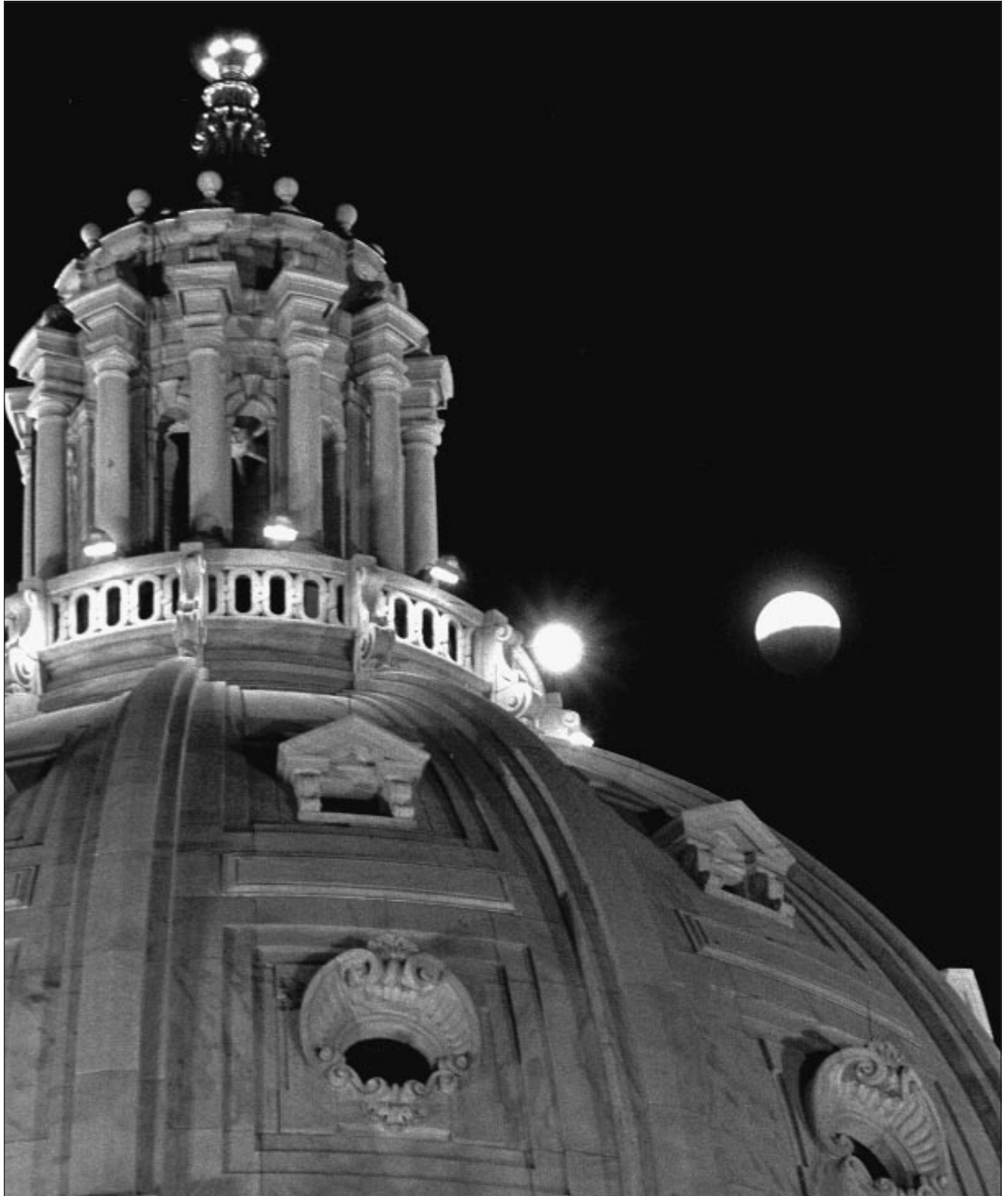


SESSION WEEKLY

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To subscribe, contact:
Minnesota House of Representatives
Public Information Office
175 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-1298
(612) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550
TTY (612) 296-9896

Director
LeClair G. Lambert

Assistant Director/Editor
Peg Hamerston

Assistant Editors
John T. Tschida
K. Darcy Hanzlik

Art & Production Coordinator
Paul Battaglia

Writers
Steve Compton, F. J. Gallagher,
Nick Healy, Celeste Riley

Photographers
Tom Olmscheid, Laura Phillips,
Andrew Von Bank

Office Manager
Toinette L. B. Bettis

Staff Assistants
Grant Martin, Nicole Thompson



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— photo by Tom Olmscheid

Highlights

Later school starts . . .

Proponents promise attentive students, less crime

Many students rely on a good jolt of caffeine to get them through their first class at Park High School in Cottage Grove, according to junior Allison Churilla.

Park High students begin the school day at 7:35 a.m., and for some, a cup of coffee or a can of Mountain Dew isn't enough to keep them on their toes.

"A lot of students are asleep in my first class," Churilla said, during March 25 testimony before the Quality Initiatives Subcommittee of the House Education Committee. "They are much less attentive than in my second class."

Staying awake in class is not the only concern created by an early start to the school day, according to Churilla. Safety is also an issue. Churilla walks to school, and the early start often sends her onto the streets well before sunrise. Her classmates who ride the bus often wait in the dark at the bus stop.

Churilla urged members of the subcommittee to support **HF1259**, a bill that would prohibit junior and senior high schools from beginning classes before 8 a.m.

The bill, which was narrowly approved on a voice vote, would require changes in the class schedules of thousands of students and hundreds of schools across the state.

Parents, students, law enforcement officials, and other supporters of the bill claim later school start times could help to solve many current problems in and out of the classroom.

But critics of the measure argue such scheduling decisions ought to be made on the local level, and some question whether later starting times are really the panacea they are made out to be.

The issue of school start times has been the center of much discussion since the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) in April 1994 urged all school districts to begin school later for teenagers.

The medical group reported that adolescents need more sleep — at least 9.5 hours per night — than do younger children or adults. At the same time, teenagers experience increasing demands on their time, including school, jobs, sports, homework, and socializing.



Early school start times means darkness when boarding the bus in the winter months for many students. Proponents of a bill to begin classes after 8 a.m. say that student safety in such circumstances is one reason the schedule change should be made.

Also, there is evidence that the timing of adolescents' sleep period is delayed, according to the MMA. They are unable to fall asleep as early as younger children and adults, and they tend to sleep later.

School schedules that send the older students to school earliest are contrary to what studies suggest would be most effective, according to the MMA.

Others see problems caused by earlier start times extending well beyond bleary-eyed hours in the classroom. Students who begin classes before 8 a.m. are often dismissed shortly after 2 p.m., and that is when the

trouble begins for police officer Lt. John Harrington.

"We see a direct correlation between [school] start time and crime," said Harrington, who runs the juvenile crime unit of the St. Paul Police Department.

Many teenagers are on their own during the afternoon hours. The lack of adult supervision inevitably allows some teens to run amok after school, and some engage in a variety of criminal activities ranging from vandalism and shoplifting to more serious offenses, Harrington said.

"There is a gap between when latchkey children get out and their parents get home," Harrington said. "A later start time would bridge that gap very effectively."

LeVita Anderson, a St. Paul resident and mother of four, also has concerns about the time students are dismissed for the day. Her son, a ninth grader, begins class before 8 a.m. and gets out long before she is finished working for the day.

"I live in a neighborhood where things are not so pleasant," Anderson said. "And I'm actually horrified at work because I'm wondering what's going on."

Many metropolitan area school districts have studied the issue of school start times in



LaVita Anderson, left, told the Education Committee's Quality Initiatives Subcommittee March 25 that later school start times for students in junior and senior high school would be a good idea. She said she worries about her 14-year old son, Fontaine, right, because of his unsupervised time after school.

recent years, but only one district, Edina, has moved to a later start.

Bill sponsor Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) said his bill would remove some of the complications involved with individual districts changing to a later start time. Currently, schools can run into problems making the change if, for example, other schools in the same athletic conference stick to earlier schedules.

"It's very difficult for individual schools to do this," Entenza said. "It's easier for everyone to jump at the same time."

Entenza originally proposed that all students begin classes no earlier than 8 a.m. He offered an amendment that would limit the prohibition on early start times to students in grades 7-12 because, he said, those are the students most adversely affected by early schedules.

Opposition to the bill focuses on the role of the state in making scheduling decisions and the potential impact the bill could have on the budgets of districts across the state.

"If you want to talk about micro-management, you're at the height of it here," said Bob Meeks, a lobbyist for the Minnesota School Boards Association.

Meeks said the bill may force some districts to flip-flop schedules, sending elementary students to school earlier and creating an entirely new set of problems when they are dismissed earlier in the afternoon.

Rep. Barbara Sykora (R-Minnetonka) agreed that the bill would amount to state "micromanagement" of local affairs.

"I don't understand why we can't allow local school boards to do this," Sykora said. "If a bunch of parents start calling on school boards, they will respond quickly."

The bill runs contrary to efforts in recent years to reduce legislative mandates on school districts, according to Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee). Kelso said the bill is "con-descending" to members of local school boards.

"Every good idea doesn't belong in state statute," Kelso said.

But Entenza, who described the bill as a necessary mandate, said the long-term benefits of shifting to later start times for teenagers would outweigh the short-term complications involved.

"Schools are based on students," Entenza said. "They are not based on busing schedules, and they are not based on extra-curricular activities."

The bill now moves to the full Education Committee.

— Nick Healy



AGRICULTURE

Slots at the track

Installing slot machines at Canterbury Park would help Minnesota's horse breeders, according to supporters of a bill discussed March 21 by the House Agriculture Committee.

HF1300, sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would allow as many as 1,500 slot machines at Canterbury Park in Shakopee.

Profits from the slots would be used to boost purses at the track, and that would keep racing alive and help the state's thoroughbred industry, according to Holsten.

Discussion of the bill focused on its potential impact on horse breeding and other agricultural concerns, but Holsten's proposal also would provide a new revenue source that could be used to construct a stadium for the Minnesota Twins.

The committee agreed to send the bill without a recommendation to the House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee.

Under **HF1300**, 20 percent of the slot machine proceeds would go to the racetrack and another 8.4 percent would reach breeders through increased purses. Among other sources, funds would be devoted to the state's Environmental Trust Fund and to a new "sports infrastructure fund," which would provide unspecified revenue for projects such as the proposed Twins ballpark.

By helping horse breeders, Holsten said, benefits also will reach farmers who sell feed to the breeders and others who provide breeders with needed supplies.

Several thoroughbred breeders described the dwindling presence of the industry in the state. As purses have grown richer in other states, especially Iowa, breeders have followed the money out of Minnesota.

Purses at Canterbury Park have now dropped to about \$4 million annually, compared to a peak level of about \$10 million in the late 1980s.

Art Eaton, who has about 50 horses on a 200-acre farm in Dakota County, said he has seen many other breeders get out of the business in recent years, but he has stuck with it.

"We're hanging on, more or less, by the skin of our teeth," Eaton said.

It is estimated that slots at Canterbury Park would raise between \$50 million and \$150 million annually.

Cheaper milk

Minnesota grocers would be allowed to sell milk at lower prices, under a bill approved March 24 by the House Agriculture Committee.

HF1646, sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), would temporarily lift current law forbidding retailers to sell milk for less than they paid for it. The change in milk pricing policy would be in effect for one year.

"Elimination of this artificial and archaic restraint on commerce in milk production will invite economic competition, stimulate consumption, and result in lower prices for consumers and greater demand for Minnesota dairy products," said Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls), who chairs the Agriculture Committee.

Wenzel and other supporters of the bill argue the current law has helped to create hardships for dairy farmers and consumers in the state.

Minnesota's dairy farmers have seen the prices they get for their product drop significantly in recent months, but consumers continue to pay some of the nation's highest retail milk prices.

The one-year change in retail pricing regulation would allow lawmakers to assess the results of the bill during the 1998 session. If the Legislature took no action, existing law setting a floor for retail milk prices would come back into effect, under the bill.

Critics of the bill argue it would only lead to instability in the milk market and would not have a positive effect on the prices paid to dairy farmers.

The bill now moves to the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.



BUSINESS

Omnibus liquor bill

The House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee moved to regulate the delivery and distribution of alcoholic beverages March 25, approving nearly a dozen new provisions incorporated into an omnibus liquor bill.

In addition to providing increased licensing capability for a handful of communities, including St. Paul, Moorhead, and Proctor, **HF524**, sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), would prohibit the delivery of alcoholic beverages manufactured outside the state to anyplace except a licensed wholesaler's warehouse. Beverages just passing through Minnesota or brought

in legally by an individual would enjoy an exemption from the bill's regulatory reach, as would wine collectors, who could continue to receive shipments — up to two cases per year, per vineyard — from out-of-state suppliers.

The bill would ban the mailing of letters, postcards, catalogs, or pamphlets intended to solicit an order for alcoholic beverages for delivery anywhere except a wholesaler's warehouse.

HF524 also consolidates the Department of Public Safety's Division of Liquor Control and Division of Gambling Enforcement into a single entity, retroactive to Oct. 1, 1996. The department combined the two divisions last fall in accordance with an executive order from Gov. Arne Carlson.



CHILDREN

Recouping child support

Recognizing that the millions of dollars in uncollected child support owed to Minnesota children keeps families on the public welfare rolls, a bill moving through the House would create a couple of new tools to get at deadbeat parents.

HF925 is a result of the 1996 federal welfare law that requires states to adopt certain laws that make it easier to track down deadbeat parents and collect money. It was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee March 25.

In fiscal year 1996, of the \$376.4 million in child support owed to Minnesota children, only \$261 million, or 69 percent, was collected, according to the Department of Human Services (bills). Officials estimate that roughly 90,000 children are not receiving their full amount of child support.

In recent years, Minnesota has adopted several laws to suspend the driver's licenses and occupational licenses of deadbeat parents. Responding to the federal welfare measure, Minnesota is now moving to suspend recreational licenses, such as those for fishing, hunting, boating, and snowmobiling.

For now, the bill requires only the DHS to consult with other state agencies to establish just how to suspend those licenses.

Minnesota already has adopted many of the federal welfare law's child support requirements. For instance, the state already requires employers to report new hires to the DHS to match employee data with those who owe child support, and ultimately, to garnish wages.

