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## Legislative News Briefs: Senator says email was a mistake

Minnesota Legislature

— Sen. Scott Newman, R-Hutchinson, said an e-mail his office sent rejecting a meeting with nurses was a mistake.

By: Don Davis, Pierce County Herald

ST. PAUL - Sen. Scott Newman, R-Hutchinson, said an e-mail his office sent rejecting a meeting with nurses was a mistake.

Newman's assistant, Kim Kelley, last week sent an e-mail to the Minnesota Nurses Association saying that the senator would not meet with the group because it supported his election opponent, Democrat Hal Kimball.

When the e-mail came to light Tuesday, it created a buzz around the Capitol. Newman quickly issued a statement apologizing for the e-mail.

"An email sent from my office suggested that I will not meet with groups or organizations that supported my opponent in the past election," the senator wrote. "While I did not personally send the email, nor was I aware of it, I do apologize for the confusion and frustration it has caused and I accept complete responsibility."

"I want to be clear that it is not my policy to reject meeting requests on a political or partisan basis. I look forward to continuing to serve all constituents of Senate District 18 as the legislative session continues."

A GOP House spokesman said that Newman will meet with nurses.

Newman is in his first Senate term, but previously served in the state House.

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A Senate energy committee plans a Thursday vote on whether to lift a state ban on constructing nuclear power plants.

A House committee already has approved getting rid of the moratorium.

"The bill is not a certificate to construct a new nuclear power plant in the state of Minnesota," said Senate Majority Leader Amy Koch, R-Buffalo, who authored the measure.

The bill also does not short-circuit any state regulations that would govern whether a plant could be built, she added.

Both sides delivered Senate testimony Tuesday, much like they have the past several years. Opponents worry about where nuclear waste would be stored while supporters say that nuclear is clean, safe power that is needed to fill the state's power need.

Minnesota's two nuclear plants are at Red Wing and Monticello and no one is proposing to build a new one any time soon.

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Three Republican House members plan today to introduce a bill requiring Minnesotans to show a photographic identification card before they can vote.

Reps. Mary Kiffmeyer of Big Lake, Bruce Vogel of Willmar and Branden Petersen of Cook Rapids plan to brief reporters on the issue this morning.

Republicans generally favor photo ID, saying it can help prevent voting fraud.

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Sen. Tom Saxhaug complains that a budget-cutting bill moving through the Senate "includes thoughtless changes" to a state forest program.

A Senate Tax Committee vote reduces from an expected \$16 an acre to \$7.75 payments to those who take part in the Sustainable Forest Initiative Act. The vote also would limit payments to \$100,000, which the Grand Rapids Democratic senator said would hurt large landholders.

The sustainable forest law was "created to provide an incentive for landowners to practice long-term sustainable forest management," Saxhaug said. But the bill, as currently written, would hurt participation in the program, he said.

Saxhaug called the Republican proposal counterproductive to work to preserve forests.

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