



2008
Minnesota
House of Representatives

Legislative Information Manual



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES

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Contents

State Government Structure1-2

- Background
- Constitution
- Legislative Branch
- Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch
- Supreme Court
- Court of Appeals
- District Courts
- Conciliation Courts

Before the Session 3

- Certificate of Election
- Election of Caucus Leaders
- House Rules and Joint Rules
- Selection of Committee Chairs,
 Assignments to Committees

House Members' Rights4-5

- Speech and Debate Privilege
- Conflicts of Interest
- Holding Other Offices
- Notary Public Privilege
- Arrest Privilege
- Civil Liability Exemption
- Excused Court Appearances
- Criminal Offenses
- Extra-Legislative Employment Rights
 - Private Employment
 - Public Employment

Getting Around6-8

- Useful Information
 - Bike Racks
 - Bill Status
 - Building Maintenance
 - Bus Service to Downtown
 - Cash Machines
 - Change Machine
 - Dining
 - Duplicating
 - Employee Assistance
 - Emergency
 - Fire
 - Hair Stylist
 - Holidays
 - Locker rooms
 - Mail

- Meeting Room Reservations
- Medical
- Minnesota Memorabilia
- Non-Smoking Policy
- Parking
- Phones
- Press Conferences
- Purchasing
- Schedules
- Security and Escort Services
- Session Floor Passes and use of Retiring Room
- Shuttle Service
- Supplies
- Tunnel System

Online Resources9-10

- Legislative Web site
 - Intranet
 - Bill tracking
 - Streaming audio and video
 - Podcasting
 - RSS feeds
 - Member Web pages
 - Wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi)
 - E-mail lists
 - Other services
 - Laptops
 - Appropriate use of computers and technology

Capitol Complex Tunnel Layout 11

The First Day 12-13

- Defining a Session
 - Biennial Session
 - Regular Session
 - Special Session
 - Daily Session
- Convening — Opening Ceremonies
- Oath of Office
- Election of Officers
- Selection of Permanent Desks
- Committees
- A Legislative Day
- Daily Sessions

Legislative Procedure..... 14-18

- The Process
- Ideas
- Types of Legislation
- Bills
- Resolutions
- The Drafting Process
- Companion Bill System
- Bill Introduction
- First Reading/Reporting
- The Committee
- Second Reading
- Consent Calendar
- General Register
- Calendar for the Day
- Fiscal Calendar
- Third Reading and Final Passage
- Preliminary Approval
- Comparisons/Substitutions
- Amended Bills
- Concurrences
- Conference Committee

How a Bill Becomes Law 19

Tax and Spending Bills 20

- Development
- Budget Resolution
- Collecting Money: Omnibus Tax Bill
- Spending Money: Appropriations Bills

The Governor's Role 22

- The Governor
- The New Law
- Special Sessions

After the Session..... 23

- Interim
- Activities

Publications 24-25

- Member-Oriented Publications
 - Minnesota Statutes
 - Session Laws of Minnesota
 - Daily Journal
 - Permanent Journals
 - Bills
 - Official Agenda
- Constituent-Oriented Publications
- Session Coverage
- Directories
- Educational Materials
- Other Publications

Legislative Offices..... 26-30

Nonpartisan Offices

- Chief Clerk's Office
- Research Department
- Fiscal Analysis
- Public Information Services
- Budget and Accounting
- Human Resources

Partisan Offices

- DFL, Republican Caucus Staff
- Leadership Staff
- Legislative Assistants
- Research
- Media
- Constituent Services
- Information Technology

Committee and Caucus Staff

- Committee Administrator
- Committee Legislative Assistant
- Chief Committee Clerk

Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms

- Pages
- Parking and Transportation
- Security
- Post Office
- Educational Programs
- High School Page Program
- College Internship Program
- Duplicating
- Facility Services

Joint Legislative Offices and Commissions 31-34

Office of the Revisor of Statutes

- Bill Drafting
- Amendment Drafting
- Computer Services
- Other Services

Legislative Reference Library

Office of the Legislative Auditor

Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC)

- Subcommittee on Employee Relations (SER)
- Salary and Budget Review Subcommittee
- Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)
- Trustee Candidate Advisory Council (TCAC)
- Compensation Council
- Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims
- Administrative Rules Subcommittee
- Library Subcommittee
- Revisor Subcommittee
- Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy
- Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government
- Legislative Commission on Health Care Access

Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota
Foreign Delegations Liaison
Legislative Electric Energy Task Force
Geographic Information Services Office (GIS)
The Office on the Economic Status of Women (OESW)
Fiscal Services Office

Other Commissions/Subcommittees:

Legislative Advisory Commission
Legislative Audit Commission
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)
Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement
Great Lakes Commission
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Glossary..... 35-42



State Government Structure

Background

The Minnesota Territory was organized under an 1849 Act of Congress authorizing its people to form a constitution and a state government. A state constitution was adopted and state officers were elected in October 1857. Minnesota was admitted to the Union on May 11, 1858.

Constitution

The Minnesota Constitution provides the basis for the state's government. All actions of the government must comply with the provisions of the constitution. Any change to the constitution must be approved by a majority of both houses of the Legislature and submitted to the people for approval. Under the Minnesota Constitution, the powers of government are divided into three separate and distinct branches — legislative, executive and judicial.

The constitution is printed in the Minnesota Legislative Manual (blue book), published each biennium by the Office of the Secretary of State. Individual copies of the constitution may be obtained from the Chief Clerk's Office.

Legislative Branch

The legislative branch consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The 134 House members are elected to a two-year term; the 67 senators to a four-year term, except in the year preceding redistricting (which takes place after each census), when their term of election is two years.

The Legislature is responsible for making new law, changing or abolishing old law, establishing a state budget and tax policy, proposing changes to the state constitution, electing regents of the University of Minnesota and overseeing the work of the government. In addition, the Legislature has a number of judicial functions. Each house may punish its own members for "disorderly or contemptuous" behavior, and can unseat a member with a majority vote.

The House of Representatives has the power to impeach the governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general and the

judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and district courts. The Senate conducts proceedings to determine if a conviction is warranted.

Executive Branch

The executive branch of government consists of five constitutional officers: the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor and attorney general. The primary function of the executive branch of government is to carry out the day-to-day operation of state government. The work is divided among the constitutional officers, approximately 25 departments and agencies, members appointed or elected to various state boards, committees, councils and authorities under the broad guidance of the governor.

As the chief executive of the state, the governor has a number of specific powers and functions. The constitution charges the governor with the responsibility of preparing for the Legislature an annual report on the general condition of the state. In addition, by statute, the governor must submit a proposed budget to the Legislature within three weeks of the first Monday of January in odd-numbered years.

Traditionally, the governor presents his or her legislative priorities to the Legislature at the beginning of each session in an address and in a written report.

Judicial Branch

The main functions of the judicial branch are to resolve disputes between private parties and to hear criminal prosecutions. The judiciary has the power to rule that a law enacted by the Legislature is unconstitutional.

Minnesota's judicial branch is comprised of three levels of courts: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and district courts.

Supreme Court

The Minnesota Supreme Court, comprised of a chief justice and six associate justices, is the final authority in Minnesota's judicial system. The Supreme Court has administrative power over the judges and personnel of the lower courts, and regulatory authority over all attorneys in the state. Its other chief responsibility is hearing appeals of decisions made by the Court of Appeals. It also serves as a reviewing body for decisions of the Minnesota Tax Court and Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. In addition to hearing appeals, the Supreme Court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law and for making recommendations to improve the judicial system.

Court of Appeals

The 16 judges of the Court of Appeals hear appeals from all the trial courts and from proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, including unemployment decisions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development com-

missioner. The Court of Appeals chambers are in the Minnesota Judicial Center, but the judges travel around the state to hear oral arguments in the same judicial district where the trial took place.

District Courts

A district court is a trial court of general jurisdiction (meaning it has the power to hear any civil or criminal case) created by the state constitution. There are more than 280 district court judges among the 10 judicial districts. District courts hear civil actions, gross misdemeanors and misdemeanor cases, as well as juvenile, family and probate matters.

Conciliation Courts

Conciliation courts hear civil disputes up to \$7,500, except for disputes over consumer credit transactions, which must be less than \$4,000 to be heard in conciliation courts.



Before the Session

Certificate of Election

Members' certificates of election are sent by the secretary of state directly to the chief clerk of the House or the secretary of the Senate.

The Chief Clerk's Office retains the certificate until the new member is sworn in. A member can expect to receive the certificate a few days after being sworn in.

Election of Caucus Leaders

Usually within a week or two after the general election, members from each party meet on an informal basis to organize and elect leaders for their individual caucuses. Each caucus can nominate a speaker-designate (the speaker is officially elected by the members of the entire House on the first day of session). The majority caucus also elects a majority leader and a majority whip, and the minority caucus elects a minority leader and minority whip. Selection of assistant leaders is done by each caucus, but the time and manner of this selection process varies from biennium to biennium and caucus to caucus.

The caucuses also meet periodically throughout the session, primarily to exchange information on various issues.

House Rules and Joint Rules

The constitution provides for each house of the Legislature to establish its own rules of procedure. Each biennium, the House does this by adopting the Permanent Rules of the House.

The permanent House rules are drafted after session begins by the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration. Early in the session, a set of rules is presented to the entire House for adoption. Until the new rules are adopted, the House adopts the rules of the previous session as temporary rules. Proposed rules can be amended on the House floor.

In addition, Joint Rules of the Senate and the House are adopted. The Joint Rules apply when the House and Senate meet together in joint convention, in conference committees, and in procedural matters which must be the same in both houses.

Selection of Committee Chairs, Assignments to Committees

The number of standing committees and their areas of responsibility are set each biennium by the speaker of the House. Under the House rules, the speaker-designate submits this information, along with the number of minority caucus members to be appointed to each committee, to the leader of the minority caucus 30 days before a new session convenes.

The speaker names the chairs, vice-chairs and members of each committee. Following the general election, each member may indicate which committee she or he prefers. Generally, members serve on three or four standing committees, but assignments per member can vary from session to session. Majority caucus members submit requests directly to the speaker-designate (the nominee elected by the majority caucus). The minority caucus members make their requests through the minority leader who submits recommendations for minority representation on the standing committees to the speaker-designate at least 15 days before convening a new session.

Committees are balanced with respect to party, occupation and geographic area represented by the members of the House.

Due to scheduling conflicts, assignment to one committee may preclude another committee assignment.



House Members' Rights

Being a member of the House of Representatives brings with it many duties, responsibilities and rights.

Speech and Debate Privilege

The Minnesota Constitution provides that legislators may not be “questioned” in any other place for speech and debate in the Legislature. In general, the courts have held that the identically worded provision of the U.S. Constitution provides a relatively broad privilege for matters relating to legislative activities. For example, the privilege protects a legislator from liability for libel or slander for statements made in floor or committee debate. Similarly, the privilege prevents litigants from compelling a legislator to testify or provide documents relating to his or her legislative activities or duties (under most circumstances).

In order to qualify for the protection of the privilege, however, the legislator’s actions or conduct must fall within what the courts describe as the “legitimate legislative sphere.” Matters not directly or integrally related to the legislative process and activities are not privileged. For example, press releases and letters to constituents have been held not to be privileged. The exact scope and extent of the privilege will depend in each instance upon the particular facts and circumstances of the case.

The issue does not often arise, but legislators should be aware of the possibility and try to understand the elements of protected and unprotected speech.

Conflicts of Interest

A House member required to vote on an issue that would substantially affect either his or her personal financial interests, or a business he or she is associated with, must not vote on it. The House, at his or her request, may excuse the member from voting on the question.

Holding Other Offices

The state constitution provides that a legislator cannot hold any other state or federal office, except postmaster or notary

public. A member who is elected or appointed to another office must resign from the Legislature.

The Minnesota Supreme Court defines an “office” under this provision as a position in which the person has authority under law, either alone or with equals, to determine public policy or make a final decision not subject to another’s supervisory approval.

Court cases or attorney general opinions have indicated that legislators may not hold the following offices:

- city charter commission member
- city council member
- civil service board member
- municipal assessor
- county attorney
- park board member
- county commissioner
- police chief
- county veterans service officer
- school board member
- county welfare board member
- state fair board member
- deputy registrar of deeds
- mayor
- deputy registrar of motor vehicles

Some positions that legislators may hold include:

- employment with any government unit where the individual does not make final decisions that are subject to no one else’s review
- architect
- cashier
- engineer
- inspector or investigator for regulatory agency
- police officer
- attorney
- census supervisor
- instructor

Notary Public Privilege

By law, all members, during their term of office, are notaries. However, they may not receive any fee for notarizing documents. When acting as a notary, a House member must sign as follows:

“Rep. _____, District _____, Minnesota.
My term expires _____.”

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes has a staff member on hand to act as a notary. Some other departments may have a staff member who is a notary as well.

Arrest Privilege

The state constitution provides that members cannot be arrested while the Legislature is in session or when they are on their way to or from the session, except in cases of felony, treason or breach of the peace. This privilege applies to misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors, excluding what the courts consider a breach of the peace. (Examples: assault or threatened assault, breaking and entering, driving while intoxicated, speeding, violent verbal attacks or other acts that cause serious alarm to people in the vicinity.)

The privilege only prevents detaining a member during session; it does not provide immunity from prosecution after the session ends. The protection is not automatic. A member can either assert the privilege in court or choose to waive it.

Civil Liability Exemption

A member is not liable, under state law, in a civil lawsuit for any act done in the course of his or her official duties.

Excused Court Appearances

A civil or criminal action in which a member is a party, attorney or witness may not be tried while the Legislature is in session or during an interim hearing. A member cannot be required to appear as a witness in court proceedings held during the session or any interim hearing, unless the court orders the member to appear and the speaker of the House, or the entire House, consents to the order.

The member may waive these privileges. In the event of a waiver, the matter can be tried at times that will not conflict with the member's legislative duties.

Criminal Offenses

It is a gross misdemeanor for anyone, by intimidation or otherwise, to prevent a member from attending a committee or floor session, casting a vote or performing any official act.

It is a felony for anyone, by threat, deception or other unlawful means, to attempt to influence a legislator in voting or performing any other official duty.

Extra-Legislative Employment Rights

Private Employment

A member who has a permanent position with a private employer in the state at the beginning of the legislative session must be allowed to resume his or her old job or a position of similar seniority, status and pay if he or she reapplies within 30 days after the end of the session.