Minnesota has already established a cen-

tralized child support payment center, which is set to open later this year.

And, the state already has adopted the federal Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) which allows states to collect child support when the deadbeat parent lives in another state, as long as that state also has adopted the federal interstate act. A problem arose, however, when a deadbeat parent lived in a state that hadn't adopted the interstate child support act. The federal welfare law now requires all states to adopt UIFSA, which should make it easier to collect child support across all state lines.

Other portions of **HF925**, sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) would:

- Require banks and other financial institutions to provide account and asset information on those owing back child support and allow for the automated seizure of bank accounts and assets. Specifically, the bill would require the DHS to come up with a way to compare bank records with the records of people who owe back child support. The department also would have to inform the financial industry on how to comply with the law.

The bill gives banks two options. First, the bank could send the state information on all its account holders and rely on the state to use only account information pertaining to deadbeat parents. Or, the bank could request from the state a list of who owes child support and match it against its account holders; forwarding only those names who are a match.

- Penalize people on public assistance who do not cooperate with the state to establish paternity and seek child support. This pro-

March madness



Goldie Gopher visited the House chamber March 26, prompting an enthusiastic outbreak of the Minnesota Rouser. The U of M's mascot and members of the pep band journeyed to the Capitol to drum up support for the Golden Gophers basketball team, playing this weekend in the Final Four.

vision is in keeping with an overall welfare reform bill moving through the Legislature. Cooperation would include providing information about the father, submitting to genetic tests, and appearing for interviews, hearings, and other legal proceedings.

Under the bill, a family on welfare who does not cooperate would lose 25 percent of their monthly public assistance check and have their rent and utilities paid directly through the county.

- Publish a "most wanted" list of at least the top 10 deadbeat parents who owe the largest amount of money in back child support. Current law includes anyone who is \$3,000 behind in payments. Under the bill, the list would be put together by the Office of the Attorney General in consultation with the DHS. Current law leaves the list exclusively to the DHS.
- Tap into a deadbeat parent's pension, profit-sharing, and disability benefits to pay for child support. Under current law, those items are exempt from a creditor's claim.
- Require jail time for the crime of failure to pay child support and allow work release only if the defendant consents to income withholding.
- Prohibit marriages between people of the same gender and prohibit the recognition of such marriages in Minnesota even if the marriage occurred in a state that allows people of the same gender to marry. (See related story, page 8.)

The proposal is an attempt to respond to the possibility that Hawaii may recognize same-sex marriages and prepare for people who might move to Minnesota from that

state. Hawaii had passed a law prohibiting same sex marriages, but a lower court ruled the law unconstitutional. The state has appealed to its state Supreme Court.

HF925 now moves to the Health and Human Services Finance Division.

Special-needs adoptions



A bill to better reimburse licensed private adoption agencies who help place children, often from abusive homes, with new adoptive families has become law.

The new law, which will reimburse agencies up to \$16,000 per child, was signed by Gov. Arne Carlson March 11 and became effective March 12, 1997.

Under previous law, the Minnesota Department of Human Services reimbursed licensed private adoption agencies a maximum of \$4,000 per case and the cap hadn't increased since the 1980s. Today, it costs agencies from \$8,000 to \$13,000 to place a single child with special needs, according to Bob DeNardo, a supervisor in the department's family and children services division.

The previous \$4,000 cap discouraged private agencies, especially the small ones, from actively seeking families for special needs kids because they could not recoup their costs, said House sponsor Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud). Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

The adoption reimbursement helps compensate the private agency for recruiting families, matching them with the right special-needs child, and preparing the family for the child through education, counseling, and home visits.

Special-needs children are part of the Adoption Assistance Program, and in many cases, have been severely neglected or abused and their parents have relinquished their parental rights to the state. The child may not only suffer from physical problems but from behavioral, mental, and emotional ones as well.

These children often wait in foster care until someone wants them, DeNardo has said.

Currently, there are 1,700 children who are considered wards of the state. Some are being considered by families for adoption but nothing has been finalized. As of January, however, no one had shown an interest in adopting 813 of those children.

Last year, more money was set aside for reimbursement for private adoption agen-

cies, but steps to remove the cap have been delayed by a departmental rulemaking procedure. The longer state officials waited to make the change, the greater the risk that fewer children with special needs would be placed. The new law is designed to hasten the process.

(See Feb. 14, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 4; Feb. 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 5; and March 7, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 5)

HF374/SF274*/CH8



CRIME

Crime in the cities

"Our neighborhoods are deteriorating." That, according to Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), is the bottom line. It's also why she sponsored **HF1175**, approved by the House Judiciary Committee on March 25.

The bill would provide three ways to help communities respond effectively to crime, particularly that caused by chronic offenders.

"Residents see a revolving door of misdemeanor offenders," Clark told the committee. The police are called, tickets are issued, and the criminals go back to their activities. Clark said that is a common scenario in her neighborhood and one that threatens to destroy it.

Under the bill, a restorative justice component would be added to the conditions of an offender's probation, meaning criminals would be required to pay the community back for the suffering they cause. Criminals would meet with victims and their families to discuss the impact of the offense and be assigned an appropriate sanction. Means would be sought for reintegrating the offender into the community. While the courts already have such authority, Clark said she wants to make it clear that they do and encourage them to use it.

Dee Tvedt, a south Minneapolis resident who testified in favor of the bill, said that restorative justice is a powerful way to reverse the effects of crime. "I admit I was a skeptic. I thought restorative justice sounded warm and fuzzy. Instead, I found the programs are working. Victims are empowered by having a say in the process and by interacting with the offender. We've also found that offenders are not as likely to repeat their crimes after serving in a restorative justice program."

Clark's bill would turn some misdemeanor offenses into gross misdemeanors after a second offense, including some motor vehicle, property, prostitution, and weapons

offenses, and increase officers' authority to make arrests in those cases. Some drug offenses were added to the enhanced-penalties list, but only in the cities of Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. Those measures, Clark said, are intended to slow the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

Finally, Clark said that witnesses are usually left in the dark about the outcome of a complaint, which also undermines their sense of community and safety. The bill says that prosecuting authorities will make reasonable efforts to notify witnesses of the outcome of criminal proceedings.

Stephanie Glaros, also of Minneapolis, said that new approaches to fighting crime are necessary. "I see a lot of fear and frustration in my neighborhood," she said. "We can all agree the current system isn't working. We need to give something new a chance."

HF1175 will be added to the committee's omnibus anti-crime legislation.

Preventing juvenile crime

Certain Minnesota cities would receive state grant dollars to help combat teen curfew violations, truancy, and gang infiltration, under a bill being considered by the House Economic Development Finance Division.

Committee members heard the bill (**HF479**) March 26 and are considering it for inclusion in the division's omnibus budget bill.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Jim Farrell (DFL-St. Paul), leaves blank the dollar amount it is requesting. In 1996, the Department of Economic Security received a one-time appropriation of \$340,000 to fund grants for Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and counties containing those cities.

Successful amendments expanded the program to include cities with a population of 25,000 or greater and ensured that smaller communities near the city of Duluth also could have access to help.

Lt. John Harrington, head of the juvenile division of the St. Paul Police Department, said the bill is crucial to helping cities combat a variety of juvenile problems.

The St. Paul Attendance Center processed 1,222 juveniles during the 1995-1996 school year. Picking up truants, Harrington pointed out, results in less daytime juvenile crime such as purse snatching and vandalism.

The Ramsey County Curfew Center opened in June 1996 and has processed 1,102 juveniles for violating curfew. That, Harrington said, has resulted in less vandalism and fewer personal assaults.

LaRue Fields of the Minneapolis Urban League, which runs that city's curfew and truancy center, said the endeavor is not the "end all" but a way to help young people who need some guidance in their lives. It also lets the community know that its troubled young people are not just the responsibility of police.

The problem is not restricted to the Twin Cities.

Amy Caucutt, a legislative analyst with Olmsted County, explained why Rochester would like access to the grant dollars as well. The city, she said, has seen an increase in gangs, which has resulted in street prostitution.

Knowing offenders

Under an amendment to a bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee March 26, victims of juvenile offenders would have an expanded right to learn an offender's name.

"One of the most basic questions crime victims have is 'Who did this to me?'" said Sara Schlauderaff of the Department of Public Safety. "Under current law, they can't get that without a court order."

Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka) is the sponsor of **HF147**, which he said is part of anti-gang legislation. The bill says that the name of a juvenile who is the subject of a delinquency petition shall be released to the victim upon request.

Under current law, if the juvenile is 16 or older and the crime is a felony, the city or county attorney's office can release the name to the victim. If the juvenile is 16 and the charge is a nonfelony, the name can be released only with a court order. If the juvenile is under 16, whether the charge is a felony or non-felony, the name can be released only with a court order.

The bill says that "the name of a juvenile who is the subject of a delinquency petition shall be released to the victim of the alleged delinquent act upon the victim's request."

A broader legislative effort is under way to open all juvenile proceedings and records.

HF147 has been added to the committee's omnibus bill.

Window peeping

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill March 26 that would elevate from a misdemeanor to a gross misdemeanor the crime of window peeping when the victim is under the age of 16.

Under current law, the act of surreptitiously intruding on the privacy of another

becomes a gross misdemeanor after the second offense.

"Twenty years ago, window peeping was considered a nuisance crime. We didn't take it seriously. We've learned the hard way that it is serious," said Stephany Good, of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

Good cited a study showing that 68 percent of rapists began their illegal acts with window peeping. "We also learned in a serial sexual assault case that the victims were chosen by an offender who had watched them," Good said.

"It's still not taken seriously. It's still a misdemeanor," she added.

"The bill will also allow judges the discretion of keeping a perpetrator out of circulation for eight months or beyond," said Rep. Bill Macklin (R-Lakeville). "It is also evidence of our view as a Legislature that we take the crime seriously."

HF28 will be added to omnibus crime prevention legislation.



EDUCATION

Crusade to stop hazing

High school student Nikki Cosentino claims a traditional high school rite of passage turned into a nightmare that forced her out of her school and onto what she calls a "crusade" to put a stop to hazing.

Her effort brought her to the Capitol March 25 to support a bill that would require all public school districts and postsecondary institutions to adopt anti-hazing policies.

The bill (**HF60**), sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), was approved by



Mary Cosentino, left, listened intently as her daughter, Nikki, described for the Education Quality Initiatives Subcommittee the incidents of hazing she suffered at the hands of fellow Roseville area High School students. The pair testified March 25 in favor of a bill that would mandate that each school district establish anti-hazing policies.

the Quality Initiatives Subcommittee of the House Education Committee.

Cosentino was a sophomore at Roseville Area High School in the fall of 1995 when she took part in an unofficial school tradition dubbed the "sophomore kidnap."

The event involves girls from the junior class "kidnapping" sophomore girls for a night filled with supposedly harmless, if obnoxious, activities, including dressing the younger girls in diapers and other embarrassments.

Nikki's mother, Mary Cosentino, approved of the plan. After all, she had participated in the event in the 1970s when she was a student at Kellogg High School, a predecessor to Roseville High. Back then, it was all silliness and fun.

But the event is much different now, according to the Cosentinos. When Nikki Cosentino was "kidnapped" along with more than a dozen of her classmates, she was subjected to a series of dangerous encounters.

The younger girls had vinegar poured in their eyes, green dye splashed in their hair, and eggs hurled at their heads. And, according to Cosentino, some of the girls were urinated on by older boys from the school.

"The scene was chaotic and scary," Cosentino said. "These were supposed to be our friends."

All that was bad enough, according to Cosentino. But the real trouble started the following week when she and her mother reported the incident to school officials and to the police.

Breaking the "code of silence" led to harassment and threats from other girls at the school that persisted for months even after Cosentino transferred to another school, according to Cosentino and her mother.

The Cosentino's house and one of their cars were vandalized and they received death threats, Mary Cosentino said. The Cosentinos still feel unsafe, even after going to court to get restraining orders against two of the girls involved.

"I never leave home without my pager and my cell phone because I'm in constant contact with my mother," Nikki Cosentino said.

The Cosentinos have begun an organized effort to combat hazing. They even have printed up brochures that describe hazing as anything from "requiring any period of silence" to "causing indecent exposure" to "conducting immoral or humiliating games."

They want new criminal penalties specifically addressing hazing, but Greiling's bill would not go that far.

The bill would require that the Department of Children, Families and Learning

form a model anti-hazing policy and make it available to school districts.

Schools would be required to adopt a written policy that would be included in the student handbook and posted in conspicuous places in the school. Public post-secondary institutions would meet similar requirements.

The bill now moves the full Education Committee.

School bus/city bus

School buses currently share the streets of Minneapolis and St. Paul with their public transit counterparts. They may soon share their student riders as well.

A bill (**HF1372**) approved by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee March 24 calls for a study of how public transit buses could be used to take Twin Cities students to school.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), requires that the Metropolitan Council, which runs the public transit system, consult with the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts and with an advisory board to develop a school transportation plan. The goal would be to transport at least 75 percent of Minneapolis and St. Paul ninth through 12th graders using the public transit system during the 1998-1999 school year.

The study would not only determine the economic and practical feasibility of using public transit to transport students to school, but just how to do it. Recommendations on student fares and legislation needed to make the switch also would be addressed.

The Metropolitan Council and two school districts would be asked to complete the study and report back to the Legislature by Jan. 30, 1998.

The bill now goes to the House floor.



ENVIRONMENT

Happy trails

Aficionados of old western movies know that if you're given 'til sundown to get out of Dodge, you'd best hop the stagecoach to the next county. You may soon be able to do just that under a bill to create a 40-mile historic trail through Dodge, Olmsted, and Steele counties.

Under **HF1209**, approved by the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee March 24, the Stagecoach Trail would originate at the Douglas Trail near Rochester and extend west along the Zumbro River

Valley to Owatonna. The trail would parallel U.S. Route 14 and pass through Mantorville, Wasioja, and Rice Lake State Park.

Bill sponsor Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) explained that the multipurpose paved trail would be used primarily for biking and hiking. Unpaved portions of the trail would be developed for horseback riding, mountain biking, and snowmobiling, Sviggum said. As yet, no funding has been allocated for trail development.

The bill now moves to the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.



