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids, Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee chairman.

Foley served on the public safety bill conference committee.

"The beauty of all this is it was a good bipartisan group — it had a unanimous approval from the other members of the committee," said Foley.

Two provisions amended onto the House public safety

bill on the House floor that did not survive the conference committee were provisions pertaining to the castration of certain sex offenders and sex offender license plates.

"I was very upset about that," said Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who carried the castration bill in the House.

Emmer, who plans to try pursue the legislation in the future, looks at this session as an education period for lawmakers.

"I wasn't proposing some Draconian measure. I wasn't proposing some cruel and unusual punishment," said Emmer.

"The science is overwhelming that with a small group of these folks (sex offenders) this helps them," he said of castration.

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ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN
WEEKLY 5,100
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POST-BULLETIN

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2005-11 Editorial 19B
Castration legislation misguided

So, it's come to this in Minnesota. So frustrated are some lawmakers at the state's inability to eliminate sex crimes against children that they've introduced a bill that permits the physical maiming of some offenders.

Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, is the lead author of a measure that would allow for the chemical castration of individuals who repeatedly commit sex crimes against children.

We believe Rep. Emmer's legislation is misguided and sends the wrong signal to the public.

Don't get us wrong. We believe those who prey on young children are the lowest of criminals. They should be severely punished, and if there is no hope for successful treatment they should be kept in prison for the balance of their lives.

But we would hate to see our state, which has a reputation for being creative and innovative when it comes to dealing with felons, proceed down this disturbing path toward corporal punishment.

Where would it lead? Removal of fingers or hands for habitual burglars? Lobotomies for meth users?

We're more civilized than that.

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House passes higher minimum wage

MINNESOTA:
The bill passed Monday increases the minimum pay from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour in August.

BY SCOTT THISTLE
NEWS TRIBUNE WRITER

ST. PAUL — Minnesota's lowest-paid workers are likely to see a state-mandated pay raise for the first time in seven years.

The House of Representatives on Monday passed, 84-50, a three-tiered boost of the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 an hour as of August.

Not all of the state's estimated

49,000 minimum-wage earners will see the full \$1 increase. Those whose employers have gross sales of less than \$625,000 will only get a dime more per hour. Workers in training can be paid \$4.90 for up to 90 days under the measure.

"It's not as much as I would have liked," said Rep. Tom Rukavina.

See **WAGE**, Page 4A

Inside

A gun-permit bill clears a Minnesota Senate committee after a makeover.

PAGE 3D

WAGE | Senate, House must match

From Page 1A

Rukavina, DFL-Virginia, chief author of the bill, has been working for seven years to get a state-wide raise for workers. He said Monday's vote, with 18 Republicans supporting him, wasn't a win for him or his Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. "The win today is for the lowest-paid workers," he said. But the win is one of the first major victories for the minority caucus, which holds 66 of the 134 seats in the House.

Republicans opposed to the measure said it was job killer not a job creator and that higher minimum wages would drive more jobs elsewhere. The measure makes Minnesota even more hostile to entrepreneurs and job creators, said Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano. "This is a true form of socialism," Emmer said.

But Rukavina fought back, saying some would prefer government have no role between labor and business and suggested opponents of the wage increase would probably support repeal of child labor laws as well.

Rukavina said the limits on the bill were a compromise aimed at garnering Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty's support. Rukavina showed a letter of support from Pawlenty for the \$6.15-an-hour wage.

"We tried to appease him," Rukavina said of Pawlenty. "We knew we are not going to be able to override any vetoes." To do that, Rukavina would need 60 percent of the votes in the House, or 81 votes.

But Pawlenty also wanted businesses doing less than \$1 million in annual sales exempted from

the \$1 wage increase. Rukavina also managed to fend off efforts to limit wages for waiters and waitresses to \$5.25 an hour, which Pawlenty also backed.

The "tip credit or tip penalty" was wanted by some lawmakers who argued that those waiting tables earn well beyond the minimum wage when tips are considered.

"Gov. Pawlenty has said he will support a reasonable minimum wage increase and we consider the bill passed by the House reasonable and are hopeful the Senate will consider this plan so we can move forward," said Brian McClung, a spokesman for Pawlenty.

Rukavina estimates that as many as 250,000 workers would see their pay increased in a trickle-up effect from raising the bottom standard. "So this is a good day for the workers in Minnesota."

The DFL-controlled Senate earlier passed a measure that boosts the minimum wage to \$7 an hour over two years. The chief author of that bill, Sen. Ellen Anderson, DFL-St. Paul, said she would review how many workers would be cut out under the House's gross sales provisions before deciding if she would support a lower wage increase.

"A dollar increase is a good, solid increase," Anderson said. The Senate probably will get the House bill for consideration today.

SCOTT THISTLE covers the Minnesota Legislature. Reach him weekdays at (651) 222-1265 or e-mail sthistle@duluthnews.com.

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House panel OKs lawsuit caps

H8-6A

Support ran along party lines, with GOP advocating malpractice limits.

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 9 '05
By Conrad deFiebre
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Republican legislators launched a wide-ranging offensive Tuesday on unlimited medical malpractice claims in Minnesota, calling for caps on lawsuit awards similar to those in 30 other states.

"Reforming our professional liability and malpractice system now is critical," said Rep. Brad Finstad, R-New Ulm. "We need to act now before it becomes a crisis."

Bills sponsored by Finstad and fellow GOP Reps. Matt Dean, of Dellwood, and Duke Powell, of Burnsville, will be part of the House health care reform package, Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, said.

DFLers opposed much of

the initiative, as was evident in a party-line vote Tuesday on Dean's bill in the House Health Policy and Finance Committee.

All nine Republicans voted for the measure, which would limit noneconomic damages, such as for pain and suffering, and punitive damages to \$250,000 each for malpractice in obstetric or emergency-room procedures. The bill also would cap plaintiffs' attorney fees in such cases and award punitive damages to a state health insurance fund. All six DFLers voted no.

Noting that Minnesota's average malpractice insurance premiums are among the lowest in the nation — lower than in most states that have damage caps — Rep. Paul Thissen, DFL-Minneapolis, a lawyer, said the bill would do little more than "pick winners and losers."

Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, also a lawyer, said: "I don't believe caps are the answer." But he voted for the bill after the panel adopted his amendment to order annual state reports on

the status of medical malpractice insurance in Minnesota.

Three doctors testified for the overall bill, saying large jury awards have driven obstetric and emergency-room physicians out of practices in other states and made malpractice insurance increasingly unavailable to those in Minnesota.

Two women who said they were victims of malpractice — the mother of a girl who died in a hospital of a therapeutic drug overdose and a woman who underwent a double mastectomy following a mistaken diagnosis of breast cancer — spoke against the bill.