A member of the Legislature must be restored to his or her job without loss of seniority. The returning member must be allowed to participate in insurance and other benefits provided to other employees. Retirement benefits may not be reduced because of time spent in legislative service. A member cannot be discharged without good cause for three years after being restored to the job, except in inverse order of seniority.

No employer or union can discharge or otherwise discriminate against a legislator who is an employee or member, in retaliation for statements made or beliefs held in his or her capacity as a member.

A member can sue an employer who fails to comply with these provisions. The court can order the employer to obey the law and compensate the member for any loss of wages or benefits caused by the employer's non-compliance.

Public Employment

A legislator who is an employee or appointed officer of a municipality, school district, other political subdivision or a state-operated school is entitled to unpaid leave of absence during any or all of his or her term, with a right of reinstatement after the leave.

After the last legislative day in the calendar year, the member must be reinstated to the position he or she held before the beginning of the session, or must be given a position of similar seniority, status, and pay, if available, as long as:

- the position has not been abolished;
- the member reapplies for the job in writing within 30 days after the last legislative day in the calendar year; and
- the request for reinstatement is made no later than 10 years after the leave was granted.

After reinstatement, the member has the same rights to accrued and future seniority status, efficiency rating and benefits as if he or she were employed during the leave.

The member has no right to compensation for the period between the first and last legislative day in a calendar year and cannot be removed or discharged from employment for at least one year after reinstatement, except for cause after notice and hearing.

A member retains all pension rights accrued up to the time of taking leave. For purposes of determining pension-vesting rights, a member is treated as if he or she were at his or her extra-legislative job while on leave at the Legislature.

A member employed in the public sector is entitled to receive pension benefits for legislative service and for his or her other job. However, the member will not be paid benefits by both the Legislature and the other employer for the time he or she is on leave to serve in the Legislature.



Getting Around

Useful Information

The Capitol complex functions much like a small community. The following information is intended to answer some of the most frequently asked questions. For general information, contact House Public Information Services, 175 State Office Building, 651-296-2146 or 800-657-3550.

Bike Racks

For those who bike to work, there are bicycle racks and lockers located within the State Office Building parking ramp available only to building tenants, and on the west side of the Transportation Building. Ramp parking privileges are not required to use the ramp bicycle rack, but it is only accessible by key card, which is available from the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 190 State Office Building, 651-296-4860. The fully enclosed, secure bike lockers can be rented on an annual basis.

Bill Status

Contact the House Index Department, 211 State Capitol, 651-296-6646, or track bills on the Legislature's Web site (www.leg.mn).

Building Maintenance

Contact Plant Management, 651-201-2300.

Bus Service to Downtown

Metro Transit buses run frequently to downtown St. Paul from the State Office Building. Catch the bus on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. and return from downtown by catching the bus (Numbers 16, 50 or 94B) on Minnesota Street.

Cash Machines

Automatic teller machines are located in the State Office Building (ground floor), the State Capitol (basement level), in the Transportation Building (ground floor) and the Centennial Office Building (ground floor).

Change Machine

Change for dollar bills can be obtained from a change machine in the vending area in the basement of the State Office Building.

Dining

The State Office Building cafeteria and the Rathskeller café in the State Capitol are open when the Legislature is in session. Year-round cafeterias are available in the Transportation Building, Judicial Center and the Centennial and Stassen buildings.

There are many restaurants within walking distance along Rice Street and University Avenue. There also are dozens of restaurants only minutes away in downtown St. Paul.

Duplicating

Duplicating services for House business are in House Facility Services, 35 State Office Building, 651-296-8611.

Employee Assistance

The Employee Assistance Program is a confidential counseling service designed to help state employees with problems, either in or out of the workplace. Those with a personal or work-related problem can contact the Employee Assistance Program at 651-259-3840.

Emergency

If there is an emergency, call 911. The Capitol Security emergency number is 651-296-2100.

Fire

In case of fire, an alarm will sound throughout the building, fire doors will close and elevators will not operate. Evacuate the building via the stairways.

Hair Stylist

Capitol Barbers is in the basement of the State Office Building. Generally, it is open during business hours. The phone number is 651-291-1600.

Holidays

Below are the upcoming observed paid holidays for all eligible employees assigned to a Monday through Friday, five-day work week in the House:

Monday, May 26, 2008 - Memorial Day
 Friday, July 4, 2008 - Independence Day
 Monday, Sept. 3, 2008 - Labor Day
 Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2008 - Veterans Day
 Thursday, Nov. 27, 2008 - Thanksgiving Day
 Friday, Nov. 28, 2008 - Day after Thanksgiving
 Thursday, Dec. 25, 2008 - Christmas Day

(For more information on holidays, see the *Legislative Plan for Employee Benefits and Policies*.)

Locker rooms

Showers and lockers are available in the State Office Building basement. Contact the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 190 State Office Building, 651-296-4860, to reserve a locker.

Mail

The House Post Office is on the ground floor of the State Office Building in room 36. Drop-off baskets are located by each receptionist on the various floors. The post office handles both U.S. mail and interoffice mail. Questions about proper mailing procedure should be directed to the House Post Office, 651-296-9462 or the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 651-296-4860.

U.S. Postal Service mailboxes are on the first floor of the State Office Building near the elevators. Pick-up times are 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. There is also a mail drop-off site located in the State Capitol on the ground floor near the east elevator.

The House Post Office does not sell stamps. You may purchase stamps, near the Capitol complex, at these locations: Main post office, Kellogg Boulevard and Jackson Street, downtown St. Paul; Pioneer Station, 141 Fourth St. E. room 162; and Riverview Station, 292 Eva St.

Meeting Room Reservations

To schedule a room in the State Office Building call the room scheduler at 651-296-5408, or at the State Capitol by calling the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms office at 651-296-0866.

Medical

A MinuteClinic, for consultation concerning common illnesses, such as strep throat, bronchitis, ear infections and sinus infections, is available on the first floor of the Centennial Building at 658 Cedar St. from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Minnesota Memorabilia

Gifts with a Minnesota theme can be purchased at the Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W. and at Minnesota's Bookstore, 660 Olive Street. Postcards may be purchased at the first floor information center in the State Capitol.

Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited in the State Office Building and Capitol. Smoking includes the carrying of a lighted cigarette, cigar or pipe, and the use of any other smoking material.

Smoking is not allowed in the State Office Building parking ramp, nor is it permissible on the loading dock.

Parking

For information about obtaining a vehicle parking spot for a fee, contact the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 190 State Office Building, 651-296-4860. There is a ramp adjacent to the State Office Building, as well as several nearby surface lots. Monthly parking fees range from about \$29 to \$50.

Segway users may use a bicycle rack at no charge, or rent either a bicycle locker or a Segway stall with electricity in the Judicial Garage for an annual fee of \$51.

Contract parking is available to state employees with disabilities on a permanent or temporary basis. House staff and member handicapped parking is available on the lower level of the State Office Building parking ramp (use the call box at the ramp entrance to gain entry). Additional handicapped parking is located on the orange level of the Centennial Office Building ramp and in the 14th Street Lot. Most spots, however, can be found in Lot N behind the State Capitol and west of the State Office Building in Lot F.

Phones

Telephone service and hardware questions should be directed to House Facility Services, 651-296-1239. Pay phones are located in the basement of the State Capitol near the Capitol Press Corp offices.

Press Conferences

To schedule a press conference in the State Office Building, contact the room scheduler, 651-296-5408.

Purchasing

All purchase orders are issued by Facility Services, a division of the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. When goods or services are needed, all members and staff must complete a purchase requisition form and send it to the purchasing agent in Facility Services. For a complete copy of the purchasing policy, call 651-296-2305.

Schedules

House Public Information Services publishes committee and floor meeting schedules throughout the year. Meeting information can also be accessed from the committee meeting hotline at 651-296-9283 — a 24-hour recording maintained by the Public Information Services staff. Schedules are subject to change and the most current information is available online (www.house.mn).

Getting Around

Security and Escort Services

Members and staff who work late or feel uncomfortable walking to their vehicles alone may call Capitol Security for an escort. The escort service is available 24 hours a day and can be reached by calling 651-296-6741.

Capitol Security also provides bulletins or alerts about suspicious people and activities in and around the Capitol complex area.

A number of Capitol Security emergency call boxes are located throughout the Capitol area in case you need help.

Session Floor Passes and use of Retiring Room

No one other than a member, authorized staff and others named in Article II of the Permanent Rules of the House may be admitted to the House floor and Retiring Room. A limited number of passes are made available to the public. To request a pass, contact the House Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 190 State Office Building, at 651-296-4860. The alcoves in the chamber are for credentialed press members use only.

From one hour before the time the House is scheduled to convene until one hour after the House adjourns for the day, the retiring room is reserved for the exclusive use of members and House employees. According to the Permanent Rules of the House, no senator may enter the House retiring room during the time it is reserved the exclusive use of members and employees.

Shuttle Service

Meritex Enterprises, Inc., a real estate development company which owns state buildings on Lafayette Road, offers a free shuttle service to state employees. The Lafayette Park Shuttle Service makes stops at most of the state buildings on or near the Capitol complex.

The 22-passenger shuttle, much like airport shuttles, is white with blue stripes and says "Lafayette Park Shuttle" on the side. Call (612) 275-3833 a day in advance, if possible, for pickup.

Supplies

Office supplies may be obtained through Facility Services, a division of the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, 35 State Office Building.

Tunnel System

A tunnel system that connects various state office buildings opens weekdays at 6 a.m. and closes about 5 p.m. or 5:30 p.m., depending on the building. Buildings in the system include the Capitol, Judicial Center, Centennial Building, Veterans Service Building, Transportation Building, Administration parking ramp and State Office Building.



Online Resources

Legislative Web site

Since 1994, anyone with access to the Internet has been able to find an ever-growing range of online legislative information.

By connecting to the Legislature's Web site, www.leg.mn, Internet users can easily find daily schedules for the House and Senate, track the status of individual bills, read the text of bills and statutes, and discover much, much more about activities at the Capitol.

The Legislature's Web page is a joint effort by the House of Representatives, Senate, Legislative Reference Library, Office of the Revisor of Statutes and legislative commissions.

The goal of the Web site is to increase citizen participation in the legislative process by providing information in an easy-to-use format.

The Web site provides users with a multitude of services and resources, including:

- information on bills, including status, full text and latest official engrossments;
- regularly updated House and Senate daily schedules;
- contact information for House and Senate members and staff;
- rosters and schedules for standing committees, floor sessions and conference committees;
- a district finder that allows users to find their state and federal legislators by entering the user's street address and ZIP code;
- online access to the Journal of the House and Journal of the Senate, the official record of House and Senate floor action;
- access to the online version of Minnesota Statutes;
- online versions of numerous House publications including: Session Weekly, Session Daily, New Laws, Capitol Steps: How Six Bills Became Law and press releases; and
- audio and video of House and Senate committee meetings and floor sessions.

Intranet

The House Intranet (www.house.mn/intranet) provides members and staff with access to online features and services that aren't

available to the general public. In addition to everything that's on the House Web site, the Intranet gives members and staff access to:

- House administrative policies;
- downloadable administrative forms;
- employee timecard login;
- cafeteria menus; and
- Capitol and State Office Building floor plans.

House members and staff with questions about the Intranet should contact the House webmaster.

Bill tracking

The Legislature's Web site lets users keep up to date on the status of bills with MyBills, a personalized bill tracking service. MyBills is a free subscription-based service providing daily e-mail and RSS notification of the current status of all House and Senate files. Bills are searchable by bill number, author or subject. Special session bills are not included.

Streaming audio and video

Streaming media is audio or video that is listened to or viewed as it is downloading. The House provides streaming audio of all archived committee meetings, streaming video of archived floor sessions and selected committee meetings, and live webcasting of television coverage. Additionally, downloadable MP3 files of archived committee audio are provided. All audio and video is accessible via the Web site using Windows Media Player.

Podcasting

Podcasts are audio or video files that can be downloaded onto your computer and can be copied to a portable device such as an MP3 player or iPod.

Podcasts differ from Internet radio stations and streaming media in that they can be downloaded in full, individual episodes, and viewed or listened to at any time. You may also subscribe to podcasts, so that new episodes are downloaded automatically when they become available.

The House offers free audio podcasts of House committee meetings and — beginning in 2007 — floor sessions. These

Online Resources

can be accessed in a variety of ways. Most commonly, they are downloaded using programs such as iTunes, which is available for download free of charge at www.apple.com/itunes.

Podcasts can also be accessed via the House Web site with an RSS reader (see “RSS feeds” below).

RSS feeds

RSS is a technology that allows you to subscribe to Web sites. It requires a program called an RSS reader (also referred to as an aggregator), which accesses RSS feeds that allow you to receive automatic updates when new content is posted on a Web site.

The House provides RSS feeds for committee audio, MyBills customized bill tracking, Session Daily nonpartisan legislative news updates, individual House members’ News and Views pages, and more.

You can find links to a number of free, downloadable RSS readers by visiting www.house.mn and clicking on “RSS Feeds” under the “Information” subheading.

Member Web pages

Each House member has their own official Web page featuring a downloadable photo, contact information, biographical information, a “News and Views” section with RSS feeds, a schedule of town hall meetings, a member video interview (if available), a district map, district demographics and lists of bills chief-authored and coauthored.

Members’ contact information and biographical information is maintained by House Public Information Services staff and can be updated upon a member’s request. The “News and Views” and “Additional Biographical Information” sections of members’ Web pages are maintained by caucus media support staff.

Wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi)

There are now several wireless Internet, or Wi-Fi, access points in the Capitol and State Office Building. These access points include Capitol rooms 15, 107, 112, 123, 125 and 318, and the Legislative Reference Library on the sixth floor of the State Office Building.

The House does not own these access points. They are accessible to the general public.

E-mail lists

Electronic mailing lists are a convenient way to send e-mails to large groups of people at one time. The House has numerous mailing lists users can subscribe to, including: schedule updates; the Session Daily legislative news service; House Research and Fiscal Analysis updates; and lists for each House member and standing committee.

For legislators, e-mail lists provide a simple means of keeping constituents informed via press releases and newsletters. House members and staff should contact their caucus IT staff to learn more about sending e-mail using electronic mailing lists.

Other services

The House Republican and DFL caucuses each have their own information technology support staff. In addition to services listed elsewhere in this manual, support for certain services, such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), may be available for House members and staff through their caucus’ computer support staff.

Legislators and staff members should contact their caucus’ IT support staff for more information on services provided by the caucuses.