FAMILY

Alex and Brandon Frank Act

Most Minnesotans realize that the judicial system isn't perfect, but one woman, Angela Borg of Brainerd, Minn., knows firsthand how it can fail.

In the midst of a divorce and custody battle last July, Borg's estranged husband, Kurt Frank, murdered their two sons, ages four and five.

A bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee March 26 is intended to help mend a loophole in current law that may have contributed to the tragedy.

Failures occurred throughout the couple's separation process, said bill sponsor Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby). But the worst of them allowed Frank to gain a legal advan-



Angela Borg held a photo of her two sons, 4-year-old Brandon and 5-year-old Alex, who were murdered last summer by her estranged husband who was given unsupervised visitation. She testified before the House Judiciary Committee March 21 in support of a bill that would help prevent such tragedies in the future.

tage by not contesting the order for protection, or restraining order, sought and obtained by Borg. In doing so, crucial information about his past criminal behavior, which led Borg to seek the order, did not get placed in the judicial record. A judge later awarded Kurt Frank temporary joint custody of the boys, despite Borg's request that he be allowed only supervised visits. The custody arrangement prevented police from intervening at Borg's request on the night of the murders.

"When you read the judge's decision, you'll be as appalled as I was. I was dumbstruck. I could not believe this could happen," Hasskamp said, adding that the law gives more protection to the abuser. "It protects the wrong person."

HF1031, which would be called the Alex and Brandon Frank Child Safety Act, says that a judge must consider the facts as to why the individual is seeking the restraining order before making a ruling on visitation rights, in cases where a custodial parent has been granted a restraining order and requests that the other parent be allowed only supervised visitation.

As originally introduced, Hasskamp's bill would have made a failure to contest a restraining order an admission of guilt. It also would have said that a restraining order requires supervised visitation if the other party requests it.

"This is a major life and death issue," Hasskamp had said. "The [person under the restraining order] should prove to the courts that they're not a threat to women or children, or the court can deny visitation. The bill would close a loophole."

Hasskamp's bill also establishes a pilot project to improve the courts' resolution of family issues. Domestic abuse and related matters would be assigned to a single judge to improve continuity within proceedings involving the same family. The Minnesota Supreme Court would report on this provision's effectiveness by January 2000.

HF1031 is expected to be included in the omnibus crime bill.

"Everything that happened could have been avoided," Borg told the committee. "The boys could still be here."

Gay marriage ban

A move to prohibit same-sex marriages in Minnesota cleared its second legislative hurdle in the House March 25.

The ban was added as an amendment last week to a child-support bill (**HF925**) during

a March 19 House Judiciary Committee hearing.

The proposal responds to the possibility that Hawaii may recognize same-sex marriages and would affect people who might move to Minnesota from that state. Hawaii passed a law prohibiting same-sex marriages, but a lower court ruled the law unconstitutional. An appeal has been filed with the state Supreme Court, which has not yet issued a ruling.

Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka), who sponsored the ban, has said the issue is not one of competency, and whether gays can or should raise children. Instead, the question is should the state "sanction different kinds of marriage."

Current state law defines marriage as a union of two people of different sexes, but it does not expressly prohibit same-sex marriages.

While a few Judiciary Committee members, including Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), spoke strongly against the proposal, calling it an "unnecessary attack" on some Minnesotans, the panel approved the amendment on a 15-5 vote.

Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee March 25 debated the child support provisions and approved **HF925**, but did not address the gay marriage issue.

HF925, sponsored by Rep. Mat Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), now moves to the Health and Human Services Finance Division.



GOVERNMENT

Snow removal costs



Gov. Arne Carlson signed into law March 19 a bill that spends \$20 million to help cities and counties recoup some of their weather-related costs from the record breaking snowfalls of 1997.

The funds will be divided into three parts: \$6 million to match federal disaster funds in weather-related disaster areas; \$3 million reserved for assistance associated with anticipated spring floods; and \$11 million to be distributed to local governments according to a formula based on past snow removal expenses.

The law allocates grant money to cities, counties, and towns for recent severe weather-related expenses, mostly snow removal costs.

The measure, which passed the House on March 13 and the Senate on March 17, also

Budget proposal



House Speaker Phil Carruthers and Majority Leader Ted Winter are surrounded by charts and other House DFL leaders as they announced the House DFL budget plan March 24.

contains a \$16 million appropriation for state road operations, \$95,000 for state trooper overtime related to winter emergencies, and various technical amendments to Minnesota statutes.

The new law, which became effective March 20, was sponsored in the House by Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) and in the Senate by Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy).

Wenzel said that even with state and federal aid, more damage occurred this winter than cities and towns will be able to pay for.

HF100*/SF114/CH12

Legislators as lobbyists

A bill approved by the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee on March 24 would prohibit former legislators from lobbying their former colleagues for one year after leaving office.

HF104, sponsored by Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), reads: "For the period of one calendar year after leaving office, a member of the legislature may not act as a lobbyist . . . with regard to attempting to influence legislative action." An amendment to include former state agency heads and most legislative staff to the list was added in committee.

"I've been concerned for several years of the apparent coziness of former members becoming lobbyists," Sviggum said. "It's becoming a standard perception. We, as a body, have to make a statement against it."

The problem, he explained, is that prior relationships — often friendships — between members and lobbyists can interfere — or at least appear to — with a legislator's neutrality.

Todd Paulson of Common Cause said

that the Legislature has become a "revolving door" used by legislators and former legislators. "The public is entitled to send to the Legislature people who will represent their interests. [The current situation] blurs the line between public and private interests."

According to David Schultz, also of Common Cause, 35 states have enacted similar legislation.

Before approving the measure, several members said the bill could go farther and include former staff and former executive branch employees, who make up a large number of lobbyists. Sviggum said he is trying to keep the bill narrow in scope to improve its chances of success.

Two members disagreed with the bill. Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) said it infringes on free speech rights, especially of those who lobby for the common good. "They're being good citizens," he said.

Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) said the bill "tells constituents they can't trust legislators" to use good judgment.

HF104 now goes to the House Governmental Operations Committee.

State-paid claims

The House voted to expand the authority of state agencies confronting personal injury or property loss lawsuits March 24, allowing department leaders to settle out-of-court claims of up to \$7,000.

Currently, department heads must observe a \$2,500 limit on settlements offered as a result of an injury or loss caused by the action of a state employee on the job. The House passed **HF105/SF85*** by a vote of 87-44.

The bill, sponsored in the House by Rep. Edgar Olson (DFL-Fosston), also contains a handful of specific monetary settlements for claims against the state totaling nearly \$60,000, including those for individuals working jobs in prison or who were fulfilling community service sentences.

Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) characterized the bill as non-controversial, for the most part. He did single out an appropriation of \$24,000 for Braham Area Community Development, Inc. The agency filed the claim in connection with the city's failed bid to secure a new state correctional facility. (Braham, Minn., was originally selected as the site for the prison, but for environmental reasons, it was moved to Rush City.)

Paying the claim, Sviggum said, would set a dangerous precedent.

Of the bill's \$60,000 worth of claims, nearly \$58,000 of that will be paid out of the general fund, said D'Ann Knight, clerk of the Legislative Coordinating Commission's Joint Subcommittee on Claims. The Department of Public Safety, Knight said, will pay the remainder.

"This is a very small claims bill," Knight said. "Usually they have over \$100,000 worth of claims in them."

HF105/SF85* awaits Gov. Arne Carlson's signature.

Ethical open door

Future ethics proceedings involving the alleged improprieties of House members will be more open to the public, under the Permanent Rules of the House passed March 24. The vote was 121-11.

The House rules, largely technical and governing how the lower chamber functions and operates, address everything from how members use the electronic voting system to the use of offensive words in debate. Also included: ethics investigations.

In the past, complaints referred to the Ethics Committee were private, or held "in confidence," until a public hearing was scheduled on the matter. Under the new rules, the very existence of a complaint, any supporting materials, and all proceedings of the Ethics Committee are presumed to be open. A majority vote of the four-member bipartisan committee could close the proceedings to determine probable cause, to consider a member's medical or other health records, or to protect someone's privacy (such as a child or third party).

The changes stem largely from incidents that occurred during the 1996 session. In one, Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) made public the existence of an ethics inves-

tigation, contrary to House rules. He was immediately removed from the Ethics Committee, but lauded publicly.

Under the new rules, recommendations of the committee must be supported by "clear and convincing evidence," and would then be forwarded to the House floor. In the past, ethics determinations were forwarded to the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee, a panel without an equal balance of DFLers and Republicans, which could amend or reject the ethics panel's recommendations before they were forwarded to the full House.

Previous rules referred only to complaints "regarding a member's conduct." The new rules specifically address conduct "that betrays the public trust or that tends to bring the House into dishonor or disrepute," in addition to violating rules or policies of the House.

Also adopted was an amendment prohibiting employees from campaigning during work hours and using House equipment for

such purposes. It also states that House employees cannot be made to assist in campaign activities as a condition of employment. The change comes in the wake of a lawsuit (later dismissed) brought by a Senate employee who claimed she was forced to perform campaign duties within the State Capitol on state time.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education direction

Should the state be closely involved in setting the direction for Minnesota's colleges and universities in the coming decades? Or should the institutions be given a chance to set it themselves?

That was the focus of a recent discussion before the House Education Committee's Higher Education Finance Division. In recent years, the Legislature has worked to increase coordination between the state's institutions of higher learning, creating in 1995 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), a coordinating body between all state higher learning facilities except the University of Minnesota (U of M). Since then, MnSCU, the U of M, and the state's private colleges have begun to coordinate some operations and plan initiatives together.

HF304, sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), would set up a commission to develop a master plan for higher education in Minnesota. The commission would consist of legislators, governor appointees, MnSCU and U of M representatives, and students.

"I'm concerned that we lack a statewide plan for higher education," Opatz told the committee. "We've seen the U of M and MnSCU engage in strategic planning, as have other institutions. But we have no idea of their mission or focus. We don't have a plan that incorporates all those plans."

But Ray Cross, president of Northwest Technical Institute, said the bill should be put on hold. "The committee should give us a chance to work through some of our strategic plans over the next two years. If we can't do a good job, then I support this legislation," he said. "We're overloaded with planning activities, as are MnSCU and the U of M."

"I'd like to reach a steady state before getting into another round of strategic planning," said MnSCU's Bill Ulland.

Marvin Marshak, of the U of M, said he'd prefer to see the state direct the existing boards of MnSCU and the U of M, rather than create a third body.

Eagle center



Frank Taylor, curator of birds at the Raptor Center in St. Paul, holds an American Bald Eagle as Mary Rivers, vice president of Eagle Watch, testifies before the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee March 24 for funding to establish the American Bald Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minn.

Opatz said the commission would not duplicate efforts and agreed that oversight of existing boards might be a way to provide a statewide focus.

But Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) said that the commission is a good idea. "We don't want to have all the institutions come in with agendas and secret scenarios. That's what creates conflict between the systems and the Legislature," she said. "I thoroughly support this bill. It's exactly what I'm looking for."

HF304 will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill to be voted on later this session.

College savings boost

The House Education Committee approved a bill March 25 that would set aside \$30 million for EdVest, a plan that encourages families to save for college. The program provides a savings account for low-income students to help pay for postsecondary education.

HF375, sponsored by Rep. Hilda Bettermann (R-Brandon), would offer families two choices. In the first, families could deduct up to \$2,000 from their taxable income for investing the same amount in EdVest accounts. The earnings on the accounts would be exempt from state taxes, and could result in a maximum tax benefit of \$170 per year.

The second option is the state matching grant program, in which earnings on the accounts are deferred under both federal and state income taxes, and the state makes a matching contribution to the accounts.

The state's matching grant would equal 15 percent of the family's contributions for each beneficiary (the child and future student). Like the income tax subtraction option, families could contribute up to \$2,000 per year, per beneficiary. Both federal and state income taxes would be deferred on the account earnings. The maximum matching benefit would be \$300 per beneficiary.

The program would encourage matching contributions from individuals, foundations, and businesses to provide additional grants to participating students.

HF375 now heads to the House Taxes Committee.

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Rural residency

Seven years ago, the state began a program to encourage physicians to practice in rural communities. Many such areas suffered shortages or a complete absence of physicians. The program pays off medical school loans up to \$40,000 in exchange for a commitment to work in rural communities.

A bill (**HF1385**) sponsored by Rep. Hilda Bettermann (R-Brandon) and approved March 24 by the House Education Committee's Higher Education Finance Division, is designed to make the program more effective.

"It is vital to get residents and physicians into our rural areas," Bettermann said.

The bill would allow the Rural Physician Loan Forgiveness Programs to exclusively recruit residents instead of a combination of students and residents.

Current law allows for the selection of 12 participants annually; eight medical residents and four fourth-year medical students, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. However, selection of medical students in their fourth year offers no immediate financial advantage to the students and creates a three- to five-year funding gap for the department.

Once a student has agreed to be part of the program, explained Wayne Carlson, of the health department, he or she may often spend several years in a residency program before practicing in the rural area. In fact, participants have up to six years after joining the program before they must go to the rural area. During this time, departmental money is earmarked and can't be used for other purposes, Carlson said.

"We have an average three-year wait for a student," said Carlson. "The wait is only six months for a resident. The bill allows us to get physicians into the community much more quickly."

HF1385 now heads for the House Education Committee.



HOUSING

Emergency calls allowed

Tenants would be able to call the police for emergency assistance without fear of retaliation from their landlords under a bill approved by the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division March 25.

HF686, sponsored by Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), would prohibit rental

lease provisions that bar or limit tenant calls for police or emergency assistance or penalize tenants for making such calls.

Landlords often impose such provisions in response to local ordinances which require tenants to be evicted after a specified number of emergency police calls. The bill also would prohibit such local ordinances, which were often enacted to combat drug dealers. The proposal would not affect local laws requiring landlords to stop nuisance or disorderly conduct on their rental property.

Paymar told the committee that the state attorney general's office has received reports of landlords threatening domestic abuse victims with eviction if they continue calling the police. "This situation needs to be changed," Paymar said.

The bill now moves to the House floor.
(See March 14, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 6.)



HUMAN SERVICES

Welfare proposal advances

A welfare bill that, so far, contains no specific appropriations but promises to spend \$733 million in both state and federal dollars over the 1998-1999 budgeting period is on its way to the House floor.

