

Minutes
EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Legislative Audit Commission
January 21, 2015

Members Present:

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
Senator Mary Kiffmeyer
Senator Warren Limmer

Member Absent:

Senator James Metzen

Other Legislators Present:

Representative David Bly
Representative Jeanne Poppe
Senator Lyle Koenen

Representative Hansen called the Legislative Audit Commission Evaluation Subcommittee meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to release the evaluation, *State Protections for Meatpacking Workers*.

Representative Hansen pointed out that state statutes provide that until new members are appointed to the Legislative Audit Commission, the members who were previously appointed and were reelected continue to serve on the commission until they are reappointed or replaced. Representative Hansen also noted that he served on the commission and as chair of the Evaluation Subcommittee during the last legislative session, and he called the meeting of the subcommittee because the Legislative Auditor had indicated that the report being discussed today was ready to be released.

Representative Hansen introduced Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor. Mr. Nobles provided an update on upcoming reports. He said four reports would be released in February: 1) *Recycling and Waste Reduction*; 2) *Managed Care Organizations' Administrative Expenses*; 3) *Minnesota Board of Nursing: Complaint Resolution Process*; and 4) *Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange (MNsurance)*. He said a special review on the University of Minnesota Dan Markingson Case would be released in mid-March. And the last two reports would be released mid-April: 1) *Minnesota Film and TV Board* and 2) *Mineral Taxation*. Mr. Nobles said that once the LAC is reconstituted, the topic selection process will begin.

The meeting turned to the release of *State Protections for Meatpacking Workers*. Mr. Nobles introduced David Kirchner, evaluation manager, to give a presentation. Mr. Kirchner said that Minnesota is one of the nation's top meatpacking states, and has plants producing pork, beef, turkey, and chicken. Minnesota has over 12,000 workers in meat processing jobs, and many of these workers are immigrants. In 2007, the Minnesota Legislature adopted the Packinghouse Workers Bill of Rights. The law requires meatpacking employers to inform employees in their native language about their jobs and certain state and federal protections, such as job description, salary, benefits, work hours, occupational hazards, right to organize, and right to be free from discrimination. The report found that the Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI's) previous efforts to implement the law were inadequate. Mr. Kirchner said the report recommends that DLI should 1) periodically send a mailing to meatpacking employers about the law and 2) put the information on its website. The report also recommends that the Legislature clarify and update the existing law, and consider additional legislation to better address legislative goals. The report suggests several policy options for improving the law.

Representative Hansen invited the DLI representative to address the subcommittee. Ken Peterson, Commissioner, said the Department agrees with the recommendations given in the report. He said that

the Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Division (MNOSHA) has been targeting and inspecting meatpacking companies since the mid-1990s. MNOSHA also requires meatpacking companies to go through their plants yearly to look for any hazards. Mr. Peterson said that, overall, the meatpacking plants are getting safer. He said that information about the Packinghouse Workers Bill of Rights is now available on DLI's website, and they will be mailing the information to meatpacking employers more often.

With no further business, Representative Hansen adjourned the meeting at 1:38 p.m.

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Shelly Watterud, Recording Secretary