With the Dean bill, protested Rep. Tom Huntley, DFL-Duluth, "we're saying that we know what Wendy Morris' and Linda McDougal's pain and suffering was. I don't know why we think we're smarter than juries."

He said limiting malpractice awards would do nothing to keep down health care costs. The \$27.5 million paid in such settlements last year in Minnesota amounted to 0.1 percent of

all health care spending in the state, Huntley added.

Proponents of caps say the real costs come through in what's called "defensive medicine" — unnecessary tests and procedures performed to head off possible lawsuits.

"Nobody's pretending that this is a panacea," said committee Chairman Fran Bradley, R-Rochester. "But we've got to do everything we can about health costs."

The measure advanced to the Civil Law and Elections Committee. No companion bill has been introduced in the DFL-controlled Senate.

Bills sponsored by Finstad and Powell will be heard today in Bradley's committee. They would apply to private nursing homes and ambulance services the same noneconomic damage caps for local governments that provide those services: \$300,000 per claimant, \$1 million per incident and zero for punitive damages.

Conrad deFiebre is at cdefiebre@startribune.com.

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Our perspective

STAR TRIBUNE APR 7 '05

Campaign money

Make its sources visible faster

In Minnesota, the state that practically invented campaign finance reform 30 years ago, this is what should be possible in October 2006:

You've received a piece of campaign literature in the mail — one of those big glossy ones with unflattering photos accusing your legislator of casting incredibly bad votes. It bears a return address with the name of a group you've never heard of.

You log on to your computer and go to a Web address that you know well, because it has been publicized all fall. You type in the incumbent's name, or your legislative district number, or maybe just your address. A few clicks more, and you have a rundown of the money being donated and spent to affect your legislator's race. The information is up-to-date, as of the day before. It includes *all* the money raised and spent by the candidates, his or her party and legislative caucus, and by independent groups of any stripe.

Another click or two lead you to a description of the mystery group that sent you the attack ad and a list of its major donors.

Making that kind of information quickly and conveniently available to the public is not the only objective of a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill that cleared its second committee hurdle in the Minnesota House this week, but it may be the most important one. Even if the rest of the measure is felled by its opponents, the disclosure provisions ought to become law this year.

Promoters of the bill want to do a

good deal more. State Rep. Tom Emmer, a first-term Republican from Delano, has latched on to campaign reform with the vigor of a father trying to secure something of value for his children (he has seven).

Emmer's bill, assembled with the help of Hamline University campaign finance expert David Schultz, draws inspiration from the McCain-Feingold reforms at the federal level. As introduced, it seeks to limit the size of donations to political parties, legislative caucuses and the independent "527" groups that aim to influence elections. It would also restrict the amount of money that parties and caucuses can spend independently, as a condition of participating in the state's public campaign-finance program.

Those are well-intentioned reforms that might help preserve Minnesota's tradition of low-budget, grass-roots-based legislative campaigns — at least in the near term. But the federal experience is instructive: When campaign money that flowed through political parties was dammed up, it cut a new channel to independent groups. That outcome is to be expected, given that the essence of any campaign is a constitutionally protected activity: speech. But courts have held that government can require that the funding of political speech be visible to voters.

Most of Minnesota's campaign-finance disclosure rules are decades old. This session, the Legislature should bring them into the Internet age.

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168-Health

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HIV prevention aid under fire

GOP lawmaker leads push to cut program's funding over sexually explicit Web site

BY TONI COLEMAN

PIONEER PRESS APR 23 '05

Some House representatives want to slash state funding to the Minnesota AIDS Project, a major provider of HIV-prevention health information, over concerns that one of the group's Web sites contains sexually explicit information and images.

At the request of Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, the House version of the Health and Human Services funding bill precludes the organization from getting state grants. The bill also prohibits state HIV prevention funding for "Web sites, pamphlets, or other communications that contain sexually explicit images or language."

Emmer said he was outraged to see the Minnesota Department of Health name on the PrideAlive site, a Minnesota AIDS Project program

that targets gay and bisexual men. He said the Web site includes step-by-step instructions for performing specific sex acts.

"They have abused taxpayer dollars and they have abused our trust," Emmer said. "Are we talking about the sex act, how to do it? Or are we talking about the health concerns associated with the act? It seems to me we're talking about the sex act, in a very graphic way."

Minnesota AIDS Project officials, however, say the effort is yet another attempt to limit the flow of public dollars to groups that serve gay people.

"The first provision is clearly an attack against the Minnesota AIDS Project. There's no smoke screen there," said Lorraine Teel, executive director. "This is clearly an attempt to muzzle any attempt to do sound public health (regarding gay and bisexual men), and frankly it's being

done with a reckless disregard for those at risk for HIV in Minnesota."

The PrideAlive site, which includes warnings about its sexually explicit nature, contains strong language and sexually graphic photos. The site's calendar of events also lists health education events sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Minnesota AIDS Project officials say PrideAlive is privately funded, but Emmer said the distinction wasn't clear to Web site visitors. By having the department listed on the site, it implies that the state sponsors and supports it, Emmer said.

Bob Tracy, lobbyist for the group, said state-funded programs are no longer listed on the PrideAlive site in an effort to clear up confusion about which activities are government-funded and which are not.

Emmer's provision would mean

the loss of \$401,000 in state grants, something Teel said would hurt the program's ability to serve at-risk individuals in "a culturally relevant way." The group's work is critical in light of a recent state Health Department report that the rate of HIV infections has increased, she added.

"We don't deny this material is sexually explicit, but this is public health information," Teel said, noting that HIV is primarily a sexually transmitted disease. "We have to talk about sex if we are going to help people understand how to eliminate or reduce infection."

The loss of \$401,000 in state grants would jeopardize a program that teaches HIV-positive individuals how not to spread the virus and end the AIDS hotline, a statewide resource that refers HIV-positive individuals to medical providers, Teel said.

X-2
Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer says the 'time has come' for voter photo IDs, but critics say they would be an obstacle to voting for some people.

Proposed reforms kindle ID card debate

9-22-05

St. Paul Legal Ledger

BY CHARLEY SHAW

Legal Ledger Staff Writer

National election reforms proposed this week have rekindled a debate among Minnesota policymakers about voter fraud concerns.

The Commission on Federal Election Reform, led by former President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III, made numerous recommendations that state officials regard as common sense. But the endorsement of a photo identification requirement at the polls taps into a controversy that is already evident at the state Capitol.

The commission's executive summary proposed an identification card for people without a driver's license "to make sure that a person arriving at a polling place site is the same one who is named on the list."

The idea would move away from other forms of identification such as utility bills.

That proposal drew a sharp response from Chuck Samuelson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota, who said the card idea was a "back door" attempt at setting up a national identification card.