The House Ways and Means Committee March 25 approved **SF1*/HF159**, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris).

The bill uses Minnesota dollars to make up for some of the federal cuts to legal immigrants, requires families on welfare to work or be penalized, and discourages welfare moms from having another child while on public assistance.

The bill spends about \$22.2 million more over the two-year budgeting period than Gov. Arne Carlson's welfare proposal and about \$27 million less than the Senate's.

Overall, the bill would expand statewide an experimental welfare-to-work program operating in a handful of Minnesota counties over the past two years. The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) would become permanent Jan. 1, 1998, in all 87 Minnesota counties.

MFIP allows families to accept lower-paying jobs while receiving some public assistance such as extra monthly cash and subsidized child and health care. In theory, allowing someone to work while still receiving benefits helps a low-skilled parent gain work experience and eventually obtain a better job.

MFIP statewide would replace the traditional Aid to Families with Dependent Chil-

dren (AFDC) program done away with by the 1996 federal welfare law. And, in keeping with federal law, the bill sets a five-year, lifetime limit on receiving MFIP welfare checks.

Money for **SF1*/HF159** is expected to be incorporated into the omnibus Health and Human Services budget bill later this session. Money for the increased demand for child care as a result of welfare moms and dads going to work is expected in a budget bill from the Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Division.

States across the country are hurrying to pass new welfare laws after the federal government scrapped the long-standing welfare system in August 1996.

(See Jan. 24, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 9; Feb. 7, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 3 and page 12; March 7, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 17; and March 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 15.)



INDUSTRY

Return of the phone wars

Two bills approved March 20 by the House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee would mean big changes to telecommunications companies in Minnesota.

Current law separates long-distance telephone service providers and local service providers. That's part of the arrangement established after the Bell Systems breakup in the early 1980s. Minnesota is divided into five long-distance areas (LATAs), throughout which long-distance companies compete to provide service. Local service

providers, such as US West, can provide long-distance service within a single LATA, in addition to providing local service.

House files **1171** and **1172**, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), would change that, making the state one large LATA and allowing US West and other local service providers to provide long-distance service throughout the state.

The bills, Jennings said, anticipate changes called for by the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act, which will allow long-distance companies to begin offering local service, and local companies to provide extended long-distance service. The proposals are designed to help local companies compete on even footing with nationwide long-distance providers when the federal changes are in full effect.

Long-distance companies say that the bills are unfair and illegal. According to Teresa Lynch, of AT&T, the bills ignore many of the federal act's limitations and give local service providers, who currently enjoy a monopoly in their service areas, a competitive advantage. Jennings' proposals would allow local providers to get into the market prematurely, she said.

Jennings believes the long-distance companies will be better positioned to enter local markets than the locals will to enter the long-distance market. Under the bills, he said, competition will be equitable. "I'm trying to collapse the time frame," he said, and give local providers a foothold in Minnesota's long-distance industry at the same time the local market is open to competition.

That violates the law, Lynch said. "The federal act says you can't have that edge,"

and lays out how and when competition should take place, with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) serving as overseer. "We feel the state has no authority to change LATA boundaries. It is clearly contrary to the federal act and seeks to bypass [provisions] that address a [local operator's] authority to enter the inter-LATA market," Lynch said.

Jennings cited federal act provisions that say otherwise, specifically that a state can change LATAs when it would be "pro-competitive and otherwise in the public interest." He also said his bill provides consumer-friendly safeguards for when full competition is in effect. For instance, local service providers must not exclude residential customers in order to focus on more lucrative commercial accounts, and must charge all customers — rural and urban — the same rate for basic service.

AT&T's list of objections also says that the bills "immediately deregulate most, if not all, of US West's monopoly services by allowing the company to 'repackage' existing services in the guise of 'new services.'" Further, they said, the bills would keep intrastate long distance rates for AT&T and other carriers artificially high, and would allow local provider US West to charge inflated prices when long distance companies have to interconnect with them. (Competing companies routinely share networks and technology as a matter of necessity due to the nature of telephone technology). The company also says the bills would repeal consumer protections, and weaken the authority of the PUC.

Ultimately, Jennings said, the legislation will make telephone service more competitive and save consumers money.

HF1171 and **HF1172** now move to the House floor.



INSURANCE

Snowmobile insurance

A bill that would require all snowmobile owners to carry liability insurance was approved March 26 by the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

HF406, sponsored by Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), calls for a number of changes in state law in response to the mounting death toll involving snowmobile accidents this winter.

Minnesota has suffered a spate of snowmobile-related accidents this winter, claiming the lives 32 snowmobilers and bystanders.

Welfare protest



Welfare rights advocates marched away from the State Office Building after their entrance was barred March 25. Earlier in the day, five of the demonstrators were arrested after staging a protest in the office of House Speaker Phil Carruthers against changes in welfare benefits.

Peterson's bill prescribes a series of new measures to prevent such a death toll in the future.

The bill would mandate that all snowmobilers take a state-approved safety course before they can ride. (Current law requires only those under 18 to take such training.) And the bill would reduce the nighttime speed limit for snowmobiles from the current 50 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour.

The bill also would double the snowmobile registration fee — from \$30 to \$60 every three years — for machines with engines larger than 335 cubic centimeters. The increased revenue would be used to improve state snowmobile trails.

Debate in the committee focused on provisions related to insurance. The bill would require snowmobile owners to purchase a minimum of \$60,000 in liability insurance. Failure to comply would result in misdemeanor charges and revocation of the owner's snowmobile registration for 60 days during the winter season.

"Even the safest, most experienced rider can encounter conditions where he or she may lose control and cause injury to another person," Peterson said. "I would feel immensely more comfortable knowing that the other people on the trail were covered."

The bill also drew support from the families of some killed in snowmobile-related accidents this year.

Lori Renken's 10-year-old son was killed in January by a passing snowmobiler on the street in front of his home in Big Lake, Minn., she said her family's problems have been compounded because the 20-year-old man who hit her son did not have insurance.

In addition to dealing with the loss of her son, Renken has had to absorb financial losses stemming from the incident, including funeral expenses.

"It's not fair," Renken said. "I shouldn't have to pay for my son's death. I'm already paying enough."

The Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association offered support for most provisions of the bill but opposed the plan to require snowmobilers to buy insurance.

Doug Franzen, a lobbyist for the group, said the insurance requirements would be too costly and would not reach the problem snowmobilers. The riders who pose the most serious danger on the trails most likely would ignore the requirement, he said.

"Frankly, liability insurance will not prevent these sorts of tragedies," Franzen said. "We want to focus all of our resources on prevention."

Peterson said the insurance would likely cost snowmobile owners less than \$30 a year, but the snowmobile group official said the insurance could cost as much as \$200 a year.

The bill now moves to the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.



LABOR

Employment contracts

The need for a bill requiring written employment agreements in the employee's native language was underscored by testimony before the House LaborManagement Relations Committee March 24.

Speaking through an interpreter, Manuel Torres told the panel that in February he and seven other Mexicans were recruited in Atlanta to work for a janitorial service in Minnesota. They were promised \$1,200 a month plus housing, food, and warm clothing in exchange for working eight-hour shifts, six days per week.

"Instead, we worked 11 hours per day and seven days per week," Torres said. "We were living nine to a room and fed one hamburger every 24 hours. We were locked in and couldn't leave. When we complained, they beat us. . . . In the end, we never were paid."

As Torres tearfully ended his testimony, Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) commented, "I thought indentured servitude ended a long time ago in this country."

HF216, sponsored by Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul), has already been laid over

until next year because of concerns that it would be an unmanageable burden to employers. But Mariani asked for a hearing because Torres and his fellow workers do not plan to stay in Minnesota much longer. The testimony prompted several lawmakers to pledge support for the bill next year.

Margarita Zalamea, executive director of the Chicano-Latino Affairs Council, urged the Legislature to support the bill. Reminding the panel of a 1995 settlement against Minneapolis-based meat processor GFI America, Zalamea said, "There has been a history of such abuses in Minnesota."

Protecting contract workers

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill March 26 that would protect contract workers from workplace discrimination.

HF787 would add such discrimination to the list of unfair employment practices in current law. As contract work becomes more common, so are the acts of discrimination.

"It's happening more and more," said Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson), the bill's sponsor. "It's becoming a common work situation."

A typical scenario would involve a temporary worker directed to a business. Because the worker isn't officially an employee of the business where the discrimination took place, the business could claim it is not responsible.

"After the discriminatory act happens, it's not clear who is responsible. The [hiring company] says [the person is] 'not our em-

Preventing homelessness



Daisy Barton, of Eden Prairie, with daughter Risikat, left, and son Kiante, went before the Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Division March 24. Barton, who was once homeless, testified in support of a bill that would establish an emergency services grant program to prevent homelessness and more efficiently get people out of shelters and into transitional and permanent housing.

ployee.' The contracting company says it's not their responsibility," Hilty said.

The bill says it is illegal to discriminate against anyone in an employer's workplace who is providing services according to an agreement with the employer.

"The bill makes it clear that the responsibility is with the business where the discriminatory act took place."

HF787 now heads to the House floor.



LAW

Underage ID



Effective Aug. 1, 1997, a new state law will clearly mark state identification cards for people under the legal drinking age.

Gov. Arne Carlson signed a bill

March 19 that will require state identification cards for people under 21 years old to include markings similar to driver's licenses for that age group.

Under the new law, identification cards for people under the legal drinking age will be a distinguishing color and labeled "Under-21." The cards will expire on the holder's 21st birthday.

Minnesota identification cards, which provide a form of legal identification for non-drivers, are issued by the Department of Public Safety. There is a \$12.50 fee, and cards for people under 65 years old are normally valid for four years. Senior citizens are issued cards that do not expire.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) and Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) sponsored the legislation.

HF40/SF129*/CH13

Chilling public participation

A bill that protects citizens from frivolous lawsuits won approval from the House Judiciary Committee March 24.

They're called SLAPP suits, for strategic litigation against public participation. A few years ago, it came to the attention of courts and lawmakers that some parties — usually commercial interests — were using the courts to effectively deny others — usually private citizens or citizen groups — their right to free speech.

In such a scenario, a developer proposing to build a garbage dump encounters protests from local citizens. He sues them, possibly for defamation.

The suit will very likely fail in court, bill sponsor Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls)

said. "But the minute the citizens spend their first dollar having to defend themselves, they've lost." Worse, he said, the threat of lawsuits will have a chilling effect on public participation.

In 1994, the Legislature passed a law to protect against SLAPP suits, requiring developers or others filing the legal action to prove that they had been harmed by the person or people whose words or actions were at issue. If developers could not, such a lawsuit was to be dismissed.

But some have avoided the law by suing in federal rather than state court.

HF642, approved by the committee, would address that problem. The bill allows an action for damages and attorney fees in state court against someone who sues an individual in federal court in a SLAPP suit. The bill says: "If the person demonstrates that the respondent's action in federal court was brought for the purpose of harassment, to inhibit the person's public participation, to interfere with the person's exercise of protected constitutional rights... the court shall award damages..."

"This goes a step further [than existing law]," Skoglund said. "It says you can't do it in federal court either."

HF642 now heads for the House floor.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mesabi County?

In the Civil War, it was the South that tried to secede from the Union. But in Minnesota's St. Louis County, the rebels are northerners from the Iron Range and they want a new county.

Nothing ticks off citizens like taxes, and in northern Minnesota, they may split a county over it.

The debate centers around St. Louis County, Minnesota's largest. Duluth, a large urban center, sits in the southwest corner, but the Iron Range stretches across much of it.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) would let voters decide in 1998 whether to cut off the northern three-fourths of St. Louis County and form a new county. "We might call it Mesabi County," Rukavina said.

Rukavina said that although the Iron Range has 41 percent of the county's population, it pays 49 percent of county taxes and receives only 35 percent of the county's spending.

"This is a question of democracy and equal representation," said Rukavina. "It goes back to the Biblical expression, 'Let my people

go.'" A new county seat would be established in Buhl, which Rukavina called a neutral site between the two larger towns of Hibbing and Virginia. The courthouses in those two towns would continue to be maintained, he said.

The measure (**HF698**) was approved by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee March 25.

The idea of splitting St. Louis County has been around for more than a hundred years, Rukavina told the committee.

He handed out copies of an article from the *St. Louis County Journal* of March 1, 1888. "It seems to be the general opinion with all Vermillion mining men that St. Louis County is too large and that it ought to be divided," the article began.

The matter has been discussed ever since, Rukavina said. The last time the voters spoke in 1954, however, they rejected a move to split the county. A 1974 study concluded that such a split was feasible but pointed out that it would have more advantages for the Iron Range than for Duluth. Another study was authorized last year by the St. Louis County Board.

At 6,092 square miles, St. Louis County is the largest county in the nation east of the Mississippi River. With 198,212 people, it is the fifth most populous county in the state. St. Louis County stretches more than 125 miles from the Canadian to the Wisconsin border.

John Garland, director of government relations for St. Louis County, urged the committee to hold off on the bill until the county completes its study of the matter. "We feel that to pass this measure now will politicize the study and its outcome," Garland said.

HF698 will go to the House Floor.



METRO AFFAIRS

Met Council survives

The Metropolitan Council has a new lease on life, albeit a one-year lease. A proposal to abolish the council has stalled in the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

Members of the committee March 24 decided to lay over the bill (**HF783**) for study during the interim. The committee took the action with the intention to bring the proposal back for debate during the 1998 legislative session.

Bill sponsor Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lake-land) described her bill as a work in progress and did not resist the move to delay action on the measure. However, she argued the

Metropolitan Council has expanded far beyond its original mission and that lawmakers need to consider the necessity of such an entity.

"There is very little accountability for how the tax dollars are spent" by the council, Larsen said.

Created in 1967, the Metropolitan Council includes a chairperson and 16 other members (representing different portions of the metro area), all of whom are appointed by the governor. The council is responsible for comprehensive regional planning in the Twin Cities area.

The council oversees regional transit systems, wastewater treatment facilities, regional parks, and other initiatives. It manages about 3,500 employees and functions on an annual budget of about \$360 million, which is derived in part from property taxes.

Criticism of the council has focused on its far-reaching programs and authority over local government units more closely linked to their constituents.

The transportation committee also heard a spirited defense of the Metropolitan Council from current and former members of the body and others who see value in regional government efforts.