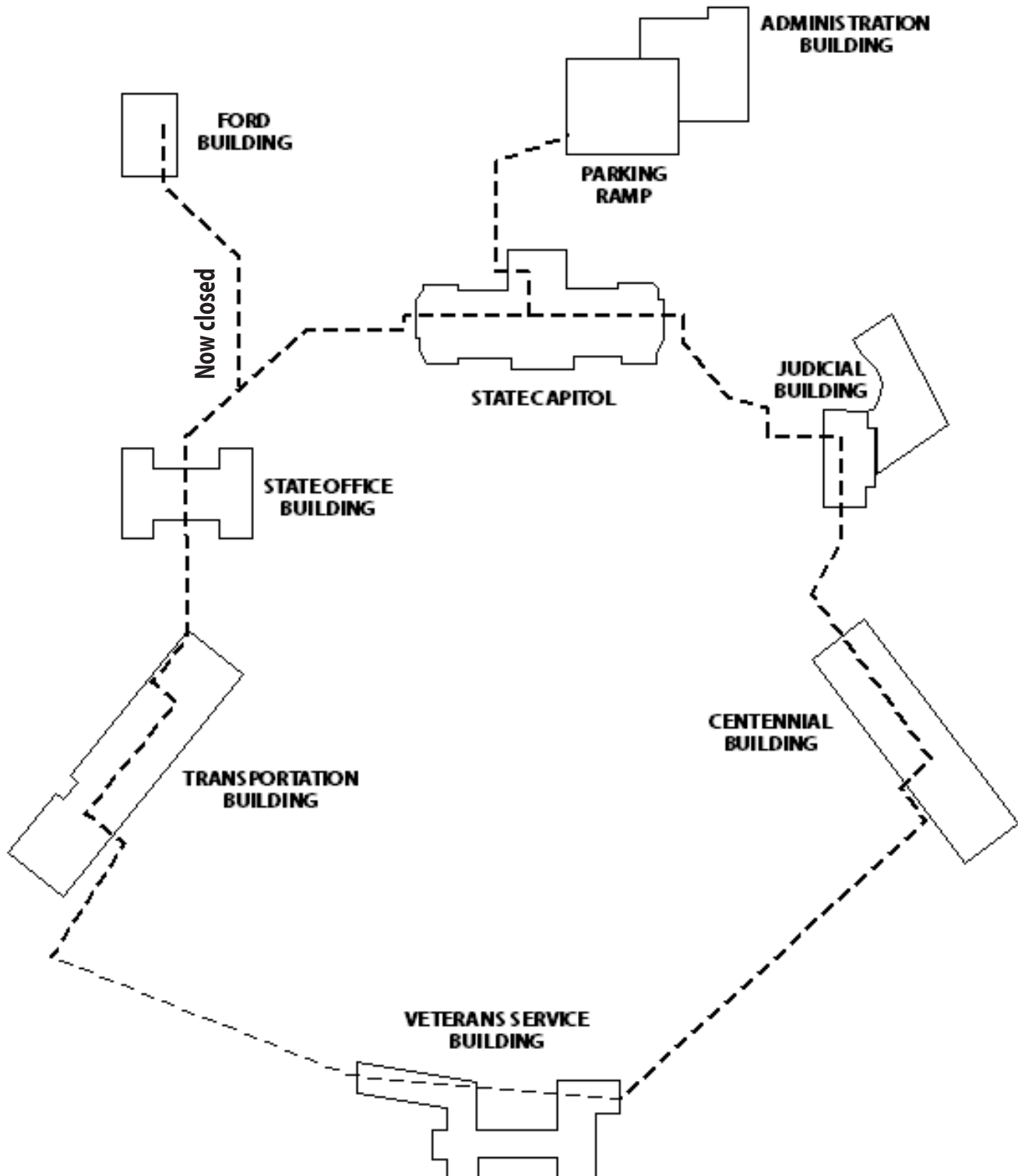
Laptops

House members are provided with laptops for legislative use. Members should contact their caucus IT support staff with questions related to their laptops.

Appropriate use of computers and technology

The House has established clear guidelines on the appropriate use of e-mail, Internet, computers and other communications technology by House members and staff. These are available for viewing on the House Intranet.

Capitol Complex Tunnel Layout





The First Day

Defining a Session

The term “session” has several meanings in the legislative process.

Biennial Session

The period during which the Legislature meets, such as “The 85th Session” (2007-2008).

Regular Session

The Legislative session extends over both years of the biennium. The odd number year marks the beginning of the biennium, and the Legislature convenes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. However, when the first Monday in January falls on Jan. 1, the first day of session is the first Wednesday after the first Monday, and it must end on the first Monday after the third Saturday in May.

In even-numbered years, the Legislature usually convenes in late January or early February. The Legislature must adjourn by the first Monday after the third Saturday in May.

The constitution states that “*the Legislature shall meet at the seat of government in regular session in each biennium at the time prescribed by law not exceeding a total of 120 legislative days.*”

Special Session

A session called by the governor “under extraordinary circumstances.” The governor may not dictate the matters to be considered or the length of sitting.

Daily Session

A meeting of either the House or Senate to transact business.

Convening — Opening Ceremonies

In odd-numbered years, the legislative session convenes at noon in the House and Senate chambers on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, or when the first Monday in January falls on Jan. 1, it shall meet the first Wednesday after the first Monday. The House is called to order by the secretary of state, who presides over the meeting until a speaker is elected by the members. The secretary of state also appoints a member as chief clerk pro tempore who first calls the roll by legislative district.

Oath of Office

Immediately following the calling of the roll by district, the oath of office is administered to members-elect by a member of the judiciary. In taking the oath, the members of the Legislature agree to support the U.S. Constitution, the Minnesota Constitution and to faithfully discharge the duties of office. Following the oath, the roll is called in alphabetical order. Below is the text of the oath:

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, and that you will faithfully discharge the duties of the office to which you have just been elected to the best of your ability, so help you God?

Election of Officers

Following the second roll call, the secretary of state calls for nominations for speaker of the House. Upon election by a majority of all members present and voting, the speaker takes the chair.

Minnesota law provides that members elect the following House officers: chief clerk, first and second assistant clerk, index clerk, chief sergeant-at-arms, assistant sergeants-at-arms, chaplain, postmaster and assistant postmaster, who, following their election, are sworn in.

The First Day

Organizational resolutions and announcements by the speaker are next on the agenda.

Selection of Permanent Desks

The selection of permanent desks is done by resolution under which the speaker directs each caucus leader to assign permanent desks to their members for the session.

Committees

Committees meet on a regular basis, according to a weekly schedule, at least once or twice a week. The first few committee meetings bring members up to date on issues to be addressed in that particular committee.

The committee system is an extremely important part of the legislative process. In the early part of the legislative session, almost all of a legislator's work is done in committee, where a bill's fate is often decided.

After the first month of session, the committee load gets heavier as more bills are introduced and referred to committees. By the last month of the session, most committees have completed their work and the focus shifts more to floor action and conference committees.

Because there are usually more than 3,000 bills introduced each biennium, legislators serve on a limited number of committees. Most serve on three or four, which allows members to focus on just a few areas of public policy.

A Legislative Day

Minnesota law defines a legislative day as one on which either the House or Senate is in session. A legislative day begins at 7 a.m. and continues until 7 a.m. the following calendar day.

Daily Sessions

The convening time for daily sessions is set by the House rules.

The guidelines for procedure of the House session come from six sources — the Minnesota Constitution, the Permanent Rules of the House, the joint rules of the Senate and House, custom and usage, Minnesota Statutes and Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure. The most complete outline of House procedures is contained in the Permanent Rules of the House, which includes the order of daily business, guidelines for debate and decorum, precedence of motions and voting procedures. Copies of the rules are provided to each member after their final adoption and are available from the Chief Clerk's Office.



Legislative Procedure

The Process

Every November in even-numbered years, approximately 2 million Minnesotans go to the polls to select peers to represent them in the Minnesota Legislature.

The new Legislature includes people from all walks of life and professions. The diverse group of men and women work together to set public policy.

Ideas

Ideas for new laws and changes in existing law come from many sources. Legislators receive and evaluate thousands of facts, statistics and expressions of opinion in the course of a two-year session.

Some legislators receive ideas for new laws by sampling grass roots opinion and hearing constituents' suggestions during campaigns or through calls and e-mails. Special interest groups and groups with special needs and problems make their ideas known as well. A significant number of proposals come from within the government itself.

The governor presents ideas and priorities in messages to the Legislature. The other constitutional offices, state departments and agencies, local, regional and county units, and legislative committees and study commissions all suggest new laws.

The fate of each idea is determined by the members who guide its journey through the Legislature, and by the legislators who judge its merits at each stage of consideration.

Types of Legislation

The Legislature deals with two major types of legislation: bills and resolutions. The Legislature is also responsible for proposing constitutional amendments to the people, either by bill or resolution.

Bills

Bills are for the purpose of making new laws, or amending or repealing existing statutes and laws. House files (HFs) and Senate files (SFs) are introduced in their respective bodies. All bills have a title, enacting clause and body.

The title tells what the bill is amending, repealing or creating and provides references to the Minnesota statutes or laws that would be affected.

The enacting clause of the bill appears after the title and reads as follows: "BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA."

The body of the bill is the proposal itself, which if enacted, would amend or repeal existing laws or statutes or create new ones.

Committee proposals, or bills, may be composed of numerous smaller bills that have been under consideration in the committee, or it may be a number of ideas, which have been brought to the committee's attention through public hearings and constituent mail. The committee bill's sponsor is the committee chair. Committee bills may be introduced and referred to another committee, but if no referral is made, the bill gets its first reading and is laid over one day. The next day, the committee bill receives its second reading and is placed on the General Register or the Consent Calendar, if recommended by the committee. A notation on a bill such as "Adams for the Committee on Agriculture" shows the bill is the product of an entire committee.

The words "by request" after the chief sponsor's signature indicate the bill is introduced at the request of someone, often a constituent, and it does not necessarily have the support of the sponsoring legislator.

Resolutions

Resolutions are formal actions that express intent on the part of one or both bodies, but are not codified into Minnesota statutes upon passage.

A House or Senate resolution is one that is acted upon by only one body and expresses the intent of the body.

A House or Senate concurrent resolution is one which originates in the House or Senate respectively, is acted upon, and sent to the other body for approval. These resolutions relate to the internal business of the Legislature and therefore are not submitted to the governor for action.

Resolutions memorializing the president, Congress or federal agencies are treated in the same manner as bills: they are given a House file (HF) or Senate file (SF) number, assigned to a committee and given three readings in each house. Resolutions of this type, if adopted by both houses, are official actions of the state and are enrolled and printed in the Session Laws of the State of Minnesota (informally called “Session Laws”) for the year in which they were passed, but not codified in the statutes.

Unnumbered resolutions are used when actions apply to a specific session and deal with internal operations of one house. Actions such as the allocation of stationery and stamps are usually proposed to the House in unnumbered resolutions.

A Joint Resolution is a decision by the Legislature on certain matters that can be decided without review or approval by the governor.

The Drafting Process

Anyone can draft a bill or resolution. But only a legislator can introduce a bill or resolution. There is a limit to the number of sponsors on a bill.

A member who wishes to have a bill drafted may bring that request to the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, to the House Research Department, or in some instances, to the member’s own caucus staff. When a member requests a draft, he or she may provide whatever information is convenient for the member. It may be simply the description of a problem or it may be a prepared draft of proposed new law, or it may be anything in between those extremes. Oral drafting requests are often sufficient, but supporting written material may be useful. Communication through an intermediary can cause delays, so a member may find it convenient to work personally with a drafter. Drafting is done by the research department or the revisor’s office without regard to party affiliation or member status. All drafting by these offices is done on a confidential basis.

Drafters are very conscious of the need to provide the member with what he or she wants and not to impose their own ideas on the work. They may ask questions to help with the drafting. Drafters, particularly those in the research offices, are always available to meet with constituents, interest groups and lobbyists. Face-to-face discussion is frequently helpful to assure that the member’s intentions are being carried out. The drafter will prepare as many preliminary drafts as the member finds useful. Depending upon the complexity of the proposed bill, drafting may take from one day to several weeks. After the bill is introduced, the drafter generally is available to prepare amendments or assist in any other useful way. House research staff members are assigned to staff legislative committees, and hence, are available for drafting amendments during committee deliberations. House Research Department staff also prepare bill summaries for the committees.

The House Research Department and the Office of the Revisor of Statutes circulate a list of staff members with committee assignments and drafting specialties at the beginning of the session.

Before introduction, each bill or resolution must be submitted to the Office of the Revisor of Statutes for final preparation. The revisor’s office serves both the House and the Senate and is responsible for the technical preparation of bills for introduction.

Companion Bill System

When a bill is drafted by the revisor’s office, the chief sponsor is given three copies of the bill with yellow covers for the Senate, and three copies with green covers for the House. This is called the “companion bill system.” Through the process, the chief sponsor in one body tries to find a member in the other body to be a chief sponsor and carry the bill in that body. This system allows the same identical bill, or idea, to be introduced and heard independently in each body.

Companion bills are identical when introduced, but they may change greatly as they work their way through the process. More than 90 percent of bills introduced in a session have companions in the other body.

Bill Introduction

Before a bill is introduced in the House, the speaker refers each bill and numbered resolution to one of the standing committees. The chief clerk then assigns each House file a number, which will identify it in its travels, much as a luggage tag might identify a suitcase even when the contents are rearranged, changed or replaced with new items.

The Senate has traditionally used a somewhat different path to introduction. Generally, bills and resolutions are given a number and assigned to a committee by the Senate president through the administrative procedures of the secretary of the Senate.

First Reading/Reporting

The state constitution requires that each bill be reported on three separate days in each body before votes for final passage can occur. These reports of the bill are called readings. A bill is given its first reading at the time it is introduced. Each reading is a signal that an action or series of actions have taken place. The constitution requires that a full day must pass between each reading, unless the constitutional rules and the rules of the body are suspended by a two-thirds vote of the body.

The Committee

The committee is the heart of the legislative process. It is where the most detailed work of the Legislature takes place.

It is the job of each committee to hold public hearings on bills, to put each bill it hears into its best form and to recommend to the full body only those bills that the committee feels merit further consideration.

Many bills affect several aspects of life in Minnesota. Therefore,

more than one committee may study it before the bill returns to the House or Senate floor.

When a bill is introduced and referred to committee, copies are made available to legislators and the public.

The first time a bill can be amended (changed) or killed (voted down, tabled or ignored) is in committee.

