

## DAILY BRIEFING

## ETHICS

**DFLers file complaint over remark:** Four Democratic-Farmer-Labor state representatives on Monday formally filed an ethics complaint alleging that Rep. Arlon Lindner, R-Corcoran, violated "accepted norms of house behavior" in a comment he made last week about a fellow representative.

Rep. Elaine Harder, R-Jackson, chairwoman of the four-person Ethics Committee, said no date has been set for a hearing on the allegation.

During a debate last week over the prayers used to open each House session, Lindner said to Rep. Michael Paymar, DFL-St. Paul, "I don't impose your unreligious left views on me." Subsequently, 64 House members signed a statement of "protest and dissent," which was published in the House Journal.

In the statement, they said Lindner's comment to Paymar, who is Jewish, had defamed all people of the Jewish faith.

The original list of representatives signing the statement included 52 Democratic-Farmer-Labor representatives and 12 Republicans. On Monday, two Republicans — Reps. Tony Kielucki, R-Lester Prairie, and Julie Storm, R-St. Peter — withdrew their names from the list.

PATRICK SWEENEY, STAFF WRITER

## SAFETY

**Senate passes newborn bill:** The Senate Monday unanimously passed a bill that would allow mothers to leave their newborn babies at hospitals without fear of neglect prosecution. But the

Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids, said: "What this is, is nothing more than a way of saving a child."

A key supporter of the bill is Archbishop Harry Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Among the supporting organizations are the Minnesota Hospital Association, the Minnesota Public Health Association, the Minnesota Association of Pediatricians and the Minnesota Nursing Association.

The bill passed through the Senate's usual committee process before it was taken up by the full body. In the House, however, the bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Luanne Koskinen, DFL-Coon Rapids, was refused a hearing by the chairman of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee, Rep. Fran Bradley, R-Rochester. So supporters asked the House to suspend the rules in order to bring the bill directly to the floor for consideration. The House voted 70-62 Monday against that motion.

Koskinen, who favors abortion rights, said her version of the bill — the same as passed by the Senate — needs no funding because an anonymous donor has offered to pay for brochures and television stations have promised free air time to publicize the law. She is concerned that some legislators want to attach abortion amendments to a similar bill.

"It's the abortion politics which really killed this bill," Koskinen said.

DEBRA O'CONNOR, STAFF WRITER

## PUBLIC SERVICE

**Proposal to abolish department proceeds:** A proposal to abolish the Department of Public Service

the merger would provide minimal government reform. The Public Service Department regulates utilities, while the Commerce Department regulates banking, insurance and securities. Only the weights and measures division of the public service unit remains.

"Why would you put utility regulation with insurance?" said Rep. Greg Davids, R-Preston, the bill's sponsor.

Last week, the Senate overwhelmingly voted to oust Steve Minn as commissioner of public service and commerce.

Davids' bill was endorsed by the House Subcommittee on Regulated Industries. It was expected to be heard in at least two other committees this week. No one had committed to carrying the bill in the Senate yet.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE

**Marty bill defeated:** Another campaign finance bill brought another defeat for Senate Election Laws Chairman John Marty.

Marty, DFL-Roseville, watched as the committee stripped voluntary spending limits from his bill, which also would increase the amount taxpayers could be refunded for political contributions.

The provision to increase the maximum refund to \$100 for single filers and \$200 for married filers cleared the committee on a voice vote, with Marty dissenting alone. By increasing the maximum refund, donors might be willing to contribute more.

Marty, who lost other campaign finance battles this year, viewed a refund portion as a trade-off for limits on spending by political parties and caucuses. His bill

It also would require doctors to speak with prospective patients and provide certain information on fetal development.

The committee, which considers only the fiscal impact, voted 7-1 in favor of the bill. Two DFLers were absent. Rep. Luanne Koskinen, DFL-Coon Rapids, voted against the bill.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, has said the House would do whatever it could to pass the bill.

Whether the Senate would pass or Gov. Jesse Ventura would sign such a bill is questionable. Ventura repeatedly has said he supports legalized abortion.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

## RESIDENCY

**Bill would tighten requirements:** Rep. Doug Reuter likely would lose his seat when he moves to Texas if the Legislature agrees to a bill approved by the Senate Election Laws Committee.

The bill, which would take effect as soon as Gov. Jesse Ventura signed it, would allow any constituent to seek the removal of a legislator who no longer calls the district home.

Residency requirements are ambiguous when it comes to removal, said sponsor Sen. Dave Kleis, R-St. Cloud.

"Once someone is no longer qualified to run for office, they're no longer qualified to serve," Kleis said.

Reuter, an Owatonna independent, hopes to finish his term because he fears no special election would be held and his district would be without representation until November. He plans to correspond with constituents by phone and e-mail.

## Carruthers won't seek re-election

DEBRA O'CONNOR STAFF WRITER

**R**ep. Phil Carruthers, speaker of the state's House of Representatives from 1997 to 1998, has decided not to seek re-election and has accepted a job as chief prosecutor of the Ramsey County attorney's office.

"This is something I've been thinking about for some time," Carruthers, DFL-Brooklyn Center, said Monday. "I have young kids, an 11-year-old boy and an 8-year-old boy. I wanted to spend more time with them. And 14 years just seemed enough. It's exciting and satisfying, but at the same time very demanding. It's tough to balance family life and also your second job with that schedule."

Carruthers was on the Metropolitan Council for nearly four years and was first elected to the House in 1986. He served as House majority leader from 1993 to 1996. Carruthers lost his position as speaker when Republican victories in 1998 put the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party in the minority. He would have made the same decision if the DFL were still in the majority in the House, he said.

Carruthers works as a prosecutor for several cities and has a private law practice in which he does criminal work and civil litigation.

People who have expressed interest in his seat are Todd Paulson, a lobbyist for Common Cause who is on the Metropolitan Council; Debra Hilstrom, a Brooklyn Center City Council member who