Lyle Wray, executive director of the Citizen's League, said many of the challenges facing individual cities in the metro area are best addressed on the regional level.

He cautioned against disassembling the council at a time when other urban regions throughout the country are struggling to create methods to deal with regional issues.

"In the world economy, the region is where the action is," Wray said. "Regions will have to work together to do well."

Larsen said taking time to study the issue will allow lawmakers to decide if regional government is necessary and, if so, what form it should take. (See March 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 12.)

Electing the Met Council

A bill that would transform the Metropolitan Council into an elective body won approval from the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs, and Elections Committee on March 24.

The Metropolitan Council, created in 1967, is responsible for comprehensive regional planning for the seven-county metropolitan area. One of the largest regional governments in the nation, it also oversees: the regional bus system; several waste water treatment facilities; and Metro Mobility, a transit operation serving the disabled. It over-

sees an annual budget of about \$360 million, which is partially paid by property taxes, and manages about 3,500 employees. The council is governed by a board of 17 members appointed by the governor, each representing a different portion of the metro region.

"The Metropolitan Council is the second largest unit of local government in the state," after Hennepin County, said Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls), the bill's sponsor. He said that when an official body has as much authority as the council, it should be and usually is elected. "When you're going to levy that kind of money, the people should have a right to elect the officers. Taxation without representation is fundamentally contrary to our constitution."

But Bill Schreiber, a Metropolitan Council member from the second district, said that the council only levies as directed by the Legislature. "We view ourselves an arm of the Legislature," Schreiber said, adding that the committee should consider the role it wants to play in local governance. An elected Metropolitan Council would lead to divisiveness and more government, he said.

Schreiber added that the council has not taken a formal stand on the bill, but believes most members are opposed to it.

HF423 "moves to the intent of the original framers of the Metropolitan Council in 1967," Orfield said at a previous meeting. "They believed that the council should be elected. That prevailed in the House but failed on a tie vote in the Senate in 1967."

Council elections would be nonpartisan and public funding provided for qualified candidates. Salaries of council members would not change.

HF423 now moves to the House Floor. (See March 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 12.)



SPORTS

State high school league

A proposal to increase legislative oversight of the Minnesota State High School League was rejected March 26 by the House Education Committee.

HF747, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), drew opposition from the league, a nonprofit organization that regulates athletics and other extra-curricular activities for public and private high schools throughout the state, and from committee members who are satisfied with the league's track record.

"Although nobody ever likes to see a plane

crash, this is one 747 that should never take off," said Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), who added that he has received no complaints about the league but has heard from plenty of people opposed to Kahn's bill.

Kahn described the league as a body that has the authority of a state agency and functions on public dollars (received via school districts) but is subject to none of the oversight required for government agencies.

She raised questions about the overall performance of the league and about the salaries of some of its top officers, who earn more than the commissioners of some state departments.

"This attitude that the league is above the law and that it has complete autonomy is completely unacceptable," Kahn, whose bill has the backing of Gov. Arne Carlson, said.

The bill calls for the league's budget to be submitted to the Legislature for approval, as is the case with other state agencies.

Education Committee members deleted a provision in the bill that would have required the governor to appoint the league's president, and the committee later rejected the entire bill on a voice vote.

The league's defenders included its board members and school officials who have worked closely with the league.

Len Olson, a teacher and basketball coach at Owatonna High School, said the league has a history of success in guiding high school athletics in the state.

"The high school league is free of political pressures. It is administrated honestly," Olson said. "... They have done things the correct way." (See March 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 12.)



TAXES

Tightening TIF regulation

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) and Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) presented a bill March 26 to the House Taxes Committee that would increase the amount of regulation surrounding the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) throughout Minnesota.

"We recognize that Tax Increment Financing is a valuable development tool ... [but] when TIF money is spent for anything but tax-base projects, it's really like taking money from schools," Ozment said. **HF1574**, he continued, would prevent communities from abusing the tax increment process. The panel did not vote on the measure.

Minnesota communities use Tax Increment Financing to fund economic development and other public improvement projects with property tax dollars. A city or a town creates a TIF district for a certain period of time — usually 20 years — and effectively freezes the property tax rates within that area at what is called the “original tax capacity.”

As development within the TIF district progresses and the value of the property climbs, the property taxes paid over and above the original tax capacity — the “increment” in Tax Increment Financing — is “captured” by the municipality to cover development costs. Ultimately, tax dollars that would ordinarily flow through to the county and school districts to pay for education are, in effect, spent on economic development.

And some of the economic development, Ozment said, is dubious, at best. Indeed, a March 1996 report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor documents years of tax increment abuse.

According to the report, communities can use TIF dollars for a strictly defined list of scenarios: redevelopment, renewal and renovation, soil conditioning, housing, economic development, mined underground space development, and hazardous substance cleanup.

Despite the fact that the Legislature has moved to regulate TIF five times since 1979, some communities continue to misuse the system, either by using tax increment dollars to fund projects that don’t meet the “but-for” test (which states the use of a TIF district would increase the taxable market value of a site over what would have occurred without TIF), or by failing to decertify their TIF districts after the development has been completed. Before any project can go ahead, Ozment pointed out, current law says it must meet the “but-for” test.

HF1574, Ozment said, would require developers to document that a new project, or additional spending in an existing TIF district, meets the but-for test. Increment dollars unspent upon decertification of a district would have to be returned to the city, county, and school district. A district that went three years without any development activity would automatically be decertified.

In addition, **HF1574** explicitly defines tax increment terminology and details the spending restrictions to which redevelopment districts are subject.

The committee will hear further testimony on the bill at a later date.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology agency

A bill heard by the State Government Finance Division March 26 would elevate the Minnesota Office of Technology from a division of the Department of Children, Families and Learning to an independent state agency within the executive branch.

The idea behind the proposal (**HF120**), said bill sponsor Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), is to create a strong measure of accountability in light of the increased number of technology initiatives currently before the Legislature. As things now stand, Kahn said, the responsibility for decisions concerning technology is scattered among several different state agencies, with much of it lying in the Department of Administration.

“We’re just setting a clear line of authority,” for decisions, Kahn said. “The authority is within the Office of Technology.”

If **HF120** wins approval, the office’s executive director would be charged with reviewing and coordinating state and intergovernmental information systems and the entire technology infrastructure. The technology office would also develop, in conjunction with an advisory council, a plan to provide access to information gathered by the government.

Under the bill, the technology director would have full power to approve the new agency’s contracts — including bids for hardware, software, and services. These contracts, along with any other competitive bid process, currently exist under the Department of Administration.

Perhaps most importantly, Kahn said, the technology director would have the power to delegate responsibility for the office’s activities to other state agencies.

Gov. Arne Carlson created the Office of Technology in May 1996 by executive order, said Michael Norton, the office’s deputy director, placing it in the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

“It was created there mainly because the lion’s share of the investments in technology are in the area of education,” said Norton, who did not testify at the meeting.

The measure has support from both sides of the aisle. Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) said the Republican caucus believes in **HF120**. Several other Republican members also expressed their approval.

“Remember, what we’re talking about spending on technology is roughly equivalent to building a baseball stadium,” said Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview). “Ac-

countability is imperative . . . someone has to steer the ship.”

The committee declined to act on the bill until it hears more testimony from the affected state agencies.



TRANSPORTATION

Snowmobile safety

Two bills designed to improve snowmobile safety were approved March 26 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

Minnesota has seen a rash of fatal snowmobile accidents this year; a total of 32 people have died.

Both bills approved by the committee would increase snowmobile registration fees, but the proposals prescribe a variety of measures to address safety concerns.

HF770, sponsored by Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby-Ironton), has been named the Joshua Renken and Stacy Schlosser Snowmobile Safety Act in honor of two Minnesota youths who died after being struck by snowmobiles this season.

Under the bill, anyone born after 1950 would be required to complete a training course to gain a safety certificate to operate a snowmobile.

The nighttime speed limit for snowmobiles would be reduced from 50 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour, and municipalities would be allowed to set speed limits for traveling alongside roads or highways of up to 10 miles per hour lower than the posted limit for automobile traffic.

Anyone without a valid driver’s license would be barred from operating a snowmobile with an engine larger than 440 cubic centimeters, under Hasskamp’s proposal.

The bill also would double registration fees to \$60 for three years and apply a new funding formula to dictate allocations from the state’s snowmobile trails and enforcement account.

Funds from the account would be divided as follows: 50 percent for state grants to local snowmobile clubs for trail maintenance, 25 percent to maintain the state’s own trails, and 25 percent for enforcement of snowmobile laws.

HF407, sponsored by Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), focuses on generating increased revenue for snowmobile trail improvements and maintenance and for enforcement of snowmobile laws.

Continued on page 17

New members . . .

Mullery tackles crime, neighborhood livability, jobs

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) may be a newcomer to the Minnesota Legislature, but he is not new to Minnesota politics. The Minneapolis native has worked on about



Rep. Joe Mullery

100 DFL campaigns over the past 20 years.

All that experience paid off when former District 58A Rep. Jim Rice decided not to seek re-election last year. Mullery campaigned for the DFL primary election with Rice's endorsement. Rice, however, passed away before the November general election after serving in the Legislature for 26 years. "People are constantly asking me what it is like to be filling Jim Rice's shoes," Mullery said. "It's impossible. I don't think anybody could do that."

Mullery's district is an area of mostly working class neighborhoods in the northwestern corner of Minneapolis. There, Mullery grew up in the Victory neighborhood where he still lives. His parents were both school teachers. His father taught at Henry High School for 39 years. A scholarship helped Mullery attend St. Thomas Academy. From there, he went on to the University of Minnesota for his undergraduate and law degrees.

After working a few years with a law firm, Mullery set up his own practice in downtown Minneapolis. He handles a wide range

of civil law cases with a specialty in real estate law. He has served as chair of the Civil Litigation Section of the Hennepin County Bar Association.

Since becoming involved in DFL politics in 1974, Mullery said he "served as district chair a couple of times and on the state DFL Central Committee for 16 years." One of the campaigns Mullery led was for the Quality Education Coalition, a group of reform-minded DFL candidates that took over the Minneapolis School Board a few years ago.

Mullery said that he had not intended to seek office last year. "When he [Rice] announced that he wouldn't run, I had to make a decision quickly because I wasn't planning on it. I went to the DFL convention along with three other candidates, but nobody was endorsed," he said.

The campaign set in motion a flurry of activity for the busy lawyer. "For the next few months I was campaigning and, at the same time, trying to finish as many of my legal cases as possible," he said.

Mullery won the DFL primary in September and went on to take 74 percent of the vote in the general election.

He said that even though his district has not seen a lot of violence, the top five issues during the campaign were "Crime, crime, crime, crime, and crime. In some areas there are a lot of drug houses and noisy parties. Two years ago there were a number of car arsons in one area."

Senior issues and education are two other concerns important to District 58A voters, Mullery added. "I ran into a number of people who said they would be moving when their kids got to junior high. Minneapolis grade schools still have a pretty good reputation but not the junior highs."

Welfare also comes up as an issue in the district. "There is a pretty widespread feeling that the present system encourages anti-social behavior," Mullery said. "The people most strongly against welfare are those working two jobs to make ends meet. Overall, most people feel that they could go along with welfare reform if there also is money for child care and training."

Mullery also said he would like to see neighborhoods get more power to deal with problem properties, landlords, and tenants, and is working on legislation to that effect.

— Steve Compton

District 58A

Population: 32,114
Largest city: Minneapolis
Counties: Hennepin
Location: northwestern Minneapolis
Top concern: "In addition to crime, there are still a lot of working people and union concerns in my district—concerns about jobs, pensions, livable wage, minimum wage, retraining programs, workplace safety, and re-employment workers."

— Rep. Joe Mullery

Continued from page 16

Snowmobile registration fees would increase from \$30 to \$45 for three years and temporarily increase the amount of state gas tax revenues designated for snowmobile-related purposes. During fiscal year 1998, 1 percent — up from the current 0.75 percent — of gas tax revenues would be earmarked for snowmobile trails and enforcement.

Also, the bill would appropriate \$1 million annually in 1997, 1998, and 1999 for grants to improve snowmobile trails across the state.

Both bills now move to the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

Hauling sports toys

Outdoor enthusiasts would be able to haul a bit more on the highway, under a bill approved March 24 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF1111, sponsored by Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka), would allow a trailer carrying a motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-

terrain vehicle to be pulled at the back of a three-vehicle combination.

Current law allows such combinations only when the front vehicle is a pickup truck, the second is a camper, and the third is a boat trailer. The combination cannot exceed 60 feet in length.

Weaver's bill would simply expand the limits on what can be carried on the trailer at the back of the combination. The bill would make Minnesota's law more consistent with those in neighboring states.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Skare brings experience to property tax debate

First-term Rep. Gail Skare (DFL-Bemidji) enjoys reading. In fact, when she came to the Capitol back in January, she brought a book by a Bemidji author with her, hoping that



Rep. Gail Skare

she would get a chance to enjoy it in her spare moments.

"I haven't touched it. Lately, I spend most of my time reading things like this," she said, pointing to a thick stack of bills, summaries, and revenue impact state-

ments on the table next to her. "This is my bedtime reading tonight."

Nor has she had the time to indulge in one of her other favorite activities: cross-country skiing. "Meanwhile, my husband's back in Bemidji, getting out every day," she said.

These days, most of Skare's time belongs to the state, in the form of hearings, meetings, and long hours hitting the books, learning as much as she can about the issues that confront a new representative who sits on four committees.

Yet Skare would have it no other way. She is, after all, a legislator.

"Sometimes I feel so overwhelmed," she said with a quick grin, "but I'll walk into that House chamber and a little thrill wells up inside me . . . I'm really part of this!" Which by no means should imply that Skare is some neophyte just happy to have a place at the table.

On the contrary, Skare made her share of tough calls as a Beltrami County Commissioner, a post she held for 10 years before she won election to the House. That job, she

said, was great training for her current role. Indeed, she's more than familiar with property taxes and local government/social services funding formulas. For the most part, she said, the issues are the same; only the perspective has changed. No longer can she confine the scope of her decision to Beltrami County; with her seat in the Legislature comes the obligation to consider the impact her vote will have on the entire state.

Winning that seat, though, was no walk in the northern Minnesota woods.