Samuelson said requiring people to provide proof that they are eligible to vote is "a barrier to voting." He added that voter fraud is not the issue: "The bigger issue in Minnesota is the 30-plus percent of people who don't vote."

Election Reforms: Lawmakers of both parties express support for regional primaries.

Continued from page 1

“While voters have been known to show up at the wrong polling place, there are virtually no documented cases of a person attempting to register or vote under another person’s name,” says state Sen. Chuck Wiger, DFL-North St. Paul, who chairs the Senate Elections Committee.



“I reject the idea that they don’t vote because there are people who are voting fraudulently,” Samuelson said.

State Sen. Chuck Wiger, DFL-North St. Paul, who is chairman of the Senate Elections Committee, said he expects his committee will hold hearings on the photo ID issue when the Legislature convenes next March.

Wiger echoed Samuelson in noting that instances of fraud have been infrequent. “While voters have been known to show up at the wrong polling place, there are virtually no documented cases of a person attempting to register or vote under another person’s name,” he said.

Wiger said Minnesota has been a national leader in voter turnout because different types of documents are used to prove a voter’s residence and identity at the polling place.

But Wiger’s counterpart in the House, Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, the chairman of the House Civil Law and Elections Committee, said fraud is a valid concern.

“I have been a proponent in the past of requiring some sort of photo identification for voters in Minnesota. It’s required to board a plane and cash a check, but not to vote in Minnesota. With allegations of voter fraud in Minnesota abounding from both sides of the aisle, I think this would be one major step in the right direction to restore some confidence in the system,” Johnson said.

Legislation requiring photo IDs was introduced during the last legislative session in the state Senate by Michele Bachmann, R-Stillwater.

Bachmann’s bill added language to Minnesota’s statutes that would require “proof of United States citizenship in the form of a passport, birth certificate or naturalization document” to register on Election Day or the day prior to Election Day.

Bachmann, who praised the Carter-Baker commission for highlighting the issue, said she was concerned about

fraud. For example, she said, she is concerned about college students voting in their home and campus communities. “The merits of the photo ID consist in bringing credibility to the voting process,” Bachmann said.

• Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, sponsored photo ID requirement legislation in the House. Neither bill made it out of committee last session.

The photo ID recommendation aroused sharp dissent in Washington after the recommendations were made available to the public Monday.

Critics suggested that having to acquire the ID cards in order to vote could be an obstacle for minorities, the poor and older Americans and might intimidate some people.

“We believe such a requirement would constitute nothing less than a 21st century poll tax,” said a letter from Reps. John Conyers, D-Mich., and John Lewis, D-Ga. Poll taxes were once used in some states to prevent black citizens from voting.

Former President Carter said he was hesitant about the free photo ID proposal at first, but laws passed in some states like Georgia convinced him that a national approach was a better idea. Republican lawmakers in Georgia pushed through legislation that requires a new voter identification card that costs \$20 for five years.

“Some states have passed abominable laws that are a disgrace to democracy,” Carter said.

In Atlanta, voter and civil rights organizations challenged the Georgia law in federal court, contending in a suit filed Monday that it would disenfranchise minorities and the poor. Nineteen states require voters to show identification; five request photo ID, the National Conference of State Legislatures said.

The commission proposed that voters who don’t have the card could cast a provisional ballot and produce the photo ID later. States also would have to promote the photo ID card aggressively.



“With allegations of voter fraud in Minnesota abounding from both sides of the aisle, I think this would be one major step in the right direction to restore some confidence in the system,” says state Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, who chairs the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer backed the photo ID requirement idea and said the state should pick up any costs that bear a hardship on voters as a result of the card.

“Its time has come. Absolutely. I believe the state should pay for those who can’t afford one,” Kiffmeyer said.

Kiffmeyer also noted that Minnesota has invested millions in federal, state and local dollars into its election system as a result of implementing the federal Help America Vote Act. Many initiatives called for in the Carter-Baker report, such as verifiable paper ballots and audits, are either already practiced or being implemented in Minnesota.

“I think the first reaction in reading through that is Minnesota does well,” Kiffmeyer said.

Among the commission’s numerous proposals, it recommended a change to presidential primaries. Rather than primaries in each state, the party’s presidential candidates would be chosen by voters in four regional primaries. The regional primaries would occur after the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary, according to the recommendations.

Kiffmeyer said the regional primary approach would preserve a balance of power between large and small states.

Johnson and Wiger, too, supported the regional primary approach.

“Right now, Minnesota primaries are so late in the process that the candidates for president have usually already been chosen by the time we vote.

This would allow every state and every voter to play a role in the selection of those candidates,” Johnson said.

The commission recommends putting states in charge of voter registration lists. The commission also recommended a U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that connects the states’ lists.

This integration of voter lists, the commission reported, would “eliminate the vast majority of complaints currently leveled against the election system. States will retain control over their registration list, but a distributed database can remove interstate duplicates and help states to maintain an up-to-date, fully accurate registration list. This would mean people would need to register only once in their lifetime, and it would be easy to update their registration information when they move.”

Wiger noted Minnesota is ahead of the curve in its voter registration list efforts.

“Minnesota has had a centralized, statewide voter registration database for many years. An upgraded version was installed for the 2004 election, two years ahead of the federal mandate. Voter confidence is enhanced if we continue to work closely with local government election officials and other interested persons and groups who need assurance that the database is accessible and accurate,” Wiger said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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Statewide smoking ban moves forward

Proposal exempts bars, allows separate rooms in restaurants
PIONEER PRESS JAN 28 '05

BY TONI COLEMAN
Pioneer Press

Smoking would be banned in restaurants but not bars under a proposal that cleared its first legislative hurdle in the Minnesota House on Thursday.

Both sides of the smoking debate were pleased by the compromise — proponents of a ban because the measure is still alive and opponents because it recognizes the economic impact on bars that would have to turn smoking patrons away.

"Today is a success and a victory because it is the first time a bill like this has cleared a House committee," said Rep. Doug Meslow, R-White Bear Lake.

He said he would push to have elements of his original proposal — a ban on smoking in all workplaces including bars and restaurants — restored to the bill as it winds its way through various committees.

The Health Policy and Finance committee Thursday forwarded the bill — without a formal endorsement or rejection — to the Commerce Committee, which will look at the economic impact the ban would have on government agencies enforcing it.

An establishment that makes more than 50 percent of its sales from liquor is exempt from the ban, under a committee-approved amendment offered by Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka. Restaurants not meeting the 50 percent threshold could install a separate smoking room with floor-to-ceiling walls and its own ventilation system.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty has said he would sign a smoking ban bill if it comes across his desk. Proponents of the new bill, modeled after the ordinances passed by Ramsey and Olmsted counties, say this one stands a better chance of passing than an all-out ban because it settles some concerns about an overreaching government.