The committee has a number of choices for action. It may:

- recommend that a bill pass as introduced (with its original wording);
- amend the bill to change the wording, add or remove provisions, or design alternative language that may clarify, weaken, or strengthen a bill, and return it to the floor;
- adopt a “delete everything” amendment, which, in effect, creates a new bill, because everything after the enacting clause is stricken and replaced with new language;*
- combine two or more bills on the same subject into a single bill, retaining one bill’s House file number;
- send detailed, complex or controversial bills to a subcommittee which can hear public testimony, call in experts, suggest amendments, report back to the full committee, ignore a bill, table it or vote it down;
- recommend that a bill pass, with or without amendments, and that it be sent to another committee for further study;
- return the bill to the full House without a recommendation on whether it should pass;
- write a committee bill based on the suggestions of one or more regular bills; or
- kill a bill by voting it down, tabling it, delaying action or ignoring it by refusing to give the bill a hearing.

The chief sponsor is the spokesperson for the bill in committee.

There may be a number of questions from committee members, so the chief sponsor must have a good understanding of the bill and sometimes the assistance of an expert. It should be noted that House staff — the committee administrator, committee legislative assistant and analysts from House Research and Fiscal Analysis departments — assist committees by explaining and helping members understand the bill.

The chief sponsor cannot rely on eloquence to steer a bill safely through the committee. The most effective presentation is a well-organized, concise recitation of the most appropriate information, backed up by facts and statistics. Bill summaries are often prepared with staff aid. Staff may also be asked to speak or comment in committee.

Opponents and proponents of a measure may testify before the committee. Any citizen may express his or her views at these hearings. The chief sponsor can invite witnesses to speak for the bill. Opponents may also organize interested people to testify. All testifiers are subject to questioning by the committee.

When time is limited, the committee chair may create a list of people who have asked to speak and divide the time among the different points of view so a sampling of public opinion is heard.

After hearing from the sponsor and others who wish to speak, committee members try to reach a decision. They must give careful scrutiny to the bills heard in committee and use their

best judgment when weighing public testimony in attempting to make changes or retain original wording and in making recommendations on measures.

Since no legislator can study every bill that is introduced, a lawmaker relies on the committee process and the hard work and careful consideration of colleagues to determine which bills are most important, and in what form they will be taken up on the floor.

No committee hears every bill referred to it. Committee chairs schedule hearings on a bill after a request from the chief sponsor has been received. During most legislative sessions, less than 10 percent of the bills introduced become law and the majority of the proposals are eliminated in committee. To speak of percentages can be somewhat misleading because the total includes companion bills, bills dealing with several aspects of the same problem, which may be combined into a single measure, and similar bills introduced by different sponsors in the same house.

Non-controversial bills may pass in minutes. Some measures require weeks or months of committee and subcommittee study before a final recommendation is made.

Bills are seldom judged strictly on partisan lines. Coalitions form and shift, and a legislator often finds that an ally on one matter is a tough opponent on another, regardless of party affiliation.

Before a vote is taken, the chief sponsor may survey committee members by checking their positions, answering technical questions and assessing the chance for an affirmative committee decision. Most of the lobbying on a bill involves educating committee members.

Lobbyists and citizens on all sides of a question contact committee members, provide information and arguments to back up their points of view, and supply background data on their concerns.

Proponents and opponents may discuss compromises that will satisfy most members, or the sponsor may poll individual committee members on amendments to help move the bill through committee.

Votes in committee are by voice, unless a roll call is requested.

A majority of those present and voting, assuming a quorum, is needed to amend a bill or change its status within the legislative process. Any motion which results in a tie vote is defeated. A defeated motion may be reconsidered by any member of the committee as long as the matter remains in possession of the committee. (Members of the committee who do not support a committee action on a bill can submit a minority report which is taken up on the floor of the House before the report of the majority of the committee.)

If the committee cannot reach agreement, or does not hold hearings on a bill, the bill has ended its journey. (While it is technically possible to bring a bill to the full House without committee approval, this procedure is not frequently attempted, and is even less frequently successful.) Some bills are revived as amendments to other bills elsewhere in the process.

* This type of amendment is used when there are substantial changes in a bill, making page and line number amendments cumbersome and unclear. Generally, it should be used only when absolutely necessary. Assistance in preparing a “delete everything” amendment is available through the House Research Department or the revisor’s office.

Second Reading

Committee actions are recorded in the committee report compiled by the committee's legislative assistant, approved and signed by the chair, and sent to the House floor for re-referral to another committee or adoption and second reading. Reports of committees are recommendations only until the report is adopted by a majority vote on the floor. Approval is normally routine. The committee report on a bill that does not recommend re-referral to another committee includes a recommendation for placement of that bill on the Consent Calendar or the General Register.

Consent Calendar

Committees can recommend that non-controversial bills be placed on the Consent Calendar (printed on a pink sheet) in the House. These bills bypass the General Register and are eligible for debate and possible amendment, third reading and final passage in one day. They usually pass with little or no debate. (Ten representatives can object to Consent Calendar placement, automatically sending the bill to the General Register.) The Consent Calendar is taken up early in the daily session.

General Register

Bills not placed on the Consent Calendar are placed on a list called the General Register (printed on a white sheet), which is like a parking lot where bills wait to be taken up by the full House. Bills are placed on the General Register in the order they receive a second reading.

Calendar for the Day

The Calendar for the Day (printed on a yellow sheet) is a list of bills that may be considered by the House that day.

Bills are placed on the Calendar for the Day for consideration by the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration, which designates bills from the General Register. The rules committee is required to set the list by 5 p.m. on the day before the bills are to be considered by the full House, but that requirement is lifted late in the legislative session.

The House must consider each bill on the Calendar for the Day in the order determined by the presiding officer. Bills on the Calendar for the Day are eligible for debate and possible amendment.

There also is another method of getting a bill on the Calendar for the Day. If a bill sits on the General Register for more than 10 legislative days, a member can make a motion to place the bill on the calendar. This motion requires a majority vote of the whole House (68 votes) for adoption.

Fiscal Calendar

Any bill related to finances, taxes or raising revenue that has had a second reading and is usually on the General Register can be considered by the House at the request of the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee or the House Taxes Committee. Such bills are placed on the Fiscal Calendar (printed on

a green sheet), and from there, the bills are eligible for debate and possible amendment.

A chair is required to announce his or her intention to place a bill on the Fiscal Calendar by 5 p.m. on the day before the bill is to be considered by the full House, but that requirement is lifted late in the legislative session.

Third Reading and Final Passage

Once all proposed amendments have been dealt with, the bill is given its third reading. The bill cannot be further amended without unanimous consent.

At this point, controversial bills may be debated at length, but usually the chief sponsor briefly outlines the bill and stands for questions and a brief discussion. Unless there is controversy, the full House proceeds to a roll call vote.

All votes on final passage are recorded by name in the official record, the Journal of the House.

A majority vote of all elected members — not just a majority of those present — is required. In the House, at least 68 votes are needed; in the Senate, at least 34 votes.

Authorization of bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the state requires a three-fifths majority of all members elected. In the House, at least 81 votes are needed; in the Senate, at least 41 votes.

Preliminary Approval

Passage in one body of the Legislature marks the halfway point in a bill's legislative journey. A bill must pass both the House and Senate in identical form before it can become law. When one body of the Legislature passes a bill, it is transmitted by message (conveyed through an administrative procedure) to the other body, where it is again subject to the same steps outlined above.

There are several ways to speed up consideration in the other house. Chief sponsors of companion bills can attempt to coordinate House and Senate action. The first bill to win final approval is transmitted to the other house. For example, if the Senate version of a bill passes first, the Senate file is transmitted to the House.

If the House companion bill is still in a House committee, the Senate bill will be referred to the House committee. The committee will then take up for consideration the Senate bill that was referred to the committee. Any subsequent committee action will be on the Senate bill, although the committee can (and often does), delete the Senate language and insert the House language.

Comparisons/Substitutions

If the House companion is awaiting floor action on one of the agenda lists, the two bills are "referred for comparison" and they are read against each other and the differences are reported. This work is done in the name of the chief clerk by the revisor of statutes. Comparison reports are provided to the chief sponsor, the majority and minority leaders, and their assistant leaders, and one copy is filed at the House Desk. The copy filed at the

desk is available for inspection by any member of the House.

The chief clerk reports whether the bills were found to be identical or different. If the bills are identical, the Senate bill will be substituted (take the place of the House companion) in a motion by the chief sponsor. The House bill is then indefinitely postponed by the same motion. If the bills are found to be different, the rules must be suspended to substitute the Senate bill with its differences for the House bill.

In either case, once the substitution is made, the House bill is indefinitely postponed.

In the House, the language of the bill that already has passed the Senate automatically takes the place of the language that was recommended by the House committee. If the chief sponsor wants to go back to the House language, he or she makes a motion to amend the bill when it comes up for action on the House floor and to substitute the House language for the language passed by the Senate.

In the Senate, the procedure is different. When a House bill is substituted for a Senate bill on the Senate floor, the Senate automatically places the Senate language back into the bill.

The Senate sponsor must propose an amendment if he or she wishes to use the House language.

Amended Bills

The House and Senate often pass the same bill in different versions.

When one house amends a bill that was approved by the other body, it sends the bill back to its house of origin. The house of origin must either, by motion, accept all of the changes made by the other house and vote to repass the bill, or refuse to accept them and by motion, send the bill to a conference committee to work out a compromise.

Concurrences

When the amended bill returns to the house of origin, a copy of the amendments from the other body are given to the sponsor. One option the sponsor has is to concur with the amendments. Many times amendments in the other body are minor, non-controversial or simply technical in nature. Sometimes the bill has left the house of origin with an amendment that the sponsor did not want on, and it may have been taken off by the other body. And sometimes the bill is more to the sponsor's liking as it passed in the other body.

The motion to concur is made by the sponsor and must be approved by the body. Any member can make a motion to refuse to concur with the other body's amendments, and to appoint a conference committee to work out the differences. The motion to refuse to concur and to go to conference would be taken up first.

Assuming that the motion to concur prevailed, the bill would be given a third reading, as amended by the Senate, and the bill would be up for repassage.

Conference Committee

When either the House or Senate refuses to accept the version of a bill as amended by the other body, a motion is made to refuse to concur and send the bill to a conference committee, where three or five members from each body are to negotiate a compromise.

In the House, the members are appointed by the speaker and in the Senate by the subcommittee on committees led by the majority caucus.

Conferees are selected to uphold the position of their respective houses, but they have some latitude in trying to reach a compromise.

A bill's chance of passing usually increases as it moves through each step of the journey. But it may have rough going in conference committee. First, the bill is in conference committee because strong differences kept the two bodies from agreeing on the same version. Secondly, most conference committees work in the closing days of session, under great time pressure. Usually, time permitting, each side makes some compromises and the final product incorporates elements from each body's position.

House research and/or committee staff, acting as advisors to the conferees, draft language for the conferees. The revisor of statutes, however, prepares the conference committee report itself. Any member of a conference committee may request the drafting of all or part of a conference committee report.

When a majority of the conferees of each body have signed the report, it is returned to the revisor who makes final checks, and returns it to the house of origin for action.

Like regular committees, these committees are staffed by House and Senate employees who keep the revisor informed on the progress of the conference committee. Conference committees are, in fact, joint meetings of separate committees; consequently, a majority vote of each committee is required to take any action. If the conference committee votes to adopt the report, the measure is then presented to the body. This compromise bill cannot be amended. Each body can accept the report, give the bill its third reading as amended by conference and repass the bill, or it can refuse to accept the report and send it back to conference. As a part of the motion to refuse to adopt the report of the conference committee, the sponsor of the motion can request that a new conference committee be appointed to work out the differences.

When both houses repass a bill as amended by conference committee, it is enrolled by the revisor and transmitted to the governor for consideration.

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Minnesota

Idea

1 A bill is an idea for a new law or an idea to change an old law. Anyone can suggest an idea for a bill — an individual, consumer group, professional association, government agency, or the governor. Most often, however, ideas come from legislators, the only ones who can begin to move an idea through the process. There are 134 House members and 67 senators.

Legal form

2 The Office of the Revisor of Statutes and staff from other legislative offices work with legislators in putting the idea for a new law into proper legal form. The revisor's office is responsible for assuring that the proposal's form complies with the rules of both bodies before the bill can be introduced into the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate.

Authors

3 Each bill must have a legislator to sponsor and introduce it in the Legislature. That legislator is the chief sponsor whose name appears on the bill along with the bill's file number to identify it as it moves through the legislative process. There may be up to 34 co-sponsors from the House and four from the Senate. Their names also appear on the bill.

Introduction

4 The chief House sponsor of the bill introduces it in the House; the chief Senate sponsor introduces it in the Senate. Identical bills introduced in each body are called *companion* bills. The bill introduction is called the *first reading*. The presiding officer of the House then refers it to an appropriate House committee for discussion; the same thing happens in the Senate.

Committee

5 The bill is discussed in one or more committees depending upon the subject matter. After discussion, committee members recommend action — approval or disapproval — to the full House and full Senate. The House committee then sends a report to the House about its action on the bill; the Senate committee does likewise in the Senate.

Floor

6 After the full House or Senate accepts the committee report, the bill has its *second reading* and is placed on the House agenda called the General Register or the Senate agenda called General Orders. (A committee can recommend that non-controversial bills bypass the General Register or General Orders and go onto the Consent Calendar, where bills usually pass without debate.) After this point, House and Senate procedures differ slightly.

General Register

7 In the House, the General Register serves as a parking lot where bills await action by the full body. Bills chosen to appear on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar are drawn from the General Register.

In the Senate, a different procedure is used. Bills are listed on the General Orders agenda. Senate members, acting as the "committee of the whole," have a chance to debate the issue and offer amendments on the bill. Afterwards, they vote to recommend: passage of the bill, progress (delay action), or further committee action. And sometimes they recommend that a bill not pass. From here, the bill is placed on the Calendar.

Calendar for the Day

8 In the House, the Calendar for the Day is a list of bills the House Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration has designated for the full House to vote on. Members can vote to amend the bill, and after amendments are dispensed with, the bill is given its *third reading* before the vote of the full body is taken. The House also has a Fiscal Calendar, on which the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee or House Taxes Committee can call up for consideration any tax or finance bill that has had a second reading. The bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

In the Senate, bills approved by the "committee of the whole" are placed on the Calendar. At this point, the bill has its *third reading*, after which time the bill cannot be amended unless the entire body agrees to it. Toward the end of the session, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration designates bills from the General Orders calendar to receive priority consideration. These Special Orders bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

A bill needs 68 votes to pass the House and 34 votes to pass the Senate. If the House and Senate each pass the same version of the bill, it goes to the governor for a signature.