Things looked good in the beginning, Skare said, but before it was over she had to endure some tough — yet effective — campaign tactics at the hands of her Republican opponent. Polls showed that at one point Skare led her challenger by a nearly two-to-one margin. Yet when all the ballots were counted, she had won by less than 2 percent — a mere 277 votes.

She attributes the erosion of support to a questionnaire mailed out by the National Rifle Association to political candidates in the closing days of the campaign. The organization gave her a low grade, and awarded her opponent a much higher rating.

"He capitalized on it," Skare said. "He sent out a letter saying I was anti-hunting and anti-gun. I could feel the support slipping away."

In fact, she said, nothing could be further from the truth. Her husband is an avid hunter, as are her sons.

"I've never been anti-hunting," she said. "I've got bear rugs in my basement. It was hard to fight that statement eight days before the election."

Skare looks forward to working hard over the course of her term, particularly on property tax reform. She sits not only on the Taxes Committee, but also on the group's Sales and Income Tax Division. She also has a place on the Agriculture Committee and the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

In addition to property taxes, Skare said, many of her constituents have told her education issues are a high priority, along with welfare reform, particularly how the new federal mandates will affect services on a local level. But as a first-term member who happens to have more than a little experience in local government, she's realistic about just how much she can change things on the state side.

"I'm not hung up on . . . having to carry a bill — not that I won't," Skare said. "My role is to use my background on how things affect local government and try to give perspective from that end."

— F.J. Gallagher

District 4A

1996 population: 34,564

Largest city: Bemidji

Counties: Beltrami, Hubbard

Location: northern Minnesota

Top concern: "My desire is to better the relationship between state and local governments — distribute resources more equitably between communities and provide some flexibility in how communities execute state mandates."

— Rep. Gail Skare

Committee deadlines

Each year the House and Senate set deadlines by which most bills must be heard in a committee and forwarded through the process. The deadlines serve to weed out some of the several thousand bills introduced each year.

The first committee deadline is **Wednesday, March 26**. That means all bills must be passed out of all policy committees in their house of origin to receive further consideration this session. If a

House bill hasn't been approved by House policy committees by the deadline, but its Senate companion has, the bill has met the committee deadline.

By the second committee deadline — **Wednesday, April 9** — all bills other than those containing appropriations, must be passed out of all policy committees in both the House and the Senate. The deadline does not apply to the finance divisions of the committees or the Rules and Legislative Administration Committee, the Taxes

Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee.

By **Friday, April 18**, all appropriations bills must clear their policy and finance committees and move to either the Taxes Committee or Ways and Means Committee.

Of course, there are exceptions to the deadlines. Any lawmaker may try to convince the Rules and Legislative Administration Committee, which includes leaders from both party caucuses, to hear a bill after the deadlines.

Bill Introductions

HF1889-HF2028

Monday, March 24

HF1889—Lieder (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 593, Crookston, permitted to begin school year prior to Labor Day.

HF1890—McElroy (R)

Taxes

Homestead property tax treatment provided to part-time residents.

HF1891—Smith (R)

Governmental Operations

Independent School District No. 277, Westonka, teacher provided service credit purchase deadline extension.

HF1892—Biernat (DFL)

Education

General education formula training and experience revenue component state aid adjustment provided, and money appropriated.

HF1893—Dempsey (R)

Education

School abatement aid funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1894—Tomassoni (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Hibbing tax increment financing district revenue use authorized.

HF1895—Hilty (DFL)

Labor-Management Relations

Workers' compensation rehabilitation program requirements modified.

HF1896—Greiling (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Father registry established, adolescent pregnancy prevention plan established, family planning special program grant provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF1897—Hilty (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 4, McGregor, levy authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1898—Tomassoni (DFL)

Education

General education revenue definition modified, and declining pupil enrollment aid established.

HF1899—Kelso (DFL)

Education

School district state aid payment provisions modified.

HF1900—Bettermann (R)

Judiciary

Machine gun and short-barreled shotgun permitted uses specified.

HF1901—Finseth (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Red Lake River and Thief River dredging grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1902—Stanek (R)

Judiciary

Minneapolis Police Department appropriated money for transporting and housing detainees.

HF1903—Goodno (R)

Education

Vocational Technical Education Council duties modified, and money appropriated.

HF1904—Goodno (R)

General Legislation, Veterans Affairs

& Elections

Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1905—Ozment (R)

Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Oxygenated gasoline federal mandate waiver appeal authorized.

HF1906—Peterson (DFL)

Education

General education formula allowance increased.

HF1907—Milbert (DFL)

Education

Inver Hills Community College campus entrance construction costs paid, and money appropriated.

HF1908—Finseth (R)

Environment & Natural Resources

Tree planting stock production restricted, and planting stock production information disclosure required.

HF1909—Erhardt (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Bloomington, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Edina, and Richfield joint public safety training facility developed, and bond issuance authorized.

HF1910—Greenfield (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Minority health initiative developed, steering committee and grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF1911—Pelowski (DFL)

Education

Higher education facilities authority revenue bond issuance dollar amount increased.

HF1912—Hasskamp (DFL)

Taxes

Unimproved real estate bordering public water property tax rate reduced.

HF1913—Greenfield (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Maltreatment of minors act adopted, advisory committee established, and report required.

HF1914—Biernat (DFL)

General Legislation, Veterans Affairs

& Elections

Minneapolis school board elections held at the same time as state elections.

HF1915—Paymar (DFL)

Taxes

Limited market value treatment implementation threshold reduced.

HF1916—Entenza (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, community-based school program funded, and money appropriated.

HF1917—Clark (DFL)

Economic Development & International Trade

Affordable rental investment fund program appropriated money.

HF1918—Clark (DFL)

Judiciary

American Indian corrections advisory committee established, and money appropriated.

HF1919—Clark (DFL)

Economic Development & International Trade

Minnesota investment fund appropriated money for welfare-to-work programs.

HF1920—Osskopp (R)

Taxes

Personal and dependent income tax credit provided.

HF1921—Jaros (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Adult restorative dental services added to covered MinnesotaCare program services.

HF1922—Chaudhary (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Columbia Heights allowed to operate housing replacement districts.

HF1923—Sykora (R)

Education

Partners for quality school improvement pilot training program established, and money appropriated.

<p>HF1924—Juhnke (DFL) Agriculture Retail food handler certification required.</p> <p>HF1925—Peterson (DFL) Regulated Industries & Energy Farm wind energy conversion system loan pilot program established.</p> <p>HF1926—Pugh (DFL) Judiciary Racketeering law provisions modified.</p> <p>HF1927—Kubly (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Buffalo Lake ethanol facility certification extension provided for tax increment financing purposes.</p> <p>HF1928—Mares (R) Financial Institutions & Insurance Cochlear implant health plan coverage required.</p> <p>HF1929—Winter (DFL) Education State colleges and universities land purchase, sale, and leasing provided.</p> <p>HF1930—Trimble (DFL) Health & Human Services Regional treatment center cemetery grave marker numbers replaced with names of individuals at all graves.</p> <p>HF1931—Abrams (R) Taxes First income tax bracket rate reduced.</p> <p>HF1932—Biernat (DFL) Education State graduation rule applicability extended to all children required to receive instruction under the compulsory attendance law.</p> <p>HF1933—Bishop (R) Health & Human Services Patient health record release consent provisions modified.</p> <p>HF1934—Kelso (DFL) Education Educational accountability office established, general education revenue increased, special program funding increased, technology revenue program established, advisory panel established, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1935—Murphy (DFL) Judiciary Homicide and child fatality case interactive multimedia courtroom presentation equipment grant provided, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1936—Murphy (DFL) Labor-Management Relations Collective bargaining agreement arbitration required in certain cases, procedures established, and penalties provided.</p>	<p>HF1937—Bishop (R) Health & Human Services Written or oral controlled substance prescription requirements modified.</p> <p>HF1938—Mullery (DFL) Transportation & Transit Jim Rice Expressway designated on interstate highway No. 94 in Minneapolis.</p> <p>HF1939—Smith (R) Education School districts providing special instruction and services for children with disabilities deemed financially responsible for costs.</p> <p>HF1940—Bishop (R) Environment & Natural Resources Alternative discharging sewage system permit established, water quality treatment and management cooperatives established, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1941—Mahon (DFL) Transportation & Transit Public safety inspectors authorized to stop motor vehicles under certain circumstances.</p> <p>HF1942—Huntley (DFL) Taxes Hospital purchases exempted from sales tax.</p> <p>HF1943—Swenson, H. (R) Taxes Agricultural land exempted from general education levy.</p> <p>HF1944—Anderson, B. (R) Rules & Legislative Administration Legislative procedures governed by law, and constitutional amendment proposed.</p> <p>HF1945—Anderson, I. (DFL) Governmental Operations International Falls Voyageur interpretive and conference center established, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1946—Long (DFL) Transportation & Transit Stillwater St. Croix River bridge mediation requested.</p> <p>HF1947—Broecker (R) Judiciary Child and adolescent sexual health institute sexual violence and prevention education programs established, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1948—Smith (R) Judiciary Peace officers authorized to arrest traffic signal violators up to four hours after the offense.</p> <p>HF1949—Bishop (R) Governmental Operations Revenue department building purchase provided in St. Paul, and bond issuance authorized.</p>	<p>HF1950—Peterson (DFL) Agriculture Animal feedlot and residential development of agricultural land notices required.</p> <p>HF1951—Milbert (DFL) Education Inver Grove Heights public land purchase authorized.</p> <p>HF1952—Garcia (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Finance Metropolitan regional parks maintenance and operation funded, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1953—Solberg (DFL) Agriculture Straw and prairie grass use in wood pulp production feasibility studied, and money appropriated.</p> <p>HF1954—Kahn (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Professional sports; Congress memorialized to discourage use of public resources for the movement of professional sports franchises.</p> <p>HF1955—Hausman (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Steam electric generating power plant emissions regulated.</p> <p>HF1956—Pugh (DFL) Judiciary Freedom of information and privacy office established, and rules and penalties provided.</p> <p>HF1957—Jennings (DFL) Regulated Industries & Energy Metropolitan Airports Commission 911 emergency services payment authorized.</p> <p>HF1958—Pugh (DFL) Judiciary Health record destruction provided after death of patient.</p> <p>HF1959—Milbert (DFL) Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs Commercial assumed names regulated, intentional misrepresentation prohibited, and penalties provided.</p> <p>HF1960—Weaver (R) Judiciary Courts permitted to order defendants to serve time in custody during consecutively imposed nonfelony sentences.</p>
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Tuesday, March 25

HF1961—Peterson (DFL)

Agriculture

Rural policy and development center established, and money appropriated.

HF1962—Sykora (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Minnesota Twins major league baseball stadium limited partnership provided.

HF1963—Abrams (R)

General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Bipartisan congressional and legislative reapportionment commission established, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1964—Olson, E. (DFL)

Taxes

Tax increment financing restrictions, conditions, and limitations modified.

HF1965—Hilty (DFL)

Governmental Operations

Administration department, office of environmental assistance, public service department, state archaeologist, and transportation regulation board reorganization orders codified.

HF1966—Pugh (DFL)

Education

School districts allowed to alter organization into separate election districts.

HF1967—Farrell (DFL)

Judiciary

Gang-motivated or facilitated crimes provided mandatory minimum sentences, soliciting minors to commit criminal acts crime penalties increased, juror tampering crime established, definitions modified, and money appropriated.

HF1968—Kahn (DFL)

Governmental Operations

Public pension plan reporting requirements and penalty provisions modified.

HF1969—Ness (R)

Education

Summer school funding provided for elementary pupils.

HF1970—Ness (R)

Education

School district Title I replacement aid provided, and money appropriated.

HF1971—Mahon (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Metropolitan regional parks maintenance and operation funded, and money appropriated.

HF1972—Luther (DFL)

Education

Energy assistance program funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1973—Farrell (DFL)

General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Haiti; military reserve forces on active duty in Haiti provided salary differential payment.

HF1974—Broecker (R)

Transportation & Transit

County state-aid highway fund turnback account and construction account fund transfers authorized.

HF1975—Carlson (DFL)

Education

University of Minnesota Board of Regents membership modified, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1976—Dawkins (DFL)

Taxes

AmeriCorp and youth works program stipends exempted from individual income tax.

HF1977—Slawik (DFL)

Education

School district referendum subtraction eliminated, technology improvement discretionary levy authorized, additional state aid provided to districts with low revenues, and money appropriated.

HF1978—Anderson, B. (R)

Education

Locally controlled graduation rule alternative provided, and money appropriated.

HF1979—Mullery (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Attorney general required to investigate unfair drug price discrimination, prescription drug price negotiation authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1980—Stanek (R)

Judiciary

Juvenile court proceeding prosecution information disclosure provisions modified.

HF1981—Huntley (DFL)

Economic Development & International Trade

Employment support services for persons with mental illness funding authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1982—Pugh (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 197, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan, graduation standards pathway implementation grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1983—Hausman (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Aitkin, Becker, Blue Earth, Cass, Crow Wing, Mille Lacs, and Washington counties tax-forfeited land sales authorized.

HF1984—Hausman (DFL)

Transportation & Transit

Ramsey county job-related transportation pilot project established, and money appropriated.

HF1985—Wejcman (DFL)

Taxes

Business incubator and industrial park facility construction material and supply sales tax exemption provided.

HF1986—Wenzel (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Solid waste generator assessment fund return provided to counties.

HF1987—Evans (DFL)

Judiciary

Drug-free zones established around chemical dependency treatment centers, and penalties provided.

HF1988—Greenfield (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Health-related licensing board alternative dispute resolution procedures established.

HF1989—Mares (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Metropolitan regional parks maintenance and operation funded, and money appropriated.

HF1990—Ozment (R)

Governmental Operations

Hampton and Randolph volunteer fire fighter relief association consolidation authorized.

HF1991—Entenza (DFL)

Judiciary

Contempt of court distinctions clarified.

HF1992—Skoglund (DFL)

Judiciary

DWI; preliminary breath test evidence use authorized, vehicle forfeiture provided for third-time DWI offenders, and sentencing provisions clarified.

HF1993—Pugh (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Dental goods and services exempted from MinnesotaCare provider tax.

HF1994—Jefferson (DFL)

Taxes

Minneapolis property tax abatement of value and reduction period extended.