The public health argument about secondhand smoke in support of a ban looks like a reason to restrict civil liberties, said Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano.

"Where does it end?" Emmer asked. "Next it's going to be cell phones, computers, peanut oil, salt, cheeseburgers. You can make this same argument for many different things. The marketplace should decide."

"If we smoke in a room with other people, every person in that room is smoking with us," said Rep. Ron Latz, DFL-St. Louis Park, the bill's co-sponsor, arguing for the rights of those who don't want to be bothered by smoke.

Bob Moffitt, communications director for the American Lung Association of Minnesota, said he was pleased by the committee's action.

"When we think about where we were last year, a similar bill couldn't even get a hearing in the House. Legislators are sensing a change in the air. All of the local ordinances are sending a message," Moffitt said. "The light bulb has finally gone on."

Toni Coleman can be reached at tcoleman@pioneerpress.com or (651) 228-5442.

19B

✓ Keeping people safe

Thank you for the excellent story of May 1 about AIDS prevention in the Twin Cities, "Out front on HIV." It was desperately needed with certain lawmakers attacking our work, which is not funded with taxpayer money.

As one of the volunteers featured in the story, I am personally offended that ✓ Rep. Tom Emmer would question our commitment to ending this epidemic. We will do whatever it takes to keep people safe, and our approach works.

It is unfortunate that Emmer's crusade against free speech will hamper the efforts to control HIV and AIDS throughout the entire state, and will end up costing the state 10 times as much in increased medical costs. As taxpayers, that should offend all of us, but Emmer just doesn't get it.

Brian Geving, Minneapolis.

STAR TRIBUNE MAY 8 '05

'Safer than sorry' over sex offender legislation

House bill reflects much of Pawlenty's proposal

by T.W. Budig
Capitol reporter

The woman who denounced the murderer of Katie Poirier used to be his wife.

Amy Blom, former wife of convicted sex offender and murderer Donald Blom, testified before the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee March 31 during a hearing on sex offender legislation.

"I don't believe sex offenders can change," Blom told lawmakers.

In the case of her former husband, the system failed to stop a cunning sex offender for years, she said.

"Not until 1999 when he killed Katie Poirier after already being convicted of five previous sex offenses did he finally receive a life sentence," said Blom.

The damage Donald Blom inflicted extended to the home.

"He tormented and tortured me and the emotional pain I feel is a life sentence," said Blom.

Life sentences are one feature of the House sex offender legislation being carried by Rep. Kurt Zellers, R-Maple Grove.

The initiative reflects policy recommendations made by Gov. Tim Pawlenty.

Although state senators have spoken of the Legislature overreacting to celebrated crimes like the murder of Poirier and more recently Dru Sjodin, Zellers defended his legislation.

"I don't think this is an overreaction in any way," he said.

"Our bill is safe; theirs

at the capitol

(the Senate's) is sorry. I'd rather be safe than sorry."

Zellers' bill imposes life sentences, without parole on certain first- and second-degree criminal sexual conduct offenders when one or more aggravating factors are present, such as victim torture and victim was younger than 13.

It doubles the maximum penalty for first- through fifth- degree criminal sexual conduct.

The legislation, as in the Senate legislation, also uses indeterminate sentencing — prison sentences in which release dates ride on the behavior of the sex offender.

The proposed legislation carries a cost — senators have criticized it on fiscal grounds.

According to a House fiscal note, within four years the legislation, if enacted, would require 304 additional state prison beds at the cost of about \$5 million.

Within 50 years, it would require anywhere from 3,500 to 7,500 prison beds, an expansion costing as much as \$200 million a year.

But Eric Lipman, Pawlenty Administration state sex offender policy coordinator, cautioned committee members in interpreting the fiscal note.

"I've always been dubious of fiscal note inflation," he said.

For his part, Zellers justified the costs by arguing that within 20 years the state would begin saving some \$20 million a year as it would no longer be legally committing flagrant sex offenders but imprisoning them.

That's much less expensive, he said.

And that savings doesn't

show up on the fiscal note, Zellers said.

• Rep. Tony Cornish, R-Good Thunder, said sex offenders should have never been committed to begin with.

"I don't believe most sex offenders are sick in their minds; they're sick in the heart," he said.

It's estimated currently there are about 1,400 sex offenders serving time in Minnesota prisons.

Last year, some 607 offenders were convicted of sex crimes.

Under Zellers' proposed legislation, about a dozen of these offenders could face possible life sentences without parole.

"It's a very narrow population of sex offenders," said Zellers, speaking after the hearing.

One proposal not found in the Zellers' bill is a House initiative authored by Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, dealing with the voluntary chemical castration of sex offenders.

"If it comes to the House floor, I can guarantee I'll be supporting it," said Zellers.

Zellers' legislation is currently held in the Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee.

Another difference between the House and Senate sex offender legislation, besides life sentence without parole, is that the Senate bill, unlike the Houses, doesn't increase maximum penalties.

• Sen. David Kleis, R-St. Cloud, attempted to amend life sentence without parole provisions on to the Senate bill March 31 in committee, but the amendment failed.

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ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN
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We need to speak frankly about HIV and its prevention

STAR TRIBUNE APR 26 '05
By Lorraine Teel

With a reckless disregard for those most at risk for HIV, extreme elements in our community have influenced state legislators to introduce dangerous policies setting back public health 100 years.

In May of 1895 the great poet and playwright Oscar Wilde was convicted of sodomy and sentenced to two years in prison. Apparently these same fearful and cowardly ideas are still amongst us today, this time sentencing adult gay and bisexual men to death.

An amendment to the Minnesota House version of the

Health Omnibus bill hands down that death sentence. The only way to talk to adults about safer sex is to use sexually explicit language, yet this bill demands that the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) not use any funds to support "sexually explicit materials."

Excuse me? When has society ever agreed on what is "sexually explicit?" Who is going to make that call? We use sex to sell toothpaste, cars and pizza. But when it comes to safer sex we are being asked to mask our language, bite our tongues, be polite and for heaven's sake, don't give this information to adults.

Health education cannot

be taught using euphemisms and innuendo. We need to speak frankly about the details of HIV transmission and prevention.

Just this past year, 44 percent of new HIV infections in Minnesota were linked to gay and bisexual men. Nearly two-thirds of those living with HIV in Minnesota are gay and bisexual men. Most alarming — 96 percent of young men infected over the past three years were gay and bisexual.

The Minnesota AIDS Project runs the state's largest and most successful program reaching these men.

They were offended by our

website. Yes, we have sexually explicit material on our website. And it is clearly marked that it is intended for gay and bisexual men. Apparently after some activists and elected officials trolled the website, they were so upset by these safer-sex messages they became determined to silence us.