Conference

9 If the House and Senate versions of the bill are different, they go to a conference committee. In the House, the speaker appoints three or five representatives, and in the Senate, the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration selects the same number of senators to form the committee. The committee meets to work out differences in the two bills and to reach a compromise.

Floor

10 The conference committee's compromise bill then goes back to the House and the Senate for another vote. If both bodies pass the bill in this form, it is sent to the governor for his or her approval or disapproval. (If one or both bodies reject the report, it goes back to the conference committee for further consideration.)

Governor

11 Once the governor has the bill, he or she may: sign it, and the bill becomes law; veto it within three days; or allow it to become law by not signing it. During session, the House and Senate can override a governor's veto. This requires a two-thirds vote in the House (90 votes) and Senate (45 votes). The governor also may "line-item veto" parts of a money bill, or "pocket veto" a bill passed during the last three days of the session by not signing it within 14 days after final adjournment.



Tax and Spending Bills

Development

Development of the key taxing and spending bills follows a track somewhat different from that followed for development of most other bills.

Budget Resolution

Each biennium, the House Ways and Means Committee discusses the state's budget situation and passes a budget resolution. The committee waits until after the state releases its February budget forecast to discuss the resolution. This resolution sets, as a single amount, the maximum limitation on general fund expenditures, especially as they relate to the Legislature's taxing and appropriating powers, for the fiscal biennium. This resolution must be approved by the full House before becoming effective.

Collecting Money: Omnibus Tax Bill

The Omnibus Tax Bill, which must originate in the House, represents a comprehensive summation of the House Taxes Committee's activities during the legislative session. It is the product of many formal hearings and informal deliberations among legislative leaders, the governor's office and others.

Work begins on several fronts. The full committee usually begins work on personal and corporate income tax matters. When necessary, the committee chair can appoint members to serve on subcommittees to review specific tax issues. Since the committee has responsibility for the revenue side of the state budget, the usual starting point is an evaluation of revenues being raised by the current tax structure, the revenue items in the governor's proposed biennial budget, the effects of tax proposals on the budget and the revenue targets listed in the budget resolution.

With the budget resolution targets in mind, the committee examines the state's fiscal outlook, using revenue forecasts provided by the Department of Finance. The full committee and subcommittees hold hearings on proposals, which may be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.

The full committee then holds final hearings to complete work on the bill. Separate bills referred or re-referred to the committee

and acted upon may also be incorporated into the omnibus bill.

On the House floor, the committee chair is the chief spokesperson for the omnibus bill. Other amendments may be considered here. The bill usually then moves to the conference committee, where it takes final shape.

Spending Money: Appropriations Bills

In the past, the Minnesota Legislature has passed nine major operating budget bills, in addition to the omnibus tax and capital investment bills.

However, due to the differing structure of committees between the House and the Senate, leaders have not determined specifically how many bills will be sent jointly to the governor.

In the House, finance committees produce appropriations bills. The House rules dictate that omnibus bills emerging from finance committees cannot be combined with those from other committees. However, joint rules for the bodies will govern the process.

All bills containing items of appropriation are referred to the House Ways and Means Committee before they can be brought before the full House.

Each finance committee usually begins by hearing from each department, agency and system contained in its section of the budget. They hear testimony by officials and other individuals concerning budget requests and other matters relating to their operations. The next phase is the allocation of money. During these public hearings, motions are made by the committee members to allocate funding for each department or agency. As they are approved, they become part of the panel's omnibus appropriations bill.

Bills that may have fiscal implications to particular areas of state government are also referred to the finance committees. A fiscal note may be requested on those bills that may have a financial impact on the state budget. House rules dictate that the total of all bills with a fiscal impact — not just the omnibus bill — will be counted against that committee's budget target.

After assembled by the finance committees, omnibus bills are considered by the House Ways and Means Committee. When the bills are taken up on the House floor, the committee chair

defends the bill prepared by his or her committee. After the House passes the bills, they are sent to the Senate. Differences in the House and Senate versions are resolved by a conference committee.

When the governor receives an omnibus appropriations bill, he or she can sign it, let it become law without a signature, line-

item veto spending provisions or veto the bill entirely. Unless otherwise specified, appropriations are not effective until the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1. In the second year of the biennium, the House Ways and Means Committee considers adjustments that may need to be made in the state budget as well as new bills that may have financial implications.



The Governor's Role

The Governor

A bill that has passed both legislative bodies in identical form is enrolled (compared with all records to ensure final agreement to one single version of House and Senate bills and carefully and accurately copied into a presentation format). The enrolled copy is signed by both presiding officers and by the chief clerk of the House and the secretary of the Senate and presented to the governor. During the session, it is the date of the revisor's presentation of the bill to the governor, not the date of final passage, which starts the clock running for deadlines for the governor's action on the bill.

The governor has several options:

- The governor may sign a bill and it becomes law.
- When the Legislature is in session, a bill becomes law without the governor's signature if he or she does not return it to the house of origin with a statement of objections within three days after receiving it.
- If the governor objects to a bill, he or she can veto it and send a message to the Legislature explaining the actions. The governor can also line-item veto specific items of appropriation in an appropriations bill and allow the remainder to become law. A two-thirds vote in each house is needed to override a veto (90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate).
- A bill vetoed after the Legislature is adjourned at the end of an odd-numbered year is returned to its house of origin and tabled. The vetoed bill may be taken up after the interim recess when the Legislature reconvenes.
- Special rules apply to bills passed during the last three days before final adjournment in the even-numbered year. The Legislature has three extra days to send the enrolled bill to the governor. The governor then has 14 calendar days following final adjournment to make a decision on a measure. This period includes a three-day period immediately following the session, during which the bill might not have been presented yet. During this period, the governor must sign all bills he or she wishes to become law.

Any bill not signed and deposited with the secretary of state within the 14-day period does not become law. Sometimes, late

in the session, the governor will intentionally delay a veto until it is too late for the Legislature to override the action. Called a pocket veto, this automatically kills the bill.

The attorney general routinely reviews all bills passed by the Legislature and advises the governor as to the constitutionality of each measure.

The New Law

To be "enacted," a bill must pass the Legislature, be signed by the governor or repassed over the governor's veto, and be filed with the secretary of state, whose office is the permanent custodian of official state documents.

Acts, except those containing appropriations, take effect on Aug. 1 following enactment unless another date is specified in the act itself. Most appropriations acts take effect on July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year.

Special Sessions

The governor may call the Legislature into special session during the temporary adjournment between the first and second year of a legislative biennium, or after final adjournment, to take emergency action or to act on important issues left undecided at the close of a regular session.

The governor can suggest the agenda for the session but cannot dictate the measures to be considered or the length of the special session.

A special session is a separate legislative session. It is not a continuation of a regular session. Officers elected for the regular session serve in the special session, and the rules adopted for the regular session remain in effect, unless the body provides otherwise.

A special session has its own records, which may be published separately or in conjunction with the records of the preceding regular session.

Any legislation to be considered must follow the same steps that would be required in a regular session.



After the Session

Interim

Adjournment of the Legislature at the end of the first year of a biennial session does not mean the end of the road for a bill.

Bills that are in committee at the end of the first annual session may be heard during the interim recess. Bills on the Consent Calendar or General Register are returned to the standing committee last acting on the bill. Bills in conference committees and bills that have been vetoed after adjournment are returned to their house of origin, where they are tabled and members of the conference committee are discharged. They may be taken from the table in the second year's regular session and acted upon.

Activities

The interim recess also is an opportunity for committees and individual legislators to have meetings in communities throughout the state.

Bill sponsors can use the time to educate fellow legislators and the public about their pending bills and to build support.

Wide-ranging compromises are sometimes reached during interim recess hearings and during the second year of the biennial session.

When the Legislature adjourns sine die at the end of the even-numbered year, all bills which have not received final approval in identical form by both bodies do not become law and are considered dead.

Some ideas are introduced in every session for a number of years before they win final approval and receive the governor's signature.



Publications

Member-Oriented Publications

Minnesota Statutes

Permanent and general laws, which apply to all citizens, are published in bound volumes called Minnesota Statutes. Included are laws which apply to: the Legislature; the executive branch, including state departments; the judiciary and courts; tax policy; public safety and police authority; towns, cities and counties; commerce and trade; private property and private rights; civil injuries and remedies; and crimes against people and property and their penalties. In this volume, laws are organized according to subject matter.

A new set of statutes is printed every two years. Pocket supplements containing changes in the new statutes are printed following the first year of the biennium.

At the beginning of the session each member is supplied with an up-to-date set of Minnesota Statutes.

Session Laws of Minnesota

Session Laws are published as a numerical listing of the text of all bills that became law during a legislative session, including appropriations bills, local and temporary bills, proposed constitutional amendments and joint resolutions. Session Laws also is known as Laws of Minnesota and Session Laws of the State of Minnesota.

Daily Journal

The daily journals, compiled by the chief clerk of the House and the secretary of the Senate, are the official legal records of legislative proceedings.

The state constitution requires that the journal contain a record of all roll call votes. The journal also records attendance, introductions, committee reports and reports of conference committees. The journals contain the text of official communications between the two houses, messages from the governor and protests filed by members. The text of all amendments and motions proposed to the body are included with the actions taken upon them, but no official record is kept of the comments made in debate and discussion. However, sessions are audio taped and filed with the Legislative Reference Library.

Minnesota is a journal entry state, which means that the journal is the final authority used by the courts concerning actions of the Legislature and in determining legislative intent. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the journal be complete and accurate.

The journal is printed at the end of each day's session, and copies are available online about two to three hours after daily adjournment. Printed copies of daily journals are available from the Chief Clerk's Office in the Capitol.

Permanent Journals

Each year the daily journals are proofread, corrected, indexed and certified for publication by the chief clerk and the secretary of the Senate. Members, upon request, receive a bound copy of the permanent Journal of the House. Bound copies of the permanent Journal of the Senate also are available to members.

Bills

Printed copies of all bills pending in the House are available from the Chief Clerk's Office, 211 State Capitol.

Members are provided printed copies of bills to study at the time they are taken up by the committee.

Each member is provided a laptop computer so that the House Web site can be accessed on the House floor to view the text of all bills and amendments that are up for debate.

Official Agenda

The House official agenda for each legislative day is prepared by the chief clerk, under the direction of the speaker. The General Register, Consent Calendar, Fiscal Calendar and Calendar for the Day, announced in advance, are placed on members' chamber desks, and are made available on the House Web site prior to each daily session.

Constituent-Oriented Publications

The nonpartisan staff of House Public Information Services provides informational and educational publications and services to help residents stay connected with the Legislature.

Members may request quantities of publications for distribution to Capitol visitors or for special events and meetings.

Limited quantities of publications are available to the public upon request. The office is located at 175 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Phone numbers are 651-296-2146 or 800-657-3550 or Minnesota Relay service at 711 or 800-627-3529 (TTY). Most published documents are downloadable at www.house.leg.state.mn/hinfo/publications.htm.

Documents published by the office can be made available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities.

Listed here is a sampling of available constituent-oriented publications.

Session Coverage

- *Session Weekly* — an award-winning nonpartisan newsmagazine published once a week during session. It reports on House and committee action, lists all bill introductions, tracks bill action and features other information related to the legislative process. It is available in hardcopy and online.
- *Session Daily* — an online news service updated every day during session and when news from the House warrants. Subscribers to this service receive an e-mail alert when news items have been posted.
- *New Laws* — a Web-available resource prepared at the end of each session that summarizes and indexes all bills that became law during the session.
- *Seating Arrangement* — a fold-out map with photos to identify the members and their seats in the House and the Senate chambers. Key staff at the front desks in the House and Senate chambers are also included.

Directories

- *Election Directory* — an unofficial listing (published immediately after Election Day) of the newly elected legislative bodies. It includes members' photos, district numbers, party designation, some biographical information, a demographic look at the newly elected House and Senate, and name pronunciation guides.
- *Members Directory* — known as the "green book," it is published early in the first year of the biennium. It includes biographical information and committee assignments for all 201 legislators. It also includes contact information for committees and key offices in each of the two legislative bodies.
- *Official Directory of the Minnesota Legislature* — known as the "red book," this directory includes the same information as the Members Directory with any necessary updates. It also contains permanent House and Senate staff information, as well as the House and Senate rules and statutory and constitutional provisions relating to the Legislature. It is available near the middle of the first year of each biennium.

- *2007-2008 Legislative Information* — printed during the second year of the biennium, it contains much of the information found in the "green book," with any updates.

Educational Materials

- *Minnesota State Government Series* — a packet of nine fact sheets on the state and its government. They are: 1) State Profile; 2) State Symbols; 3) State Counties; 4) State Lawmakers; 5) State Legislative Information; 6) State Law Process; 7) U.S. Congress; 8) Minnesota Constitution; and 9) Three Branches of Minnesota State Government.
- *Capitol Steps: How Six Bills Became Law* — a booklet that follows six laws as they made their way through the legislative process. It explains both simple and complicated concepts ranging from where the idea for a law comes from to the Legislature's power of overriding a governor's veto. The book is written for ages 11 and older.
- *Restoration* — a booklet of photos and text describing the 1989-90 renovation of the House chamber.

Other Publications

The Minnesota Legislative Manual, more commonly known as the "blue book," is prepared and published by the Office of the Secretary of State about six months after the beginning of the new legislative session.

This book contains a brief history of the state, the state constitution, the rules of the House and Senate, a photographic directory of the Legislature, maps of legislative districts, directories of the executive and judicial branches of state government, election results and other information regarding state government.

The Minnesota Guidebook to State Agency Services is published by the Department of Administration. It includes information about state agencies and the services they provide to the public and to other agencies and units of government. Copies are available from Minnesota's Bookstore, 660 Olive St., St. Paul, MN 55155-2028.

Minnesota House of Representatives Legislative Information Manual is prepared by House Public Information Services. The manual is a general reference and procedural booklet for House members and staff. It describes the roles of the three branches of government, including each department within the House. It also gives a step-by-step description of how a legislative session typically unfolds.

The Court Information Office of the Minnesota Judicial Branch publishes a pamphlet, "A Consumer Guide to the Minnesota Judicial Branch," which describes the purpose and procedures of the Minnesota court system.

