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Minnesota House of Representatives

Kurt Zellers, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Laws Effective July 1, 2012

The following is a list of selected new laws passed during the 2012 legislative session that take effect July 1, 2012.

The asterisk following the bill number denotes the language that became law. Summaries of all laws passed by the 2012 Legislature are available online from nonpartisan House Public Information Services at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/Newlaws2012-0.asp>

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Travel insurance gets new definitions

To adapt to the changing modes of travel and traveler expectations, changes need to be made to state statute regarding travel insurance.

A new law “modernizes the definition of travel insurance and regulates how travel agents disseminate travel insurance information,” according to Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie), who sponsors the law with Sen. David Brown (R-Becker).

Of note, the new law clarifies that travel insurance does not include major medical plans, which provide comprehensive medical protection for travelers with trips lasting six months or longer, including those working overseas as an expatriate or military personnel being deployed.

HF2544/SF2069*/CH157

EDUCATION

Buying lunchroom equipment

Schools will no longer need Department of Education approval to purchase lunchroom equipment with surplus funds from their food service fund.

School administrators noted that making updates to lunchrooms was too cumbersome under the previous law. Rep. Mike LeMieur (R-Little Falls) and Sen. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) sponsor the law.

HF2376*/SF1971/CH138

ENVIRONMENT

Accelerating the fight against aquatic invasive species

Helping business owners, fighting the spread of invasive species and improving water management are among the major themes of this year's omnibus environment and natural resources law.

Sponsored by Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) and Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria), the law establishes an advisory inspection process to help businesses proactively comply with regulations. Rather than find out the hard way that they're in violation of state laws or rules and face financial penalties, the idea is that businesses can contact state agencies and request an advisory inspection.

If an inspector identifies violations, the business can avoid any penalties as long as they're corrected within 60 days. Several agencies are exempted from the provisions, including the Department of Revenue. The law also states that the exemption from penalties does not apply to conduct involving fraud and various other circumstances.

The law increases civil penalties for transporting certain aquatic invasive species and doubles the fines for repeat offenders. Conservation officers will also be granted authority to order watercraft and other equipment to be removed from waters when necessary, and the Department of Natural Resources can require mandatory inspections at water access sites. The state's ban on placing watercraft with invasive species attached into public waters is expanded to include all water-related equipment.

HF2164*/SF1830/CH272

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Paramedic services reimbursed

In 2011, the Legislature directed the human services commissioner to determine which community paramedic services could be covered under Medical Assistance and determine payment later for those services.

A new law authorizes community paramedics to now be reimbursed for such services, effective July 1, 2012, or upon federal approval, whichever is later.

For example, Medical Assistance may cover chronic disease monitoring, medication compliance, and immunizations and vaccinations for eligible recipients when the services are provided by a community paramedic. These services are covered for individuals who frequently use emergency rooms, or for whom the provision of community paramedic service would prevent admission to or allow discharge from a nursing facility or prevent readmission.

Rep. Tara Mack (R-Apple Valley) and Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont) sponsor the law.

HF2060/SF1543*/CH169

MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS

Honor guards given equal priority

Honor guards are paid up to \$50 each time they provide services, such as playing "Taps," at the funeral of a military veteran.

Effective July 1, 2012, the veterans affairs commissioner cannot prioritize these payments based on whether the honor guard units are sponsored by organizations that have charitable gambling operations. Previously, when funding ran low, honor guards sponsored by charitable gambling organizations could see their payments delayed until the end of the year due to permissible language.

The new law is sponsored by Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) and Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca).

HF1903*/SF1814/CH149

PUBLIC SAFETY

Notifying an abuse victim's parents

An extra phone call will need to be made when a child is a crime victim.

Sponsored by Rep. Bruce Vogel (R-Willmar) and Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls), a new law will add to the custody order in a divorce agreement so that each party must “notify the other party if the minor child is the victim of an alleged crime and shall provide the name of the investigating law enforcement officer.” It will also require law enforcement to immediately notify a local welfare agency if the child is a victim of neglect, physical abuse or sexual abuse outside the family.

Parents who are under a protective order or in the Safe at Home program will have the notification provided through a third party so as to avoid direct contact with their former spouse.

HF1899/SF2297*/CH153