These elected officials want not only to end our prevention programming targeting gay and bisexual men, they want the MDH to stop funding our program working with HIV-positive men to educate them about how to not transmit the virus; they want to stop our program reaching out to in-

jecting drug users and providing them with lifesaving information so that this virus doesn't spread in the heterosexual community.

And, amazingly, they want to end the 18-year history of the MAP AIDSLine that provides basic information and referrals to more than 5,000 callers per year.

All because they were offended? Tell me, what were they doing looking at our website in the first place?

If they had wanted print materials offering no visual depictions of how to properly use a condom or offering only dry text about abstinence un-

til marriage, they should have asked. We could have provided them with such a brochure. But instead they came to a website intended for adult gay men, not supported with any public dollars, and against all First Amendment protections are trying to punish us for reaching a group of citizens, gay and bisexual men, that they apparently care nothing for.

Oh, did I forget? In their zeal to keep gay men abstinent until marriage, they are also working to ensure that they will never be able to marry. Details.

Lorraine Teel is executive director of the Minnesota AIDS Project.



Jeff Wheeler/Star Tribune

From left, Nick Hahn, Kristen Perron, Brian Geving and Keith Pederson headed to another bar to hand out condoms. "In the bars, we get five seconds with somebody," Pederson said. "But online, in the privacy of their home or office cubicle, people get right to the point, a real teaching moment."

HIV from B1

Relaxed view of the risks complicates education efforts

"But the world is changing, and so are we," Teel said.

With 60 employees and about 1,400 volunteers, the 22-year-old MAP is the state's oldest and largest nonprofit agency fighting HIV and AIDS. It uses a wide range of education, counseling, disease testing, legal help and social services, state health officials say.

Since Minnesota's first case, reported in 1982, HIV has infected 7,547 Minnesotans. Of those, 2,697 have died.

New drugs since 1995 help people with AIDS live longer. But the dark side of that success, officials say, has been a more relaxed view of the risk of HIV.

"Too many of my patients see HIV as just another chronic disease," said Dr. Keith Henry, an AIDS researcher and a physician at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis.

Cruising for trouble

For the past four months, Ansell has spent most weekdays from 3 to 5 p.m. visiting two gay-oriented chat rooms on the Internet.

With national surveys showing that about 55 percent of gay men don't always use condoms, Ansell counsels men about the risks of specific sexual practices and helps those with HIV cope with the disease.

"A lot of people just don't know enough about how to stay safe," he said, his fingers flying as he juggled two online conversations with gay men.

Ansell, HIV-positive for 18 years, is a health education coordinator with a MAP program called Positive Link, begun by men with HIV to help others cope with the disease.

MAP staff members say the online contacts appear to be more open and honest than those made by the condom crews in gay bars.

"In the bars, we get five sec-

onds with somebody," said Keith Pederson, a coordinator with another MAP program, PrideAlive. "But online, in the privacy of their home or office cubicle, people get right to the point, a real teaching moment."

Internet outreach is becoming increasingly important, said Kip Beardsley, state AIDS director at the Health Department. "To connect with communities of people at risk of HIV, you have to be where they are."

Online inquirers typically are polite, grateful and graphically explicit.

"If you expect to communicate with high-risk groups about sexually transmitted diseases, you have to talk the language — body parts, sex practices and all," Ansell said.

Some legislators such as Emmer say some explicit language in AIDS prevention work is gratuitous and childish. The health budget bill passed by the House would require state-funded AIDS prevention work to avoid sexually explicit language. And it would eliminate MAP's Health Department funding, which totals 10 percent of the nonprofit's \$4.4 million annual budget.

The Senate health bill does not include HIV spending restrictions. MAP lobbyists expect them to be proposed in amendments on the Senate floor.

Neither the PrideAlive program nor the material that disturbed Emmer receives state money, but Emmer said any use of sexually explicit language by MAP shows that it "can't be trusted to do the job right."

Condoms in bars

The core of the fight against AIDS remains face-to-face work with gay and bisexual men, who account for about 60 percent of all HIV cases.

Dampened by drizzle, Pederson and his crew dodged from bar to bar in downtown Minneapolis one recent Friday night, dispensing smiles

SAFER SEX

A number of government and nonprofit agencies offer information about HIV prevention and information.

Minnesota AIDS Project, for help with counseling, disease testing, legal, housing and social services, 612-341-2060, or www.mnaidsproject.org for online resource guide.

Minnesota AIDSLine, statewide information and referral, 612-373-2437 or 1-800-248-2437, or send e-mail to map_aidsline@mnaidsproject.org.

Minnesota Department of Health, online HIV information, disease testing sites and annual HIV reports, www.health.state.mn.us.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, online HIV statistics, information, treatment and prevention, www.cdc.gov/hiv.

and protection against HIV.

Amid the din of music and voices in the Saloon, volunteer Nick Hahn connected with bar patron Jonathan Schulze just long enough for Schulze to grab a few condoms from the proffered tray and smile in thanks.

"Everybody says he's HIV-negative. Maybe so, but man, I never take a chance," said Schulze, 26, waving a packaged condom for emphasis. "I'm always protected."

Like most AIDS prevention workers, those working the bars try to encourage safer sex, not safe sex.

"We talk about all types of protection, including abstinence. But the minute we start preaching, we lose them," said Pederson, 44. "We're talking about risk management."

The fight against HIV probably won't end, he said, at least not until scientists develop drugs to kill the disease.

"People take risks, and most

younger guys never went through the years of losing dozens of friends to AIDS," he said. "It's too easy to get complacent."

"That's why we need to be out here — on the streets, on the Internet, in the African community — reminding people to think: Don't take drugs that blur your judgment, use protection with sex, and for heaven's sake, don't hesitate to ask for help."

Work with Africans

HIV prevention work is harder among new immigrants from Africa, where AIDS has killed millions. Cultural, religious and social differences among those new Minnesotans make sex and HIV difficult topics.

"You can't overestimate the stigma of AIDS in the African-born community," said Sides, the AIDS epidemiologist.

African immigrants are about 1 percent of Minnesotans, but last year they accounted for 20 percent of the new HIV cases, more than half of them women.

"For many of them, sex is very private, something you don't talk about," Sides said. "Even starting the conversation is difficult, let alone convincing people to be tested for HIV."

Makundi is trying to break through those cultural barriers with a new MAP program called the African Service Initiative.

"First we want to help more people get in for HIV testing," said Makundi, who came from Tanzania eight years ago.

Most immigrants are not familiar with health screenings. "In Africa, you go to the doctor when you are sick. So people think if you get an HIV test, it must mean you already have AIDS and are dying," she said.

"We have to convince people that it's safe to talk, to be tested and to get help, whether you test negative or positive," Makundi said. "We're crossing these barriers one client at a time."