The Legislative Reference Library, 600 State Office Building, is a highly specialized information resource and can obtain virtually any publication requested by members or staff.



Legislative Offices

The House employs professionals to work behind the scenes in both helping lawmakers write and offer legislation, and informing the public about proposals, laws and other facets of state government. Offices in the House are divided into two main categories: partisan and nonpartisan. Nonpartisan offices are not aligned with any political party and are charged with presenting information and services without regard to political affiliation. Often they provide the same services to both political caucuses. Partisan offices are affiliated with a political party and are designed to serve the specific members of those parties in the House. There are also key nonpartisan joint offices that serve both the House and the Senate.

Nonpartisan Offices

Chief Clerk's Office

651-296-2314; Fax: 651-296-1326
211 State Capitol
www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/cco.htm
Al Mathiowetz — Chief Clerk

The Chief Clerk's Office is a service and resource center of information for members of the House, staff and the public. The office provides assistance, advice and information on procedural and parliamentary matters, and is responsible for the filing, printing and distributing of legal and other records and documents. Technical assistance and maintenance of House electrical and electronic systems also is provided. A managed House Web site offers public access to daily documents.

House Desk

The area immediately below the speaker's rostrum in the House Chamber is commonly known as the House Desk. It is the primary role of the House Desk staff to ensure that House business is carried out smoothly and in accordance with the state constitution, the Permanent Rules of the House, and all other laws and rules which relate to legislative operations and enactment of laws. House Desk staff organizes the orders of business, administers and records amendments, prepares mo-

tions, records roll calls, document official actions on original bill covers, answers parliamentary questions, offers advice regarding legislative procedure, and compiles and edits the Journal of the House.

Third Floor Office

The Third Floor Office assists the House Desk staff with the production of all agendas, calendars, orders of business and the compilation of daily and permanent journals. It also oversees the duplication of amendments, concurrences, conference committee reports, noncontroversial motions, resolutions, introductions, committee reports and other documents for floor use. In addition, the Third Floor staff prepares messages for the Senate and governor as directed by House Desk staff.

Front Office

This office primarily works with the public. It organizes files and distributes printed bills under consideration by the House, calendars, journals, chapters, legislative resource books and other documents to the public, legislators and staff. In addition, the Front Office staff prepares an index of printed page numbers for House bills and Senate bills and an identical bill list on House files. At the end of the session, this office produces a bill rider list and compiles a listing of all new laws in numerical order by chapter number, House file number and Senate file number.

Index Department

The Index Department is established by the Permanent Rules of the House. Staff members write short and long descriptions of all bills under consideration by the House. The bills are listed under appropriate topic areas. The Index Department records all official House actions on legislation from the Journal of the House. The data is available on the Legislature's Web site (www.leg.mn) to help the public, staff and lawmakers track legislation. In addition, the Index Department compiles and maintains computer-generated indexes by topic, author, companion bill and statutory reference. A conference committee report also is produced. After the session ends, a "Session Statistics" report is made available through the department.

For bill status inquiries, select reports or information on training and use of the House Index Information system, contact the department at 651-296-6646.

Information Technology

This office provides the planning and project management of House technology projects, the House computer network, member and staff computers and changes to House local area network. The office also provides evaluation of new technology options and performs the centralized backup of files on the House network.

Additionally, the office is responsible for the management of information technology and the development, design and maintenance of the House Web site.

Research Department

651-296-6753; Fax: 651-296-9887

600 State Office Building,

www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/hrd.htm

Patrick McCormack — Director

House Research Department is the research and legal services office of the Minnesota House of Representatives. The department serves the House of Representatives as a whole, without regard to party affiliation or legislative position. The staff does not advocate, endorse, promote or oppose legislation or legislative decisions.

The work of department focuses on helping members and committees develop and evaluate legislative policies and laws.

House Research has three missions:

- to help legislators and committees make informed legislative decisions by providing information and analysis that is credible, impartial and relevant to legislative decisions. Department staff gathers and summarizes information on programs and policies of the federal government, Minnesota and other states; analyzes federal and state policies and laws; conducts empirical research studies; and maintains computer programs used by the House to analyze public finance and other government programs. The department publishes the results for use by all legislators. Research is also done for committees, as part of the legislative process, and for individual legislators upon request;
- to help legislators and committees develop legislation that carries out their legislative decisions by providing expert and experienced help in developing and drafting legislation and in evaluating and understanding the effects of legislation. Department staff members analyze options, draft bills and amendments, summarize laws and bills, provide information and answer questions. This work is done for committees, as part of the legislative process, and for individual legislators on request; and
- to advise the House on legal matters arising from the conduct of House business. Attorneys in the department serve as legal counsel to the House as a government agency.

Fiscal Analysis

651-296-7176 Fax: 651-296-9709

373 State Office Building

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/fiscal/fahome.htm>

Bill Marx — Chief Fiscal Analyst

Fiscal analysts provide legislative support for the House finance, taxes and budget committees, as well as providing information to the Legislature on fiscal issues. The finance committees and divisions, House Taxes Committee, House Capital Investment Committee, and House Ways and Means Committee are all staffed by fiscal analysts who provide professional help to committee members making decisions on state finances.

Fiscal staff provides budget background information, analyzes spending and revenue proposals, tracks legislative decisions and drafts legislation to implement budget decisions. Fiscal analysts also respond to requests from members needing analyses or information on government finances. Publications providing background information on state finance issues are published by the fiscal staff.

Public Information Services

651-296-2146; Fax 651-297-8135

175 State Office Building

www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/hinfo.htm

Barry LaGrave — Director

House Public Information Services serves as the general information contact point for the House of Representatives. It provides credible and timely nonpartisan publications and services that inform the general public about the legislative process, and encourages public participation in the Minnesota Legislature.

Information and Outreach

The department handles general requests for information, such as helping constituents find and contact their representatives, filling audio, visual and publication requests and answering questions about the legislative process.

Publications

House Public Information Services publishes Session Weekly, an award-winning newsmagazine that is produced by a professional editorial staff and mailed out every Friday during session. It provides explanations of new legislation and in-depth coverage of the legislative process.

The office also publishes a variety of legislative directories and informational material on state government and the legislative process. Educational publications developed by this office are often used in classrooms. All department-produced printed materials are available on the Internet at www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/publications.htm.

Session Daily is an online news service updated every day during session and when news from the House warrants.

New Laws provides summaries of all bills passed by lawmakers and signed or vetoed by the governor during each legislative session.

Television

Staff provides access to the legislative process through television coverage of House meetings and educational and informational programming. It distributes services through a variety of methods.

Daily television programming is available, and live webcasts of floor sessions and select committee meetings can be accessed through the House Web site at www.house.mn. In addition, video coverage of all floor sessions and many House committees is archived and made available over the Internet.

Photography

The photographers provide official House photographs, candid shots and photographs of members with constituents who come to the State Capitol. Photographers visually document House floor sessions and committee hearings, accept assignments from both political caucuses and provide images for House directories and publications.

Budget and Accounting

651-296-3305; Fax: 651-296-4372

45 State Office Building

Paul Schweizer — Controller

Finance, Payroll and Expense Reimbursement

The House Budget and Accounting Office is responsible for all financial functions of the House, including member and staff payroll, member and staff expense reimbursements, vendor payments, contracts, accounting, budgeting and purchase approval. Policies regarding these services can be found in the Administrative Services tab on the House intranet site: www.house.mn/intranet.

Human Resources

651-297-8200

185 State Office Building

Kelly Knight — Director

House Human Resources provides information on the state health and dental insurance plans for employees and their dependents; retirement; deferred compensation; pre-tax medical and dependent reimbursement accounts; employee, spouse and child life insurance; and short- and long-term disability insurance. Additions or changes to current coverage are also processed here.

Benefits and other employment information is also available in the Administrative Services section of the House Intranet Site. Job opportunities are posted outside this office (as well as on the House Web site). Information is also available on tuition reimbursement, employee assistance, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, sexual harassment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and employee training and development. Employment verification requests are processed here.

Partisan Offices

Each caucus has partisan staff to fill key roles.

DFL, Republican Caucus Staff

Both political parties have partisan caucus staff to assist with scheduling, research, media relations, constituent requests, information systems and word processing.

Leadership Staff

A select few staff members are considered leadership staff. They assist in caucus and House management and planning, staff coordination, overall staff support services and act as political advisers. Some may also assist in scheduling House floor sessions and overseeing the flow of bills on the House floor.

Legislative Assistants

Most members share the services of a legislative assistant with one or two other members. Duties include scheduling, handling constituent inquiries and coordinating the daily activities of the members.

Research

The research departments assist members and staff in developing and interpreting public policy by providing information which serves both the political and policy analysis needs of the members and staff. Research assists in the inception, development, drafting, presentation and summarizing of bills, amendments and other legislation.

Media

The media departments help members communicate with their local press. Writing services include: press releases, news columns, letters to the editor, legislative reports, newsletters, questionnaires, speeches and photo cutlines. The departments also provide radio and graphics services.

Constituent Services

Constituent services departments serve as the chief clearing-house for all requests that require casework for a constituent and/or background information for a member.

Information Technology

The information technology departments maintain computer systems throughout the respective caucuses. The information technology staff provides software and hardware support, fields computer questions and trains members and staff in the use of their computers.

Committee and Caucus Staff

Committee Administrator

Committee administrators are assigned to each chair. They are responsible for a wide range of duties, including researching, screening and scheduling testifiers, preparing preliminary drafts of bills and amendments, preparing and administering the committee budget, representing the chair at events and assisting the chairman or chairwoman in the end of session negotiations. Additionally, the committee administrator serves as a liaison between the chair and the members of the legislature, executive branch, other legislative staff and the public at large.

Committee Legislative Assistant

Committee legislative assistants are assigned to a committee chair and perform administrative support duties for the chair, keep records of the current status of every bill in the possession of the committee, assist members in drafting amendments and keep records of all committee actions. The legislative assistants gather materials necessary for the preparation of the official reports of the committee for approval by the chair and submission to the full House.

Chief Committee Clerk

The chief committee clerk coordinates activities among the Chief Clerk's Office, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes and House committee legislative assistants for the timely drafting and filing of committee reports.

Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms

651-296-4860
190 State Office Building
Chief Sergeant-at-Arms

The Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms provides many services for members, staff and the public. The chief sergeant-at-arms heads the department. Other staff members could include full-time assistant sergeants, which include the postmaster and the assistant postmaster, duplicating technicians, the facility services supervisor, telecommunications coordinator, a legislative assistant and the House Page staff during session. The chief sergeant is appointed by the speaker. The assistant sergeants, postmaster and assistant postmaster are elected by the House members to serve with the chief sergeant as officers of the House.

Pages

Pages serve as support staff for all House and conference committee hearings, and aid all departments in accomplishing their duties. During session, pages assist members in the House Chamber by obtaining copies of bills or other legislative materials and delivering messages from the public or other members. They also assist in preparing for a daily session by placing agendas and orders on each member's desk as well as passing out amendments and other data during debate. Pages also maintain chamber and State Office Building files of Senate and House journals and copies of bills pending before the House.

Parking and Transportation

The sergeant's office assigns parking spaces for members and staff. Parking information for the public is available from the sergeant's office for those attending meetings or visiting House lawmakers. Transportation services for "away from the complex" meetings are provided upon request.

Security

The sergeant's office serves as a liaison with Capitol Security in providing security for House office areas. A major role for the chief sergeant is to provide a safe environment for members and staff at all times, particularly during session in the House Chamber or during committee meetings. The assistant sergeants, postmaster and assistant postmaster aid in this duty.

The chief sergeant is responsible for decorum and protocol, and may be requested by the speaker to locate and escort members to the chamber during a roll call vote. Members may be escorted from the chamber, or even members of the public from the gallery, if they become disruptive.

The sergeant's office orders and distributes keys for offices, files and desks; unlocks committee rooms for meetings; issues Capitol Complex key cards; and provides supplies, telecommunications and duplicating services.

Post Office

The House Post Office, 36 State Office Building, 651-296-9462, receives and distributes mail for members and staff. The postmaster coordinates with the chief sergeant-at-arms and House Budget and Accounting to maintain responsibility for approximately \$100,000 worth of postage per year. The postmaster, during session days, coordinates with the chief sergeant to ensure the security and smooth operation of the House Chamber.

Educational Programs

An assistant sergeant coordinates the High School Page Program and the College Internship Program. Another responsibility is to organize and lead seminars about the legislative process and conduct tours for constituents and special guests upon request.

High School Page Program

A nonpartisan student activity brings juniors from more than 500 state public and non-public high schools to spend a week at the Capitol to serve as pages. The program encourages involvement in the legislative process and in state government. Some activities include meeting with individual members and key officials of the three branches of government, attending committee hearings and educational seminars, and serving as pages in the House Chamber alongside the full-time pages.

College Internship Program

Interns work for members or key staff by performing duties, such as conducting research, following the status of bills or monitoring committees, to receive academic credit from their college or university. Internships are available throughout the year.

Duplicating

House Duplicating, 35 State Office Building 651-296-8611, reproduces the Permanent Journal of the House, bills, amendments, committee reports, schedules and other legislative materials requested by House members and staff. Two administrative assistants operate state-of-the-art duplicating technology to produce high-quality products and to ensure that the duplicating needs of the House are met in a timely manner.

Facility Services

House Facility Services, 35 State Office Building, 651-296-2305, distributes and inventories House property and equipment and provides the necessary office supplies for House members and staff.



Joint Legislative Offices and Commissions

Office of the Revisor of Statutes

651-296-2868; Fax: 651-296-0569
 700 State Office Building
www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us
Michele Timmons — Revisor

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes provides services to members of both houses of the Legislature, the governor and other constitutional officers, and state agencies and departments. The services of the office are nonpartisan and confidential. The office consists of attorneys, editors, computer specialists and support personnel. Members and staff may request services by writing, calling or visiting the office.

Bill Drafting

The revisor's office works from instructions from a representative, senator, a person authorized by a legislator, the governor or constitutional officers. These instructions may be very simple; some only state a problem and request a statutory solution. They also may be very detailed. Sometimes they include a draft of a proposed bill prepared by a researcher or an attorney for a department, local unit of government or lobbying group.

Amendment Drafting

Upon request, office attorneys draft amendments for committee meetings or floor sessions. Office attorneys and support staff are available during House floor sessions to provide advice and drafting assistance, including the drafting, keyboarding, proofing and copying of amendments. They are stationed in the east and west hallways just outside the chamber.