HF1995—Rest (DFL)

Taxes

Public bond issuance and investment of public funds provisions modified.

Wednesday, March 26

HF1996—Rest (DFL)

Taxes

State bond allocation provisions updated and clarified.

HF1997—Mulder (R)

Health & Human Services

Nursing facility operating cost per diem limit exemptions provided.

HF1998—Mulder (R)

Education

Border state enrollment options program tuition payment negotiation provided.

HF1999—Mulder (R)

Health & Human Services

Osteoporosis; radiographic absorptionmetry use permitted for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis.

HF2000—Anderson, I. (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

International Falls public employee residency requirement imposed.

HF2001—Dawkins (DFL)

Education

Children's trust fund act adopted, terminology and program requirements modified, and money appropriated.

HF2002—Harder (R)

Education

Independent School District Nos. 178, Storden-Jeffers, 633, Lamberton, and 638, Sanborn, appropriated money for a high school remote access program.

HF2003—Bettermann (R)

Education

Minnesota school-to-work student organization provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF2004—Bakk (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.

HF2005—Westrom (R)

Health & Human Services

Hearing loss specialist services included as a covered benefit under MinnesotaCare and medical assistance.

HF2006—Jefferson (DFL)

Education

Teachers retirement association coordinated membership continuation provided.

HF2007—Tunheim (DFL)

Financial Institutions & Insurance

Omnibus financial institution regulatory bill providing advertising regulations, prepayment penalties, credit extensions, and modifying bank powers.

HF2008—Harder (R)

Health & Human Services

Nursing facility operating cost per diem limit exemptions provided.

HF2009—Bakk (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Federal payment in lieu of taxes on entitlement land distribution provided.

HF2010—Abrams (R)

Taxes

Tax Increment Financing district increment collection and spending state approval required.

HF2011—Davids (R)

Health & Human Services

Abortion data reporting provisions modified, and criminal penalties provided.

HF2012—Davids (R)

Health & Human Services

Social work board complaint investigation procedures modified.

HF2013—Davids (R)

Environment & Natural Resources

Smallmouth bass regulation uniformity required.

HF2014—Folliard (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 270, Hopkins, exempted from limitations on participation and financial support.

HF2015—Folliard (DFL)

Education

Family Connections parent involvement demonstration site established, and money appropriated.

HF2016—Haas (R)

Financial Institutions & Insurance

Financial institution loan solicitation by mailing a check payable to the addressee prohibited.

HF2017—Mariani (DFL)

Economic Development & International Trade

Opportunities industrialization centers funded, and money appropriated.

HF2018—Swenson, D. (R)

Judiciary

Juvenile petty offender definition limited.

HF2019—Bishop (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Municipal board town disposition provided.

HF2020—Evans (DFL)

Transportation & Transit

New Brighton street or road railroad crossing closure time period limited.

HF2021—Carlson (DFL)

Education

Homework hotline funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF2022—Murphy (DFL)

Judiciary

Arrowhead regional corrections agency appropriated money for a productive day pilot project.

HF2023—Hasskamp (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Home medical equipment services regulated.

HF2024—Leighton (DFL)

Transportation & Transit

Masonic special motor vehicle license plate issuance authorized.

HF2025—Hasskamp (DFL)

Taxes

Commercial-industrial parcel municipal limitation provided for property tax purposes.

HF2026—Wenzel (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Nursing facility operating cost per diem limit exemptions provided.

HF2027—Paymar (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

St. Paul sanitary sewer connection repair provided, rainleaders disconnected, and assessments provided.

HF2028—Mariani (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Charter city computer software and training financing authorized, and bond issuance provided.

Where to find information

Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (612) 296-2314

This office provides copies of bills at no charge, all agendas for House sessions, and the Journal of the House.

House Index Department

211 State Capitol (612) 296-6646

The House Index Department, a part of the Chief Clerk's Office, has a computerized index available for public use. House Index lists bills by committee, topic, author, file number, and other categories. The office can also give you the current status of legislation.

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature's web page at:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

Clarification

Last week's Minnesota Index contained an item incorrectly stating the number of Minnesota kids living in working poor families. It should have read 7 in 100. We regret the error.

Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call
House Calls at **(612) 296-9283**.
All meetings are open to the public.
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MONDAY, March 31

**The House will not meet in session.
Committees will not meet.**

TUESDAY, April 1

8 a.m.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy
Agenda: HF234 (Macklin) Local jail booking fees and collection procedures established.
HF762 (Wejman) Youth community service grant program pilot project established in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and money appropriated.
HF848 (Dehler) Sentencing to service programs expanded, and money appropriated.
HF1885 (Solberg) Mille Lacs Fishing Treaty implementation public safety funding provided, and money appropriated.
HF746 (Pugh) Corrections department service contract limitations and conditions provided, and inmate work standards adopted.
HF899 (Bishop) Dodge-Fillmore-Olmsted community corrections agency productive day pilot project operation provided, and money appropriated.
HF933 (Olson, M.) Correctional facility for recidivists feasibility study provided and task force established, and money appropriated.
HF1003 (Milbert) Dakota County family group conferencing pilot project established, alleged offender diversion provided, and money appropriated.
HF1023 (Clark) Women leaving systems of prostitution provided support services, and money appropriated.
HF1363 (Juhnke) Willmar child guide prevention program funded, and money appropriated.
Report on Martin Luther King Anti-Violence Project, Council on Black Minnesotans.
HF119 (Skoglund) Judge's reduction of minimum mandatory fines, surcharges, and penalty assessments restricted.

HF500 (Pugh) Public defender document copying fee imposed by government agencies.
HF860 (Dawkins) Corrections department required to reimburse counties for apprehension and confinement of certain individuals.
HF1154 (Skoglund) Bomb disposal expense reimbursement provided, and money appropriated.
HF1165 (Skoglund) Juvenile court records and peace officer records on children data practice provisions modified, and money appropriated.
HF1226 (Broecker) Ramsey County enhanced probation law enforcement community partnership pilot project grant provided, and money appropriated.
HF1241 (Pugh) Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey County school-based probation pilot program established, and money appropriated.
HF1284 (McGuire) Battered women community advocacy programs funded, and money appropriated.
HF1337 (McGuire) Community justice services act adopted.
HF1440 (Broecker) Peace and police officer soft body armor reimbursement amount index provided.
HF1597 (Pugh) Supreme Court appropriated money for civil legal services.
HF1674 (Dawkins) Community-based crime prevention grant eligibility provisions modified.
HF1691 (Pugh) Judicial Standards Board court cost and attorney fee payment allowed in certain cases, and money appropriated.
HF1763 (Larsen) Dodge, Fillmore, Olmsted, St. Louis, Stearns, and Washington counties sex offender community notification equipment grants provided, and money appropriated.
HF1780 (Pugh) Corrections department appropriated money for sexual assault program grants.
HF1846 (Swenson, D.) Crime victim services provided in underserved communities, and money appropriated.
HF1882 (Murphy) Real estate document filing and recording fees modified.
HF1935 (Murphy) Homicide and child fatality case interactive multimedia courtroom presentation equipment grant provided, and money appropriated.
HF1947 (Broecker) Child and adolescent sexual health institute sexual violence and prevention education programs established, and money appropriated.
Agenda will be completed in the evening at an announced time. Other bills may be added and the order is flexible.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: HF1684 (Kelso) Minnesota International Center international classroom connection program funded, and money appropriated.
HF308 (Koppendrayner) Education income tax credit and deduction provided, and money appropriated.
HF1723 (Greiling) Gifted and talented educa-

tion program grants provided, school district eligibility criteria established, and money appropriated.

HF1835 (Schumacher) Advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs funded, and money appropriated.

Transportation & Transit

Finance Division/

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder

Agenda: HF956 (Osthoff) Port development assistance project eligibility criteria modified, project review procedure exemption provided, and money appropriated.

HF1295 (Hausman) Counties authorized to sell county state-aid highway bonds to fund maintenance building construction.

HF1596 (Broecker) Trunk Highway No. 49 in North Oaks Chippewa Middle School pedestrian safety measures required.

HF1789 (Mullery) Railroad train or locomotive crew requirements established, and penalty provided.

HF1578 (Mullery) Veteran service organization members provided special motor vehicle license plate stickers.

HF1722 (Larsen) Motor vehicle drivers required to maintain vehicle control when approaching or passing an authorized emergency vehicle, and violation surcharge imposed.

HF738 (Wagenius) Metropolitan Council urban service area extension moratorium imposed.

HF1689 (Johnson, A.) Motorcycle driver instruction permit provisions modified, and endorsement fees provided.

HF1500 (Marko) Municipal transportation state aid qualification provisions modified.

HF1644 (Molnau) Municipal state-aid street fund apportionment provisions modified.

HF1672 (Paymar) Trunk Highway No. 5 in St. Paul beautification and enhancement provided, and money appropriated.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE*

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: HF1490 (Sekhon) Metropolitan regional parks maintenance and operation funded, and money appropriated.

HF1651 (Holsten) Critical habitat private sector matching account funded, and money appropriated.

HF1208 (Rostberg) Community forest improvement grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF779 (Lieder) Hybrid tree management research funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1560 (Munger) Frog reproductive problem research funding provided, and money appropriated.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

Executive Committee/ Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources

229 State Capitol
Chr. Sen. Steven Morse
Agenda: Review and adopt the administrative budget for 1997-1999.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn
Agenda: HF1299 (Jennings) Electric Energy Task Force renamed the legislative commission on utility competition, and electric industry restructuring review process established. HF297 (Jennings) National Guard member tuition and textbook reimbursement grant program provisions modified. HF1686 (Kubly) Rural dispute resolution act adopted. HF1409 (Kubly) Animal feedlot rules provided legislative review. HF1531 (Kahn) State Capitol renovation appropriations reallocated. HF1542 (Solberg) Public employment labor agreements ratified, technical modifications provided, and definitions modified. HF1134 (Knight) Administration department elevator regulation, building code, lease, and manufactured home installer licensure provisions modified. HF653 (Pugh) Diabetes outpatient self-management training and education health insurance coverage required.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn
Agenda: To be announced.

Housing & Housing Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Karen Clark
Agenda: HF1276 (Trimble) Community rehabilitation fund program and affordable rental investment fund program appropriated money. HF1611 (Slawik) Landfall appropriated money for housing and redevelopment. HF1632 (Mariani) Neighborhood land trust program appropriated money. HF1917 (Clark) Affordable rental investment fund program appropriated money. Budget allocation discussion.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Reform of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). HF1547 (Ozment) Tax increment financing restrictions imposed, terms defined, and provisions clarified. HFXXXX (Abrams) Reform of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Additional bills may be added. (Committee will meet in the evening if necessary.)

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: HF1213 (Goodno) Moorhead land transfer authorized. HF1371 (Orfield) Agricultural and economic development board bond issuance provisions modified. HF1380 (Huntley) Duluth family practice residency program authority transferred to the Duluth economic development authority. HF1388 (Knoblach) Bond issuance reporting required. HF1753 (Kalis) State municipal aid bond issuance authorizations modified.

COMMERCE, TOURISM & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: HF970 (Wejcman) Minneapolis building contractor licensing requirement exemption expiration removed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest
Agenda: Testimony on stadium financing alternatives from members of the public and the Legislature.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings
Agenda: HF853 (Clark) Telephone assistance program expanded to provide assistance to low-income families with children. HF1508 (Kubly) Minnesota alternative energy development authority established. Additional bills may be added.

Subcommittee on Salary and Budget/ Legislative Coordinating Commission

300N State Office Building
Chr. Sen. Roger Moe
Agenda: Proposed 1998-1999 budget for commissions and joint agencies. Proposed policy for MIS positions.

1:30 p.m.

Legislative Coordinating Commission

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phil Carruthers
Agenda: Report of the Salary and Budget Subcommittee.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

WEDNESDAY, April 2

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: HF1092 (Mullery) Learn to earn sum-

mer youth employment program grants provided, and money appropriated. HF248 (Trimble) Refugee citizenship and employment training provided, and money appropriated.

HF790 (Wejcman) Citizenship promotion program established, and money appropriated. HF811 (Entenza) Minnesota Futures Fund appropriated money to provide technical assistance to nonprofit organizations. HF836 (Evans) Microenterprise loan technical assistance and loan administration provided, and money appropriated. HF1271 (Juhnke) New London Little Theater project grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1458 (Marko) Newport improvement project economic impact study provided, and money appropriated. HF1532 (Skare) American Indian history museum appropriation provisions modified. HF1662 (McGuire) Historical Society appropriated money for grants to the Minnesota Center for Legal Education programs. HF1700 (Kubly) Olivia commercial building redevelopment provided, and money appropriated.

HF1850 (Ness) Fishing artifact museum feasibility studied, and money appropriated. HF834 (Clark) YouthBuild grant funding limit eliminated, and money appropriated.

HF901 (Wejcman) Minnesota employment center for deaf and hard-of-hearing people funded, and money appropriated.

HF1012 (Trimble) Contamination Cleanup Grant program requirements modified, and money appropriated.

HF1659 (Evans) New Brighton north metro I-35W corridor economic development project appropriated money.

HF1767 (Juhnke) County and local historical society grant-in-aid program established, and money appropriated.

HF1824 (Mariani) Minnesota Project Innovation appropriated money.

HF827 (Tomassoni) University of Minnesota grape and wine research center established, and money appropriated.

HF1589 (Evans) Torture victim center appropriated money.

HF1638 (Trimble) Foreign trade zones promoted, and money appropriated.

HF1880 (Jennings) Employer re-employment compensation payment schedule provisions modified.

Higher Education

Finance Division/EDUCATION

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski
Agenda: HF1364 (Bettgermann) Private career school act adopted. HF1562 (Johnson, A.) Statewide university system student evaluation of instructors information deemed public data. Additional bills may be added.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: HF607 (Davids) Homework helpline funding provided, and money appropriated. HF643 (Olson, E.) Pine Point School provided permanent status. HF752 (Tomassoni) Independent School District No. 701, Hibbing, grant authorized for

expenses due to fire, and common teacher retirement date established.