Warren Wolfe is at wolfe@startribune.com.

“Everybody says he’s HIV-negative. Maybe so, but man, I never take a chance.”

— Jonathan Schulze, 26



Photographs by Jeff Wheeler/Star Tribune

Volunteer Nick Hahn offered condoms to patrons in the Saloon bar recently. The Minnesota AIDS Project effort in gay bars has lasted for a decade. But new trends in the spread of HIV are forcing activists to take up new methods, such as posting in online chat rooms and talking with new immigrants from Africa.

OUTFRONT ON HIV

STAR TRIBUNE MAY 1 '05

By Warren Wolfe • Star Tribune Staff Writer

For a decade, Minnesota’s war against AIDS has relied literally on hand-to-hand combat — activists from the Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) handing out thousands of condoms in gay bars and urging sexual caution. ¶ Now AIDS workers say that troubling new trends are forcing them to take the fight into far more challenging combat zones. ¶ More gay and bisexual men have found the Internet to be a new meeting ground for anonymous and unprotected sex, fueled by rising use of the drug crystal methamphetamine. And the rate of HIV, which leads to AIDS, is rising among heterosexual African immigrants. ¶ Prevention has slowed the AIDS epidemic in Minnesota since new HIV cases peaked at 367 in 1992. But for the past decade the number of new cases has stayed stubbornly around 300 a year.

“We’re concerned that with these new problems, the HIV numbers may go up,” said Tracy Sides, an AIDS epidemiologist at the state Health Department.

MAP’s challenge grew more complicated Friday when the House passed a budget bill excluding it from Health Department funding. The cut was proposed by Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who said he objected to sexually explicit language on a MAP website.

“It’s ironic,” said Lorraine Teel, MAP’s executive director, “that some people think it’s OK to use sex to sell cars and soap, but not HIV prevention.”

One of the MAP foot soldiers entering the new AIDS battlefield is Andy Ansell, a k a PozAnswerMan, who cruises Internet chat rooms. That’s where men can hook up for PNP — short for “party and play,” or unprotected sex, often including drug use.

Another is Dori Makundi, who teaches African-born men and women about the risks of unprotected heterosexual sex.

“Our traditional face-to-face contact in gay bars has been tremendously successful,” Teel said. MAP trains and sponsors the crews that last year handed out about 120,000 condoms. “New infections have been kept in check.”



Keith Pederson, a coordinator with the Minnesota AIDS Project’s PrideAlive program, stocked up on condoms at the project’s office in Minneapolis before he and three volunteers headed out to bars to distribute them. Last year, project-trained crews handed out about 120,000 condoms.

HIV continues on B3

(Back)

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Lawmakers get \$136,000 in overtime payments

102 of 201 in Legislature paid
so far for 2005 special session

BY PATRICK SWEENEY
Pioneer Press

Minnesota lawmakers have so far claimed about \$136,000 in daily salary and expense payments for their eight-week special legislative session this summer, according to House and Senate records.

A number of lawmakers — Democrats and Republicans, and members of both the House and Senate — refused to accept the \$66-a-day payments they are allowed to collect in addition to their \$2,595-a-month base salary. Others claimed the pay for only part of the special session.

OVERTIME PAYMENTS, 10A



AT A GLANCE

During the special session, the \$66 per diem was only for days a legislator attended floor sessions or committee hearings, or took part in budget negotiations. Outstate legislators could claim per diems for travel days.

Online: For a complete list of special session per diem payments as of the Sept. 1 payroll, go to www.twincities.com and click on the Politics page.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Overtime payments

(continued)

Many of those who refused to claim the money did so either in a show of contrition for failing to get their work done by a May 23 constitutional deadline, or in a demonstration of solidarity with state workers who lost pay during a partial government shutdown, or in anticipation of retribution next year from voters angry about the overtime session.

All payment totals are still incomplete because separate deadlines for senators and state representatives to claim the funds have not passed.

But, through a Sept. 1 payroll, 39 of 67 senators had asked for and received the so-called "per diem" payments, according to legislative pay records reviewed by the Pioneer Press. Sixty-three of 134 House members received the per diem payments. The average payment total was \$1,589 for senators who took the per diem pay, and \$1,171 for House members.

And, while the two bodies are nearly evenly divided between Republicans and members of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, DFLers so far have claimed two-thirds of the per diem money that has been paid out.

The highest per diem total in each body went to committee chairmen deeply involved in budget negotiations. LeRoy Stumpf, DFL-Plummer, Senate education budget committee chairman, claimed \$2,970, and Fran Bradley, R-Rochester, House health policy and finance committee chairman, claimed \$2,112.

The per diems are an odd combination of expense payments and a salary supplement for legislators who got their last increase in base pay in 1999. During regular sessions, legislators receive per diems for weekends and holidays, as well as days they work.

It is likely the number of legislators claiming the per diems for this special session, especially in the House, will grow and the total cost will increase. That's because House members have 90 days to claim per diems. Senators are allowed 60 days. The special session ended July 13.

The per diem payments have been part of the legislative pay system for years. But the per diems, especially during special sessions called to finish unfinished business, have long been controversial.

In 2001, during a special session budget battle that was a lot like this year's deadlock,

Special session per diems

Here is a list of East Metro lawmakers who collected per diem payments for this year's special session. Lawmakers have several more weeks to submit a claim.

House member	Party	Amount	Senate member	Party	Amount
Joe Atkins	DFL	\$896	Ellen Anderson	DFL	\$1,386
Chris DeLaForest	R	1,320	Bill Belanger	R	2,442
Pat Garofalo	R	1,120	Don Betzold	DFL	2,046
Barbara Goodwin	DFL	1,122	Mike McGinn	R	462
Tom Hackbarth	R	660	Mee Moua	DFL	2,376
Alice Hausman	DFL	1,320	Sandra Pappas	DFL	924
Mary Liz Holberg	R	132	Pat Pariseau	R	924
Sheldon Johnson	DFL	726	Chuck Wiger	DFL	1,254
Karen Klinzing	R	792			
John Lesch	DFL	1,122			
Tim Mahoney	DFL	264			
Carlos Mariani	DFL	462			
Doug Meslow	R	840			
Duke Powell	R	1,254			
Char Samuelson	R	1,122			
Cy Thao	DFL	594			
Andy Westerberg	R	1,254			

Source: Minnesota House and Senate



PIONEER PRESS

OPTING OUT

These state senators notified the Senate Fiscal Services staff they would not claim per diems during the special session (the House did not maintain a similar list):

Michele Bachmann, R; Richard Cohen, DFL; Dick Day, R; Michelle Fischbach, R; Dean Johnson, DFL; Debbie Johnson, R; Bob Kierlin, R; Sheila Kiscaden, IP; Dave Kleis, R; Brian LeClair, R; Becky Lourey, DFL; Sharon Marko, DFL; John Marty, DFL; Jim Metzen, DFL; Geoff Michel, R; Mady Reiter, R; Julie Rosen, R; Dan Sparks, DFL; and Betsy Wergin, R.

then-Gov. Jesse Ventura challenged lawmakers to "come in on their own dollar" and forgo the daily payments.