Computer Services

An advanced computer text management system is used to assist in drafting, engrossing and publishing bills and amendments. The revisor's computer staff creates and maintains programs for other legislative work. These programs are used for the House and Senate journals, House and Senate indexes, House and Senate calendars and agendas, and information provided for the Internet.

Other Services

Other duties of the revisor's office include: drafting committee reports for consideration by the House; integrating amendments into bills as they are adopted (engrossing); drafting conference committee reports for consideration by the House and Senate; preparing comparisons for the House and Senate desks and conference committees; preparing and transmitting formal copies to the governor for signature (enrolling); publishing laws passed after each annual session of the Legislature (Session Laws); approving and drafting administrative rules for state agencies; publishing a collection of permanent and general laws in their most current language (Minnesota Statutes); and publishing the collection of administrative rules (Minnesota Rules). Attorneys from the revisor's office serve as legal counsel for the Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims. The revisor's office prepares and submits legislative bills that clarify or correct errors in statutes and administrative rules.

Legislative Reference Library

651-296-3398 or 651-296-8338; Fax: 651-296-9731
 645 State Office Building
www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp
Robbie LaFleur — Director

The Legislative Reference Library was established in 1969 as a nonpartisan service. Librarians handle inquiries in person, by mail, phone, e-mail or instant messaging. Legislators can contact library staff and receive materials while working from their offices, homes or from the House Chamber.

The library is on the sixth floor of the State Office Building and is open to the general public. A reading room provides both public computers and wireless access for visitors with laptops.

The public policy collection of print and electronic materials includes:

- books, reports and magazines;
- newspapers — print and electronic. Of special note, the library purchases access to the full text of the Star Tribune, Pioneer Press and other regional newspapers which can be accessed online;

- mandated reports. Each year the Legislature requires many one-time studies and ongoing reports, both to study issues and provide accountability for state-funded programs. The library tracks and acquires the reports and ensures availability in electronic format to members and the general public;
- legislative history materials. The collection, required by the rules of the House and Senate, includes House and Senate committee minutes and recordings of committee meetings and floor sessions;
- news clipping files. Coverage includes current legislators, former legislators, prominent Minnesotans, and by topic from the 1970s to the present;
- historical statistics on the Legislature and state government, and information on former legislators and legislative sessions;
- consultants' reports. The library is mandated to receive a copy of all reports done as the result of a state contract; and
- state agency documents. The library acquires state agency reports and archives electronic copies for long-term retention and ease of use.

Office of the Legislative Auditor

651-296-4708; Fax: 651-296-4712

140 Centennial Building

www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us

James Nobles — Legislative Auditor

The Office of the Legislative Auditor is a nonpartisan audit and evaluation office within the legislative branch of Minnesota state government under the direction of the Legislative Auditor, who is appointed by the Legislative Audit Commission. The office's principal goal is to provide the Legislature, agencies and the public with audit and evaluation reports that are accurate, objective and timely. The office focuses primarily on state agencies and programs, but also audits three metropolitan agencies and selectively reviews programs that are administered locally.

Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC)

651-296-9002

72 State Office Building

www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us

Greg Hubinger — Director

The commission serves as the umbrella organization for all of the commissions, joint offices and other boards that are under its purview. The LCC sets the complement for joint agencies and commissions and the compensation of employees under its jurisdiction. All joint budgets are reviewed by the commission. The commission coordinates certain activities of the House and Senate, including the setting of insurance benefits and sick and annual leaves. The LCC provides staff, services and oversight in the following areas:

Subcommittee on Employee Relations (SER)

The group monitors the collective bargaining process between the state and its employees, ratifies negotiated collective bargaining agreements and arbitrated awards, and approves compensation plans for unrepresented state employees. The subcommittee monitors public employment issues at the local level and conducts policy research on issues related to public employment.

Salary and Budget Review Subcommittee

This subcommittee oversees specific hiring and budget-setting decisions; it reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)

This advisory council assists the governor in identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for membership on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

Trustee Candidate Advisory Council (TCAC)

The TCAC assists the governor in identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for non-student membership on the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees.

Compensation Council

The Compensation Council assists the Legislature in establishing the compensation of constitutional officers, members of the legislature, justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Court of Appeals and the district courts, and the heads of state and metropolitan agencies.

Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims

This subcommittee reviews claims submitted by people who believe they have been damaged by the state. The majority of these claims are submitted by inmates at one of the state's correctional facilities. The recommendations of the subcommittee are forwarded to the Legislature for its approval.

Administrative Rules Subcommittee

Upon written request of two or more of its members or five or more members of the Legislature, the LCC shall review a state agency rule as defined in section 14.02, subdivision 4.

Library Subcommittee

The Library Subcommittee oversees the operation of the Legislative Reference Library. The subcommittee reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Revisor Subcommittee

The Revisor Subcommittee oversees the operation of the Office of the Revisor of Statutes. The subcommittee reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy

Provides the Legislature with in-depth analysis of projected state revenues, expenditures and tax expenditures.

Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government

This commission oversees the Metropolitan Council's operating and capital budgets, work program and capital improvement program.

Legislative Commission on Health Care Access

This commission reviews the progress of the Department of Health, the Minnesota Health Care Commission and all other agencies involved in implementing the MinnesotaCare law.

Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota

This commission prepares recommendations on how to end poverty in Minnesota by 2020. The commission shall report its recommendations to the Legislature by Dec. 15, 2008.

Foreign Delegations Liaison

651-296-9002

72 State Office Building

Sally Kidd — Commission Assistant/Foreign Delegations Liaison

The liaison serves as the main point of contact in scheduling meetings and arranging itineraries for visiting international and state delegations to the Legislature.

Legislative Electric Energy Task Force

322 State Capitol 651-296-4175

409 State Office Building 651-296-2439

This task force, made up of 10 members from the House and 10 members from the Senate, studies future electric energy sources and costs, and makes recommendations for legislation for an environmentally and economically sustainable electric energy supply.

It also reviews issues relating to electric industry restructuring and makes recommendations regarding potential electric energy resources. A report is due to the Legislature every two years.

Geographic Information Services Office (GIS)

651-296-0098

55 State Office Building

Lee Meilleur — Director

The GIS office is responsible for the development and maintenance of maps and spatial databases, and is the repository for statewide boundary information for legislative use. This data can be provided to legislators and legislative staff as hard copy maps, reports or electronic files. The office also provides maps and reports via desktop GIS applications and also through the Legislative GIS Web page.

Office on the Economic Status of Women (OESW)

95 State Office Building

800-657-3949

651-296-8590

Amy Brenengen — Director

This office provides information, statistics and studies legislative and agency proposals on women, children and families in Minnesota. It also studies legislative and agency proposals that impact women, children and families, and makes recommendations to the Legislature.

Fiscal Services Office

651-296-8890

45 State Office Building

Diane Henry-Wangenstein — LCC Assistant Director

The office performs the bookkeeping and payroll for all of the agencies, commissions and subcommittees that are under the auspices of the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

Other Commissions/Subcommittees:

Legislative Advisory Commission

651-296-2438

Fourth Floor, Centennial Office Building

Tom Hanson — Commissioner of Finance

The commission has the authority to review and grant requests by state departments and agencies for additional personnel or funding from contingent appropriations. The Governor presides and the commissioner of finance acts as secretary.

Legislative Audit Commission

651-296-4708

140 Centennial Office Building

The commission appoints the legislative auditor who directs the work of the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

651-296-2406

65 State Office Building

John Velin — Director

The LCCMR recommends funding for natural resources programs to be financed by the Minnesota future resources fund, the Minnesota environment and natural resources trust fund, federal oil overcharge funds, and the Great Lakes Protection Account.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

651-296-2750

55 State Office Building

Lawrence A. Martin — Director

The commission conducts an ongoing study and review of public employee retirement plans in Minnesota and makes legislative recommendations to establish and maintain sound public employee pension policy. Annual actuarial studies of each fund are conducted by an independent consulting actuary under the direction of the commission.

Great Lakes Commission

651-296-2228

351 State Office Building

The commission promotes development of the Great Lakes basin, plans water resource development, makes maximum possible use of navigational aids and other public works, and secures balanced use of the basin. The compact was signed by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ontario.

Mississippi River Parkway Commission

(763) 212-2560

P.O. Box 59159

Minneapolis, MN 55459-8207

Hank Todd — Managing Director

The commission aids in the development of a scenic parkway and highway along the Mississippi River in Minnesota and in the promotion of economic development opportunities along the Great River Road. It works with the state and local agencies of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission in the promotion of tourism and the enhancement of economic development in the Mississippi River Valley.



Glossary

act

A bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature and has been enrolled, certified, assigned a chapter number, and either has become law without the governor's signature, has been signed into law by the governor, or vetoed by the governor and the veto has been overridden by the Legislature.

adjournment

Closing of a committee hearing or daily legislative session for the day.

adjournment "sine die"

Or "without a day" — final adjournment of either the House or the Senate at the end of a two-year biennium.

adopt

Approve or accept; usually applies to a report or clause thereof, by adding, omitting, or altering language. "The report of the committee is now adopted." See **prevail**.

advisory task force

A limited-agenda body in any of the branches of government, advisory to a policy setting agency, created with no more than a two-year life span. Example: Seed Potato Certification Task Force.

appropriation

An authorization by law to spend money from the state treasury.

authority

An executive branch agency (other than a department) whose purpose is to sell bonds for the financing, ownership, and development of public facilities. Example: Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (Authority).

biennium

Two-year period. The legislative session is biennial; the state budget is biennial (money for a two-year budget cycle). Minnesota's biennium begins on July 1 and ends on June 30, two years later.

bill

Proposal for a new law, change in current law, repeal of a current law, or for a constitutional amendment. It consists of a title, enacting clause and body (text), which is examined and approved in its form by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

bill history

A summary of the actions taken on a bill by each legislative house and/or one or more of the committees. The bill history appears on the paper cover of "original" bills, and on the first page of printed bills.

bill, House advisory

A proposal for initiation, termination, alteration, or study of a law or program which may be drawn up informally in layperson's language by a legislator and need not be submitted to the revisor.

bill, local

A bill which would affect a unit or units of local government.

bill status

1. Current standing or location of a bill within the legislative process, which can be tracked on the Legislature's Web site (www.leg.mn). 2. The informal name for the index systems prepared by the House and Senate index departments.

"blue book"

The legislative manual published biennially by the Office of the Secretary of State. It contains information on the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Minnesota government; election statistics; and government history. (Blue bound book)

board

An executive-branch agency with prescribed official duties and policy-setting authorities. Boards have at least one of these powers: 1) to perform administrative acts, including spending money; 2) to issue or revoke licenses or certifications; 3) to make rules; or 4) to adjudicate contested cases or hear appeals. Example: Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board.

body

1. One of the two houses of the Legislature. 2. Of a bill or resolution — the main text, “language,” or wording.

budget resolution

A binding resolution adopted by the House setting a single dollar amount as a limitation on state taxes and appropriations for the fiscal biennium.

“by request”

Notation after the chief author of a bill indicating that the bill is introduced at the request of a constituent and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the legislator who introduced it.

Calendar for the Day

List of bills to be taken up by the full House on a given day. The bills are drawn from the General Register, which means they have been given a second reading. The rules committee compiles the Calendar for the Day.

call of the chair

Summoning of members of a committee or body by its presiding officer.

call of the house

A condition placed upon the House at the request of 10 members, or upon the Senate by any member, compelling absent and unexcused members to come to the chamber and to cast their vote. No member may leave without permission of the presiding officer. The call may be “lifted” by majority vote of the whole body.

caucus

1. A group of representatives or senators who affiliate with the same political party or faction, such as the “DFL Caucus,” the “Republican Caucus,” the “Majority,” or the “Minority” caucus. 2. Meeting of such a group.

chamber

The official meeting place for the House or Senate in the State Capitol.

chapter

1. In Minnesota Statutes, a division of major subject areas of the law. 2. In Session Laws, each chapter is a bill that has been enacted (become law). Chapter numbers of laws are assigned by the revisor of statutes and then presented to the governor for approval.

Chief Clerk

The administrative officer with the House and parliamentary advisor, elected by House members. (In the Senate, the “Secretary.”)

Chief Sergeant-at-Arms

Appointed officer of the body responsible for keeping security and order in the chamber, offices, and corridors; for supervision of the pages; and for some services to members, some administrative tasks, and for carrying out the directives of the presiding officer.

co-author

1. One of the joint sponsors of a bill. 2. To sponsor a bill in conjunction with other legislators.

commission

A legislative body composed exclusively of members of both houses.

committee

1. A group of members appointed from a legislative body to study, consider, and make recommendations on bills, resolutions, and other related matters that affect an aspect or aspects of the state. 2. An executive or judicial branch agency called to advise another body. It is limited in its authority.

committee report

Recommendation from a standing committee to a full body to pass a bill with or without amendments, refer to another committee, or report out without any further recommendation.

companion bills

Identical bills introduced both in the House and the Senate.

comparison

Study of House and Senate companion bills, reporting any differences in the two bills. See **substitution**.

concurrence

The process of concurring in (accepting) the amendments put on a bill that passed the other body in another form. A bill up for concurrence is called a code and given a number by the House Desk. Each member gets a copy of the code which is a copy of all the amendments put on the bill by the other body. Once the amendments have been concurred upon, the bill can be given a third reading as amended by the other body, and repassed.

concurrent resolution

A document reflecting the sentiment or intent of both houses of the Legislature that governs the business of the Legislature or expresses recognition.

conferee

Conference committee member.

conference committee

Committee made up of members from each house appointed to reconcile the differences between two versions of a bill that has been passed by both houses.

confirm

Approve an executive appointment; Senate only, except appointments to the Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board, which are considered by both houses.