HF1403 (Johnson, R.) First-grade preparedness program grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF819 (Wagenius) First-grade preparedness program eligibility provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF963 (Wagenius) Early reading instruction included as part of teacher candidate curriculum, challenge grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF792 (Biernat) Cigarette and tobacco product sales tax increased, and revenue dedicated to tobacco and drug use prevention programs. HF904 (Larsen) Student tobacco use reporting required.

Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: HF699 (Dawkins) St. Paul rental tax equity pilot project reinstated, property tax refunds provided, and money appropriated.

HF1592 (Tuma) Homestead property tax status maintained for certain property owners residing in nursing homes.

HF1688 (Tunheim) Apartment property tax rate reduced in certain towns.

HF1433 (Peterson) Business property tax market value exclusion allowed.

HF1553 (Dawkins) Commercial industrial property located in enterprise zones provided property tax exemption.

HF1089 (Garcia) Metropolitan area-wide tax base homestead property inclusion provided.

HF1445 (Ozment) Residential agricultural property tax classification provided.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: HF692 (Tingelstad) Andover contaminated land cleanup funded, and money appropriated.

HF852 (McGuire) Ramsey County environmental education consortium developed, and money appropriated.

HF1083 (Seifert) Lazarus Creek/LQP-25 floodwater retention project appropriated money.

HF1582 (Davids) Fillmore County soil survey provided, and money appropriated.

HF1823 (Westfall) Pelican Rapids-to-Maplewood state park trail developed, and money appropriated.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Willard Munger

Agenda: HF947 (Wagenius) Toxics in packaging regulations modified.

HF771 (Long) Contamination cleanup grant program requirements modified, redevelopment and job creation grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF369 (Holsten) Hunting and fishing license and stamp identification and validation provisions modified.

HF311 (Luther) Angling assistance provided to disabled residents permitted without a license.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS & INSURANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Irv Anderson

Agenda: SF458 (Higgins); HF429 (Jefferson) Real property fire loss escrow account provisions clarified.

HF443 (Luther) Brooklyn Park economic development authority property tax certification authorized.

Continuation of March 26 agenda.

Health & Human Services

Finance Division/

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield

Agenda: Conclusion of presentation of governor's proposed budget for programs administered by Department of Health.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund

Agenda: To be announced.

State Government Finance Division/GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: HF647 (Jefferson) Public pension benefit accrual rates increased, defined contribution early retirement options authorized, homestead and agricultural credit aid modified, and money appropriated.

HF1461 (Entenza) Uniform business identifier system established, and money appropriated.

HF1563 (Garcia) STAR; System of Training to Achieve Results program for persons with disabilities established, and money appropriated.

HF1583 (Mullery) Nellie Stone Johnson bust placed in State Capitol.

Additional bills may be added.

12:30 p.m.

Civil & Family Law Division/JUDICIARY

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Andy Dawkins

Agenda: HF832 (Pugh) Professional malpractice action expert review certification required. HF846 (Leighton) Sexual abuse statute of limitations delayed discovery rule provisions clarified.

HF1207 (Paymar) Private corrections treatment facility liability limits provided.

HF1414 (Leighton) Probate guardian and conservator appointment provisions modified.

Additional bills may be added.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros

Agenda: To be announced.

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division/EDUCATION

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel

Agenda: HF1405 (Mariani) Head Start program account provisions clarified, and money appropriated.

Additional bills may be announced.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: To be announced.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

Joint

Economic Development

Finance Division/

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

& INTERNATIONAL TRADE/

Higher Education

Finance Division/EDUCATION

500N State Office Building

Chrs. Rep. Steve Trimble,

Rep. Gene Pelowski

Agenda: Future role of technical colleges and how they can better serve students and businesses.

K-12 Education Finance Division/EDUCATION

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso

Agenda: HF303 (Johnson, A.) School disciplinary policy evaluation and implementation grant program established, and money appropriated. Transportation working group recommendations.

HF831 (Biernat) Alternative education program equitable funding ensured.

HF1018 (Koppendrayner) Independent School District No. 473, Isle, capital grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1043 (Farrell) Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, community-based school construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1321 (Folliard) Desegregation magnet school funding provided, bond sales authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1526 (Rest) Learning year revenue authorized for half-day kindergarten pupils.

HF1573 (Folliard) Independent School District No. 283, St. Louis Park, Aquila Community Together project grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF330 (Luther) School bus safety provided through bus monitors, seat belts and video cameras.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest

Agenda: HF1367 (Rest) Major League Baseball stadium construction and maintenance provided, taxes authorized, and money appropriated.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: To be announced.

THURSDAY, April 3

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: Continuation of April 2 agenda.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Continuation of April 1 agenda.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso

Agenda: HF1934 (Kelso) Educational accountability office established, general education revenue increased, special program funding increased, technology revenue program established, advisory panel established, and money appropriated.

HF1101 (Swenson, D.) General education basic formula allowance increased, pupil transportation funding enhanced, referendum subtraction removed, school year lengthened, compulsory instruction age lowered, and money appropriated.

HF1855 (Johnson, R.) General education formula allowance increased, equalized discretionary levy provided, special education program funding increased, and money appropriated.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: HF1421 (Wenzel) Dairy technology services grant program established, and money appropriated.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: HF1628 (Johnson, A.) Internet access and computer on-line services deemed taxable services.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn

Agenda: Continuation of April 1 agenda.

HF244 (Bishop) Individual sewage system requirements modified, and Pollution Control Agency rule compliance authority granted.
HF1186 (Tunheim) Bakeries in retail food stores provided equipment and ventilation requirements.

HF635 (Entenza) North Star government on-line service and information initiative provided, information and telecommunications technology community resource development initiative established, MNcard projects implemented, and money appropriated.

HF436 (Wagenius) Reduction and recycling advisory council established, duties specified, and duration provided.

HF718 (Folliard) Conservation corps youth corps advisory committee provisions modified.

Additional bills referred under Rule 5.10 may be added.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Dorn

Agenda: To be announced.

Housing & Housing Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: Budget allocation discussion.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: HFXXXX (Rest) Sales Tax Advisory Council (STAC) recommendations.

Additional bills may be added.

(Committee will meet in the evening, if necessary.)

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: Discussion of Capitol cafeteria renovation. Any new bills re-referred to the committee.

COMMERCE, TOURISM & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim

Agenda: HF997 (Pugh) Rental-purchase agreements regulated, cost-of-lease charges limited, cash price evidence provided, and definitions modified.

HF301 (Jennings) Accountant licensure requirements modified.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest

Agenda: HF240 (Hausman) Metropolitan area transit and paratransit capital expenditure financing provided, employer discount bus pass sale requirements modified, regional transit subsidy alternative demonstration program authorized, and obsolete language deleted.

HF857 (Rhodes) Metropolitan Council cost allocation system for wastewater services modified.

HF537 (Jennings) Large energy facility definition expanded to include high-voltage transmission lines that cross the state boundary.

HF972 (Hausman) Ramsey County personnel director eligibility certification provisions modified.

HF1176 (Hausman) St. Paul Civic Center improvements provided, and money appropriated.

HF1257 (Winter) Laverne cemetery body removal and reinterment authorized.

HF1391 (Long) Political subdivisions permitted to define dependent for employee benefit purposes.

HF1379 (Huntley) Duluth Miller-Dwan Medi-

cal Center assets and liabilities transferred.
HF656 (Holsten) Washington County property taxpayer personal information use restricted.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings

Agenda: HF967 (Tomassoni) Horse racing licensee allowed to conduct card club activities. Additional bills may be added.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

COMMERCE, TOURISM & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim

Agenda: To be announced.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: Continuation of April 2 agenda.

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

Agenda: HF22 (Rukavina) Police state aid allocation method modified, and money appropriated.

HF329 (Leighton) Uniform partnership act adopted, and money appropriated.
Additional bills may be added.

FRIDAY, April 4

7:30 a.m.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso

Agenda: School-to-work/school-to-career working group recommendations.

HF160 (Winter) Independent School District No. 175, Westbrook, high school student entrepreneurship pilot program established, and money appropriated.

HF1052 (Koppendrayer) Post-secondary enrollment options act extended to include nonpublic school students.

HF1419 (Finseth) Secondary vocational aid guarantee provisions modified.

HF1652 (Ness) Secondary vocational education aid guarantee provisions modified.

HF1028 (Dawkins) Youth Works program repeal removed, Youth Works commission director selection provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF345 (Folliard) Education fiscal year levy adjustment authorized related to the repeal of K-12 education appropriation caps.

HF404 (Abrams) Education fiscal year levy adjustment authorized related to the repeal of K-12 education appropriation caps.

HF377 (Sykora) Compensatory education revenue program provisions modified.

HF597 (Tomassoni) Education supplemental

revenue reduction provisions modified.
HF1264 (Pawlenty) Crime-related cost education property tax levy provisions modified.
HF957 (Hausman) School district operating learning-year program total operating capital revenue provisions modified.

8 a.m.

Higher Education
Finance Division/EDUCATION
500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski
Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation & Transit
Finance Division/
TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder
Agenda: Continuation of April 1 agenda. Budget considerations.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF913 (Kubly) Livestock odor research program developed at the University of Minnesota, and money appropriated.
HF544 (Kahn) University of Minnesota steam plant relocation away from the Mississippi River funding provided, and money appropriated.

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division/EDUCATION
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel
Agenda: To be announced.

Health & Human Services
Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: Presentation of governor's proposed budget for Council on Disabilities; Ombudsman for Mental Health and Mental Retardation; Board of Chiropractic Examiners; Board

of Dentistry; Board of Dietetics and Nutrition; Board of Marriage and Family Therapy; Board of Medical Practice; Board of Nursing; Board of Nursing Home Administrators; Board of Optometry; Board of Pharmacy; Board of Podiatry; Board of Psychology; Board of Social Work; Board of Veterinary Medicine; and Board of Emergency Services.

JUDICIARY
Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES
200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: To be announced.

1 p.m.

Civil & Family Law Division/JUDICIARY
400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Andy Dawkins
Agenda: To be announced.

State officials often boast about Minnesota's many accomplishments. But when it comes to blowing the state's horn, it is hard to top the Minnesota State Band. As the state's community band, the nonprofit musical organization performs in all of the Twin Cities major concert halls, at festivals around the state, and even tours other countries.

Although band membership is open to any adult resident of Minnesota, most members live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. "A good 50 or 60 percent are state employees," said the band's director, Joe Kromo, an accountant in the state Department of Agriculture. "The current membership is at 55. There are always some openings in some sections. Our ideal is about 60 members."

Kromo, like other band members, is a volunteer. Each member must supply his or her own instrument, travel expenses, and uniform (blue blazers, gray slacks, and striped tie), he said. While the band is not officially recognized by the state, it does receive a \$2,000 per year appropriation from the Department of Administration. Other funds come from member-sponsored sales and from associate members who donate \$20 per year.

When the band started in 1898, there were about 14 state bands in the United States, Kromo said. "It was a tradition,

Do you know?



The state band in 1898

following the [John Philip] Souza format. Now we are the only one."

The band's highly varied concert repertoire includes contemporary music for wind ensembles, popular selections, famous marches, and symphonic transcriptions.

Each year, the band plays a regular schedule and several special events. Since its inception, the band has maintained a tradition of performances at the Como Park Lakeside Pavilion in St. Paul. The annual concert series takes place on Wednesday evenings in August. In addition, the band plays an anniversary concert in April, a fall concert in October, a holiday concert, and the governor's holiday reception, Kromo said.

The band has performed at the State Capitol on many occasions, from the welcoming of the Prime Minister of Iceland to a reception for several foreign

ambassadors at the opening of the World Trade Center in St. Paul.

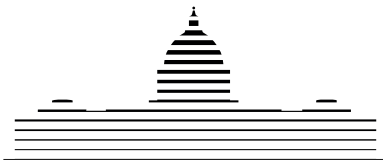
Outstate community festivals, such as the New Ulm Heritage Fest, are another frequent venue for the band. "We have performed in more Minnesota communities than any other musical group," Kromo said.

The organization has also served as Minnesota's cultural ambassador to the world. The band toured Europe twice, visiting cities in Germany and Austria in 1986, and Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany in 1992. In 1987, the band hosted two German composers and concert conductors in Minnesota. The band has participated in two international music festivals, in Castellon de la Plana, Spain, in 1990, and at the EUROFANFARE music festival in Villefranche-de-Rouergue, France, in 1993.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown), is an honorary member of the band, Kromo said. She accompanied the group on its 1986 tour and brought official state proclamations along to present to each city visited.

Kromo said the band plans to return to Europe in 1997 for a tour of Italy, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, and to participate in the 100th anniversary of the City Band of Kempten, Germany.

— Steve Compton



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Speaker of the House: Phil Carruthers
Majority Leader: Ted Winter
Minority Leader: Steve Sviggum

MINNESOTA INDEX

Capitol figures

Capitol buildings built in Minnesota before the current Capitol	2
First Minnesota Legislature to occupy the current building	34th
Cost of the building, in millions	\$4.5
Length of the Capitol, east to west, in feet	433
of the U.S. Capitol, in feet	751
Width of the State Capitol, north to south, in feet	228
Height of the Capitol, from the ground to the tip of the dome, in feet	220
Marble columns on the second floor of the Capitol	44
Diameter of the rotunda, in feet	60
Number of bronze tablets in the Capitol inscribed with the Gettysburg Address ...	1
Original cost of the Quadriga, the golden horses sculpture atop the Capitol	\$37,600
Weight of the sculpture, in pounds	10,000
Cost to repair and regild the Quadriga, 1994	\$636,000
Height of the Quadriga, in feet	25
Width of the Quadriga, at the base, in feet	21
Total number of visitors served by the Capitol Historic Site Program, FY1996	212,474
Students who toured the Capitol, FY1996	63,692
Countries represented by visitors signing the guest book at the Capitol	98
Rooms in the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C.	540
Windows in the U.S. Capitol	658
Floor area of the U.S. Capitol, in acres	16.5
Weight, in tons, of the bronze doors, or "Columbus Doors" at the main entry to the U.S. Capitol	10
Number of different cities where Congress convened prior to the construction of the U.S. Capitol	8
Cash prize offered to whomever could produce the "most approved plan" for the U.S. Capitol	\$500

Source: *The Minnesota Capitol, Official Guide and History*, Julie Gauthier, Stafford King;
Architect of the Capitol, Office of the Curator; Capitol Historic Site Program.

For more information

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