Early this year, a group of freshman Democrats in the House, led by Rep. Larry Hosch of St. Joseph, and two Republican senators, Dave Kleis of St. Cloud and Mady Reiter of Shoreview, introduced bills to bar per diem payments during special sessions resulting from lawmakers' failure to complete their work. Both bills died in committees.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty who accepted per diem payments as a state representative during the 2001 special session, called this summer for legislation that would leave per diem policies as they are, but take away a month's base pay from legislators and the governor if they failed to enact a budget by the May deadline.

"Ordinary Minnesotans would not expect to be paid for running past a work deadline, and elected officials should not

expect it either," he said.

Visitors to the Minnesota Republican Party's State Fair booth last week were invited to sign a petition endorsing Pawlenty's plan.

One person eagerly signing was Evelyn Schwartz, a pull-tab clerk from New Brighton who called herself a liberal and a political independent.

"I just think that if they're doing their job properly, we shouldn't have to pay them extra," said Schwartz.

"I think the public was irritated that the work wasn't done," said Rep. Sandra Peterson, a freshman Democrat from New Hope who did not claim per diems. "And I think it does something to soothe those irritated feelings to know that we weren't collecting per diems, we were there on our own time."

But Rep. Tom Emmer, a freshman Republican from Delano, said he and the other legislators who claimed per diems have no apologies to make. Emmer, an attorney, said the \$1,320 he earned in special session per diems was far less than he would have made in his law practice.

"You're talking to a guy who at 44 years old made a significant personal and financial sacrifice to serve my constituents," Emmer said.

A few legislators routinely refuse to claim per diem payments during either regular or special sessions, a few claim less than the \$66 a day and some do not claim the payments on weekends or holidays.

For the special session, senators and representatives were supposed to claim per diems only for days they were attending floor sessions and committee hearings or taking part in the budget negotiations between the House, the Senate

and Pawlenty. Outstate legislators also were allowed to claim per diems for travel days.

Three of the Legislature's top four leaders did not claim per diems.

"We had not concluded our work on the budget in the regular session, and to some people it was the fault of the leadership," said Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar. "And if it's the fault of the leadership, then you shouldn't be collecting per diems."

Sen. Dick Day of Owatonna, leader of the Senate Republican minority, took no per diem payments and wrote letters to three newspapers in his district to announce his decision. He urged fellow Republicans to weigh their political futures against the expense payments.

House Minority Leader Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul, never claims per diems. House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, claimed \$1,584.

Although the per diem totals are incomplete, Democrats so far significantly outnumber Republicans — 36 to 27 — among House members claiming per diems. House Democrats received \$41,990 vs. \$31,816 for Republicans. In the Senate, 27 Democrats claimed \$48,510 in per diems; 12 Republicans claimed \$13,464.

Will legislators who accepted the per diem payments face consequences when they run for re-election next year? Probably not, predicted Don Ostrom, a visiting professor of political science at St. Olaf College who served as a DFL state representative from 1989 through 1996.

"For the most part, voters are more concerned about education or health care or taxes than they are about the particular salary a legislator gets," Ostrom said.

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July 13, 2005 CITY PAGES

12 News

19B

LAWMAKERS WANTED TO REFORM CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS THIS YEAR. SO WHAT HAPPENED?



David Fick for City Pages

Money talks: State Rep. Tom Emmer has tried—so far unsuccessfully—to bring campaign finance reform to the Capitol

Dough Boys

BY PAUL DEMKO

On January 21, Hamline University political science and law professor David Schultz met with House Minority Leader Matt Entenza. The reason for their meeting was to discuss possible changes to Minnesota's campaign finance laws. At Entenza's behest, Schultz had drafted a series of suggestions for tightening contribution limits and broadening disclosure requirements. ■ At the time, Entenza was facing intense scrutiny for pouring money into

DFL-affiliated organizations in the final weeks of the 2004 election campaign. The St. Paul lawmaker and his wife, Lois Quam, an executive with UnitedHealth Group, donated some \$600,000 to DFL causes during the election cycle. The scope of the couple's political benevolence, however, was not disclosed until after the election—when the Democrats picked up 13 seats in the House and came within one victory of toppling the Republican majority.

Schultz laid out eight suggested changes to Minnesota's campaign finance laws. Under his proposal, all political donations—whether to so-called 527 groups such as 21st Century Democrats (the organization that received much of Entenza's support last year) or directly to campaigns—would have to be disclosed within 48 hours. In addition, all contributions would be limited to \$1,000. There were also measures designed to curb attack ads in the final weeks of campaigns. Many of the changes mimic those implemented in 2002 at the federal level through the McCain-Feingold bill.

"It was basically my dream bill," says Schultz, a past head of Common Cause

Minnesota. "If we passed this bill we'd have had the best campaign finance laws in the country."

Entenza apparently lost interest in reforming the state's campaign finance laws once the furor over his personal contributions died down. But Schultz's proposal was eventually picked up by Rep. Tom Emmer, an eccentric freshman Republican from Delano. Emmer has made waves this year by championing chemical castration of sex offenders and attempting to strip Minnesota AIDS Project of all state funding.

He was motivated, in part, by disgust at Entenza's underhanded DFL financial support. "What he did in my estimation was unethical and it was clearly a way to bend the rules, but it wasn't illegal," says Emmer. However, he also makes it clear that financial shenanigans are endemic to both major parties. "It's driven by special interest groups giving donations, tons of money to both caucuses," Emmer says.

Various interest groups, most notably Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, stepped up their attacks on the finance reform measure.

There are dollar figures to back Emmer's assertion. In 2004, according to a study recently completed by Schultz, large donors, lobbyists, and political action committees spent \$94,821 *per legislator* to influence state legislative races and policy decisions.

In March Emmer's bill passed out of the House Civil Law and Elections Committee intact. While in a second committee, the provision limiting the size of contributions was stripped out. The disclosure requirements,

which Emmer deemed the most important element of the bill, however, passed to the house floor in April. "I want total transparency," he says.

Initially, Emmer was optimistic that the bill would be passed, but once it got to the floor, support suddenly dissipated. Various interest groups, most notably Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, stepped up their attacks on the measure. The anti-choice non-profit group passed out literature condemning the bill and told house members that the vote would be counted in the organization's influential legislative scorecards, even though the issue has nothing to do with abortion.