Consent Calendar

Local or noncontroversial bills which are given their second reading; bypass the General Register; and are eligible for debate and possible amendment, third reading, and final passage in one day.

constitutional amendment

A bill that proposes to the voters a change in the state constitution. Notification of proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution follows the course of House or Senate files.

council

An executive, legislative, or judicial committee at least one-half of whose membership is required to be made up of officers or representatives of specified businesses, geographic regions, ethnic groups, occupations, industries, political organizations, etc.

custom and usage

1. Guidelines used to determine a parliamentary question when the state constitution, laws, and permanent and joint rules do not apply. 2. The tradition and precedence of the body.

division

A request that members stand or raise hands to be counted when the outcome of a voice vote is unclear or in dispute.

division of a committee

A permanent sub-unit of a committee appointed to consider bills or portions thereof that relate to specific subject areas of the committee's responsibility.

division of a question

To allow the separation of a motion or amendment which contains several separate and distinct parts, so that each part can be considered separately.

drafting

Drawing up a bill in legal language and standard form.

effective date

The date when the law takes effect. Unless otherwise provided in the act, all laws containing appropriations take effect on July 1; all other laws on Aug. 1 following the governor's approval.

enabling legislation

Act which provides the means, power, or authority to do something; permissive legislation; usually applies to local units of government.

enacting clause

Constitutionally required portion of a bill which formally expresses the intent that it become law: "BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:"

engrossment

After a bill is amended and approved, the bill is engrossed. This engrossment process incorporates the amendment or amendments inside the bill.

enrolled bill

The final engrossment of a bill passed by the Legislature, ready for the governor's action.

enrollment

Enrolling a bill puts the bill in act form. Once the bill has been passed by both bodies, the bill is first engrossed if there are any amendments, and then enrolled. It is printed on stationery with the words "AN ACT" at the top, and following the bill is a signature page that is first signed by the chief clerk, secretary of the Senate, speaker of the House, and president of the Senate (the bill is now enrolled). The bill is then ready to be presented to the governor for final approval.

file

Official name of a bill. House file (H.F. No. _____) or Senate file (S.F. No. _____).

final passage

A vote taken on a bill after its third reading, requiring a majority of all elected members of a legislative body for approval. Each member's vote is recorded in the journal, as required by the state constitution.

first reading

Reporting of a bill to the body, as required by the Minnesota Constitution and the rules of the body, at the time of its introduction and referral to committee.

fiscal note

A list of the costs, or financial implications of a bill, prepared at the request of a committee chair by the executive branch of government; may be attached with the committee report.

Fiscal Calendar

A list of spending or revenue bills to be taken up by the full House on a given day. The bills are drawn from the General Register, which means they have had a second reading. Bills can be placed on the Fiscal Calendar by the chair of the Ways & Means Committee or the chair of the Taxes Committee.

fiscal year

A 12-month accounting period. (For the state budget, July 1 to June 30. Two “fiscal years” make a biennial budget cycle.)

floor

The chamber and its environs are restricted to members of a body, its officers and employees, and authorized guests.

front desk

That portion of the chamber where the House chief clerk or secretary of the Senate and their assistants work during the session (below the rostrum of the presiding officer).

gallery

Balconies in the chamber where visitors may observe the proceedings of a legislative body.

General Register

A list of bills which have had their second readings and await action by the full House.

germane

Relevant or pertinent to. (This term is most often used when talking about the appropriateness of amendments for a particular bill.)

germaneness

Relevance or appropriateness of a proposed amendment or motion under consideration.

grandfather clause or “grandfather in”

In a bill which creates new or additional qualifications, the clause or section which exempts from compliance those individuals or entities already in the affected class when the law takes effect. Informal terminology.

“greenback”

Identifies an original House file (must be authored by a House member). Sometimes called a “greenjacket.”

hearing

A formal meeting of a committee, division, or subcommittee where evidence may be presented or testimony heard. Usually used interchangeably with “committee hearing.”

hopper

Basket at the front desk in the House chamber or in the leadership corner of the State Office Building where members put their bills for introduction.

House File or HF

Designation appearing before the number of a bill, which indicates that the measure originated in the House of Representatives.

indefinite postponement

Used in connection with substitutions. Once a House file has been referred for comparison with its Senate file companion, it is reported and the differences are noted. By motion the Senate file is substituted for the House file and the House file is then indefinitely postponed.

index

1. A list of bills in a particular category. 2. The departments within the Chief Clerk’s Office and the Secretary of the Senate charged with recording the status of all bills in the House or the Senate. Listings of bills also are kept according to their number, author, topic and statutory sections affected.

interim

The interval between adjournment sine die, and the convening of a new Legislature.

interim recess

The interval between the temporary adjournment at the end of the first year of a biennial session, and reconvening for the second annual session.

introduction

The formal presentation of a bill to a body of the Legislature at the time of the first reading and referral to committee.

Joint Convention

Combined meeting of the two bodies of the Legislature to transact certain business, to hear addresses by the governor or other distinguished guests. The speaker of the House presides as president of the Joint Convention; the House chief clerk is the secretary.

Joint Rules

Rules adopted by both houses to govern the Joint Conventions and the other official interactions between the House and the Senate.

Journal

The official record of the daily proceedings of each house kept by the House chief clerk and the secretary of the Senate, respectively. Required by the state constitution, defined by statute and rules of each body.

laid over

Postponement or delay in consideration of a matter before the body or one of its committees, either temporarily or until a set time in the future. “I move that the bill be laid over until Wednesday, April 4.”

lay on the table

Set aside a matter before the body or committee, so that it may be taken up at a later time by majority vote. Same as “table.”

Legislative Coordinating Commission

A committee made up of members who comprise the leadership of both houses; established by statute to supervise matters concerning the relationship, joint operation, and interaction of the House and Senate.

legislative day

A day when either house of the Legislature is in session; a 24-hour period commencing at 7 a.m.

legislative immunity

Privilege of a legislator to be free from civil arrest and civil prosecution during a session of the Legislature. A privilege granted by the Minnesota Constitution.

lobbyist

A person acting individually or for an interest group who tries to influence the introduction of, the decisions on, or voting on specific legislation.

main author

Same as “chief author.”

majority

1. *Final Passage* - 50 percent plus one of all members elected to a legislative body: 68 votes in the House; 34 votes in the Senate. 2. *Simple* - in committee, subcommittee, and division, 50 percent plus one of those members present while voting.

Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure

The standard manual of legislative procedure used by the Minnesota House and Senate.

memorialize

To petition (request by resolution) that a specific action be taken. (Resolutions by the Minnesota Legislature memorializing the Congress are treated as bills.)

minority report

A report containing the opinion of a minority of the members who disagree with the recommendations in the committee report on a bill or resolution. The minority report is considered before the committee report, and if adopted, stands as the report of the committee on that matter.

motion

A proposal for a specific action formally made in a committee, subcommittee, or legislative body. A parliamentary device used to put a question before a body.

“motions and resolutions”

That part of the order of business during which members may make motions on legislative matters that do not come before the body under the other items of the order of business.

order of business

That portion of the permanent rules of the body which prescribes the order in which items of business will be considered.

per diem

Literally, “by the day.” The daily expense allowance granted legislators during a session, interim recess, and interim when conducting official legislative business.

point of order

A device used to make a formal request that the presiding officer rule on a parliamentary question relating to a matter before the body.

President

The presiding officer of the Senate, elected by the senators; the presiding officer of the Joint Convention (which is the speaker of the House).

prevail

Pertains to motions; a motion which obtains the necessary votes for adoption is said to “prevail.” “The motion prevails and the report of the committee is adopted.”

previous question

A motion to close debate and to bring the pending question to an immediate vote.

progress

To delay action on a bill the author can request progress. This action temporarily sets aside the bill. The request also can be more specific as “progress retaining its place,” or “progress to a day certain,” in which case the bill could not be considered until the date stated in the request.

Pro Tempore (presiding officer)

A member of the Senate or House, respectively, designated by the presiding officer to act as the presiding officer in his/her absence.

protest and dissent

A constitutional provision allowing any two or more members to take exception to an action of either body, and to have their exception printed in the Journal of the House or Senate.

quorum

The number of members in attendance required to conduct business (50 percent plus one).

reading

A formal procedure required by the state constitution and rules. These readings indicate to legislators and the public that an action or series of actions have been taken on a bill or resolution, and the matter has reached the next stage in the legislative process. Bills receive their first reading at the time of introduction, their second reading after adoption of committee reports, and their

Glossary

third reading before placed upon final passage. Bills can receive more than first, second, or third readings. Before a bill can be repassed as amended by the other body, or repassed as amended by conference, the bill must receive another third reading.

reapportionment/redistricting

Redrawing legislative and congressional district lines every 10 years following the federal census to reflect changes and shifts in state population.

recess

1. Intermission in a daily session or committee meeting. “The majority leader moves that the House recess to the call of the chair.” 2. Time between two portions of a biennial session.

reconsideration

A floor procedure whereby a question previously decided in the affirmative or the negative is brought before the body a second time for consideration. This motion can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. If the motion to reconsider does not prevail, it cannot be made again.

refer

To assign a bill or resolution to committee, subcommittee, or division for consideration.

referendum

A procedure whereby a measure adopted by the Legislature may be submitted to the electorate of a local unit of government for ratification.

repassage

A final vote on a bill previously passed in another form. The House and Senate repass a bill after concurring on the amendments of the other body, and after adopting a report of a conference committee.

report

Constitutional language which signifies the same action as the more commonly used traditional term “reading.”

report, committee

Recommendations of a standing committee that a bill or resolution be passed or be passed with certain amendments, with or without reference to another committee, compiled by the committee’s legislative assistant and certified by the chair; may include a fiscal note or revisor’s analysis.

report, comparison

Formal announcement by the House chief clerk or secretary of the Senate that companion House and Senate bills are identical or identical with certain exceptions.

re-refer

Reassign a bill or resolution to committee.

resolution, constitutional

Resolutions proposing an amendment to the state constitution or ratifying an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. They are treated as bills.

resolution, House or Senate

Resolution expressing the opinion, sentiments, or intent of one house alone.

resolution, joint

An action taken by the Legislature meeting in Joint Convention.

resolution, memorial

A resolution, introduced as a House or Senate file, that urges another governmental body to take or refrain from a certain action.

revenue-raising

Constitutional term for the setting of taxes. Revenue raising measures must originate in the House. “Raising” means collecting, *not* “increasing,” and applies only to taxes and *not* to expenditures.

Revisor of Statutes

The office established by statute to draft all bills (except House Advisories) and resolutions introduced by members of the Legislature, to engross and enroll bills and resolutions, and to publish the Minnesota Statutes, Session Laws of the State of Minnesota, and Administrative Rules (rules adopted by executive branch agencies with statutory rule making authority).

roll call

Recorded vote taken by either body by means of the electrical voting system or by calling by voice for the votes of individual members. All roll calls are recorded in the Journal of the House.

rules

1. Regulating principles, methods of procedure. These include the Minnesota Constitution, Minnesota Statutes, Permanent Rules of the House, Joint Rules of the House and Senate, Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure, and custom and usage. 2. An operating principle or order promulgated by a branch or unit of state government under authority granted by the Legislature. These administrative rules have the force and effect of law.

Rules Committee

Officially, the Rules and Legislative Administration Committee in the House and the Committee on Rules and Administration in the Senate. A standing committee made up of the leadership and other members of both caucuses, which prepares and recommends rules for the body and changes therein, designates and assigns employees of the body and their compensation, designates bills for consideration as Calendar for the Day bills or Special Orders, makes recommendations on resolutions and bills, and recommends policy to govern the administration of the body.

Second Reading

Reporting of a bill to the body following the adoption of the committee report. “Second Reading” places the bill on the General Register, or if recommended, to the Consent Calendar, as required in the constitution and rules of the body.

Secretary of the Senate

The chief administrative officer and parliamentary advisor elected by the senators.

Select Committee

Committee established to study and report on a specific issue. Sometimes known as a “Special Committee.”

Senate File (SF)

Designation appearing before the number of a bill which indicates that the measure originated in the Senate.

Sergeant-at-Arms

See Chief Sergeant-at-Arms.

session

The biennial period during which the Legislature meets.

session, daily

A meeting of the House or Senate in its chamber, used interchangeably with “Legislative Day.”

session, joint

Same as Joint Convention.

session, regular

The annual meeting of the Legislature between the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, and the first Monday after the third Saturday in May.

session, special or extra

When the Legislature uses up its constitutionally permitted 120 legislative days in a biennium, or after the date prescribed by law for annual adjournment and if matters in the state present a sufficient urgency, the governor may call a special (or extra) session of the Legislature. The governor can call a special session for a purpose, but cannot limit the matters to be considered nor the length of sitting.

Session Laws

Published numerical listing of the text of all bills that become law during a legislative session including appropriations, local and temporary laws, proposed constitutional amendments, and joint resolutions; and a comprehensive index. Session Laws also is known as Laws of Minnesota and Session Laws of the State of Minnesota.

Sine die

The end of the even-numbered year in the biennium, terminating the two-year session.

Speaker of the House

Presiding officer of the House elected by House members.

standing committee

Permanent committee appointed with continuing responsibility to study and make recommendations on bills and resolutions within a general field of legislative responsibility.

statutes

A compilation of the general and permanent laws of the state, printed every two years by the revisor of statutes; organized according to subject matter.

substitution

The procedure whereby a bill which has received final approval in one body takes the place of its companion bill in the opposite body, by motion. If the bill is on the floor of the receiving body, the bills must be referred for comparison before substitution. See comparison.

table

To set aside consideration of a question temporarily or indefinitely.

Third Reading

Final reporting of a bill to the body before its final passage or before repassage if the bill has been amended by the other body, by conference, or after reconsideration. No amendments except amendments to the title may be offered after the third reading unless unanimous consent of the body is granted.

title

A concise summary of the contents of a bill and the portions of law it affects.

unofficial engrossment

An unofficial version of a bill pending before a committee or the whole body which has been rewritten to include in its text proposed amendments which have not been formally adopted. Senate files may be unofficially engrossed by the House to incorporate amendments adopted by the House, but on which the Senate has not yet concurred.

veto

The power or action of the governor to reject a bill. The bill is returned to the house of origin with a veto message.

veto, line-item

The power or action of the governor, rejecting one or more items of appropriations in a bill, while approving the rest.

Glossary

veto, pocket

Rejection of a bill by the governor after the Legislature has adjourned sine die, preventing its reconsideration by the Legislature.

veto message

A letter from the governor to the presiding officer of the house of origin of a bill in which the governor states the reasons for rejecting the bill or line-item vetoing it.

veto override

Re-enactment by the Legislature of a bill vetoed by the governor. A two-thirds majority of each house is required to override a veto.

vote

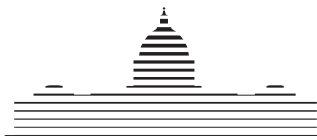
1. Formal expression of a decision of the body or one of its committees, divisions, or subcommittees by roll call or voice on a motion, bill, resolution, or other policies. 2. The expression of a decision by an individual member. 3. The means by which this decision is expressed.

“yellowback”

Identifies an original Senate file (must be authored by Senate member). Sometimes called a yellowjacket.

yield

To surrender the floor temporarily to another member for the purpose of hearing a question or to hear an explanation.



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