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**Minnesota
House of
Representatives**
Steve Sviggum, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Laws Effective Jan. 1, 2007

Editor's note: The following is a listing of selected new laws that take effect Jan. 1, 2007. The asterisk following the bill number denotes the language that became law. A complete summary of new laws, vetoed bills and bills in limbo from the 2006 session is available online from House Public Information Services. Go to <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/NewLaws/NewLawsmain.asp>.

Elections

Candidate disclosure requirements increased

Beginning Jan. 1, 2007, candidates for public office in Minnesota will have to disclose more information about their campaign finances.

Under current state law, candidates and campaign committees must file a financial report with the Office of the Secretary of State detailing their campaign contributions and expenditures.

A new law, sponsored by Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) and Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-St. Peter), makes a number of changes to the information required in that report, including:

- in addition to the purposes and total amount of campaign expenditures, the amount and date of each individual campaign expenditure must be included; and
- disclosure of the name, address and employer of any individual or committee that contributes more than \$100 to the campaign.

Previously, only the names of campaign contributors were required, and only for those who gave more than \$500.

HF3110/SF2743*/CH242

Family

Child support laws overhauled

On Jan. 1, 2007, Minnesota's child support laws will receive their first major overhaul in more than 20 years.

Among the key changes, the combined income of both parents will be used to calculate child support. New guidelines are also provided for determining who pays for a child's health care coverage and child care expenses.

The changes are the result of two recent laws — a 2005 child support reform law and a 2006 law that modified some of its provisions — both sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) and Sen. Tom Neuville (R-Northfield).

Calculating child support

Under the law's provisions, basic support — the dollar amount ordered for a child's housing, food, clothing, transportation, education and other costs — is calculated using a shared-income model, in which support is divided between parents based on the proportionate share of their combined monthly income.

Monetary contributions for child care, medical and dental expenses are calculated separately. If a parent is voluntarily unemployed or underemployed, child support must be calculated based on a determination of potential income.

Child support may be adjusted every two years based upon a change in the cost of living. A one-time, six-month review will be held to make sure that compliance of all child support and parenting time is in place.

Health care

A significant portion of the new law deals with how health care will be provided for a joint child.

Couples involved in child support orders will need to decide which party must carry health care coverage for the child; the cost of premiums and how it will be allocated between the parties; the circumstances, if any, under which the obligation to provide health care coverage for the joint child shifts from one party to the other; and, if appropriate health care coverage is not available for the joint child, whether a contribution for medical support is required.

In determining whether a party has appropriate health care coverage for the joint child, the court must evaluate the health plan using certain factors, including accessibility to services, comprehensiveness of the policy, affordability and special medical needs of the child.

Child care

Unless otherwise agreed to by the parties and approved by the court, work-related or education-related child-care costs of joint children are to be divided between the parents, based on the proportionate share of the parties' combined monthly parental income for determining child support.

HF1321/SF630*/CH164

HF3585/SF3199*/CH280

Health

Alcohol and drug counselor licensing required

All alcohol and drug counselors working for cities, counties, state agencies and hospitals must be licensed by the Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy, under a new law effective Jan. 1, 2007.

Sponsored by Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) and Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (DFL-Rochester), the legislation is part of an omnibus health occupations regulation and licensing law passed in 2005.

HF1161/SF1204*/CH147

Recreation

Vehicle admittance to state parks changed

A new law makes two minor changes to the state's requirements for admitting vehicles into state parks. Effective Jan. 1, 2007, towed vehicles used for camping may be issued a temporary permit upon entering a state park that allows the vehicle to be driven within the park.

The temporary permit will be issued along with the camping permit, and expires when the camping permit expires.

In addition, a state park permit is not required and a fee may not be charged for motor vehicle entry or parking at the visitor parking area of Soudan Underground Mine State Park.

The changes are part of an omnibus natural resources law, sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) and Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville).

HF3200/SF2973*/CH281

Safety

Carbon monoxide detectors required

Beginning Jan. 1, 2007, a new law will require carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in all newly constructed homes and apartments.

According to the law, operational detectors must be placed on each level of the residence and within 10 feet of each sleeping room in any single or multi-family dwelling.

The law takes effect Jan. 1 for newly constructed facilities in which permits were issued after that date; Aug. 1, 2008, for existing single family dwelling units; and Aug. 1, 2009, for all multi-family dwelling units.

The new requirements are part of an omnibus public safety law, sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) and Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls).

HF2656*/SF2633/CH260