"What a crock of crap that is," says Emmer, who is pro-life and was endorsed by the MCCL in 2004. He's now disgusted by the group's high-handed tactics: "I've told them to knock it off. I don't ever want to hear from them again. I don't appreciate people passing me notes while I'm in committee telling me how to vote."

The measure never made it to a full House vote. Schultz says that he called Entenza—a potential candidate for attorney general next year—to try to spur some action on it, but got no response. Emmer also believes that the DFL leader didn't want the bill to pass. "This is extensive and important reform and Matt could have had his name all over it, and he just disappeared," Emmer says.

(Entenza did not return a call seeking comment.)

A companion bill in the Senate was originally championed by John Hottinger, the veteran St. Peter DFLer. According to three different people who met with him on the matter, Hottinger initially expressed enthusiasm for the bill and promised to push it through the Senate. The measure, however, never even got a hearing in committee.

"There's two reasons you carry a bill: to support it or kill it," says Schultz. "I'm fundamentally convinced that Hottinger does not support campaign finance reform."

"He had no intention of doing anything with that bill," says Joe Marble, co-founder of the advocacy group Minnesotans for Responsible Government. "He just basically stuffed it in the drawer."

Hottinger, not surprisingly, disputes this assessment. He blames the MCCL for the inability to pass campaign finance reform and says that the only way to fix the system is to introduce full public financ-

ing—a remote prospect at best. (Such a measure failed in a Senate committee this year.) "It's not so much that I don't support it," Hottinger says of the Emmer bill. "It's that it's an incomplete proposal."

Emmer attempted to reintroduce the campaign finance bill at the start of the special session, but it went nowhere. And he's not optimistic about the prospects for reform any time soon: "The big money over there is just sick." ■

FRONT PAGE

House backs minimum wage boost

Rukavina's labors of seven years pay off with solid majority

By JULIE BRATVOLD
Legislative Correspondent

ST. PAUL — State Rep. Tom Rukavina rarely mixes his religious views with his politics, but at Monday's floor session the veteran DFLer from Virginia felt the urge to recite a portion of the Lord's

Prayer. While debating legislation to raise Minnesota's minimum wage, Rukavina told his colleagues that he has always been fond of the part that goes "... and give us today our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses ..."

"There's a lot of people that have to live day by day — not just in

this state, but in the nation — and today we're going to give them their daily bread," Rukavina preached.

For the past seven years Rukavina has authored legislation to boost the state's minimum wage and after Monday's session it seems very likely that it will

become a reality by this summer. After several hours of debate, the Republican-led House voted 84 to 50 to raise the minimum wage to \$6.15 by August. The current minimum wage is \$5.15.

Supporters said this was good news for the 50,000 Minnesota workers currently earning

minimum, as well as all low income workers who will see an increase in pay because of the bill. "It's been tough sledding for that group of people and we're trying to support them," said Rep. David Dill, DFL-Crane Lake. "You can't

Please see **RUKAVINA A8**

Rukavina from A1

House OKs minimum wage boost

deny the fact that cost of living is going up. At least this is some reflection of increases for those people."

Raising the minimum wage has typically been a contentious issue between the Republican and DFL caucuses. In February, the Senate voted closely along party lines to approve a similar bill. However, the House saw much more cooperation between parties, with 16 Republicans choosing to support the raise.

"I was very surprised — pleasantly surprised — that we got so many members from the other side of the aisle to vote with us," Rukavina said.

The issue didn't go down without a fight, however. Many lawmakers spoke against the bill, claiming it would deter employers from coming to Minnesota and could even lead to the outsourcing of jobs to other countries.

Rep. Randy Demmer, R-Hayfield, said raising the minimum wage bill would send the following message to employers considering moving to the state: "Welcome to Minnesota. We'd love to have you here — we'd love to have you here to screw you."

Several legislators attempted to alter the bill with amendments, including Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Maple Plain, who offered a provision to abolish the state's minimum wage altogether. He later withdrew the amendment, but said he wanted to get a point across. "The minimum wage (raise)

doesn't create jobs as you suggest," he directed at Rukavina. "This is a true form of socialism."

Rep. Marty Seifert, R-Marshall, was diligent in his attempts to change the definition of "small business" so that more employees would qualify for a lower minimum wage requirement under the bill. Currently, a small business is defined as one that earns \$500,000 a year. After two unsuccessful attempts to raise the maximum earnings for small businesses, the House eventually compromised on \$625,000. Small businesses will have to pay a minimum wage of \$5.25 by August, which is 90 cents lower than large businesses will be required to pay.

Rukavina was not particularly pleased with the definition change, but said he supported it to be assured that Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty would sign the bill. "I'm not happy about it, but in order to get the governor we had to compromise," he said. Numbers were not available on how many workers the change would affect, and Rukavina said he will determine that before the bill moves out of conference committee.

As he left the House chambers, Rukavina was met with several lobbyists and lawmakers who congratulated him on his victory in getting the bill passed through the challenging body. "It wasn't my victory," he said. "It was a victory for a lot of our lower income workers."

MESABI DAILY NEWS

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Same-sex marriage constitutional amendment passed by House
at the capitol

by T.W. Budig
Capitol reporter

The Minnesota House has passed same-sex marriage ban legislation that would place the proposed constitutional amendment before voters in 2006.

The legislation passed the House on a 77-56 vote after more than three hours of sometimes emotional debate.

Thirteen DFLers — including Rep. Denise

Dittrich, DFL-Champlin — voted for the proposed constitutional amendment while three Republicans voted against.

The proposed amendment had previously passed the House in 2004.

House Minority Leader Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul, called the House

floor vote “the politics of distraction.”

Minnesota marriages are not in crisis but education and other services are, he said.

• Rep. Karen Clark, DFL-Minneapolis, a lesbian lawmaker, strenuously attacked the proposed amendment as threatening

benefits for gays and lesbians.

She asked Rep. Dan Severson, R-Sauk Rapids, House bill author, how her long-term, loving relationship was so damaging as to require a constitutional amendment.

“What is threatening you?” she asked.

Rep. Michael Paymar, DFL-St. Paul, said the proposed amendment was disuniting to the state and meanspirited.

“Today I have to say I’m ashamed of this body,” he said.

But Severson and other Republicans argued the proposed amendment would serve as a safeguard against judicial activism — judges making decisions based on personal

belief instead of letter of law.

Besides that, voters want to decide the issue, it was argued.

Severson styled the proposed amendment as “the ultimate act of democracy.”

• Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, said the proposed amendment was clear.

It’s not taking away the right of gays and lesbians

to marry, he said. They just can’t marry someone of the same sex, said Emmer.

The proposed amendment would place on the ballot in 2006 the question, “Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that the state and its political subdivisions shall recognize marriage or its legal equivalent as limited to only the union of one man and one woman.”