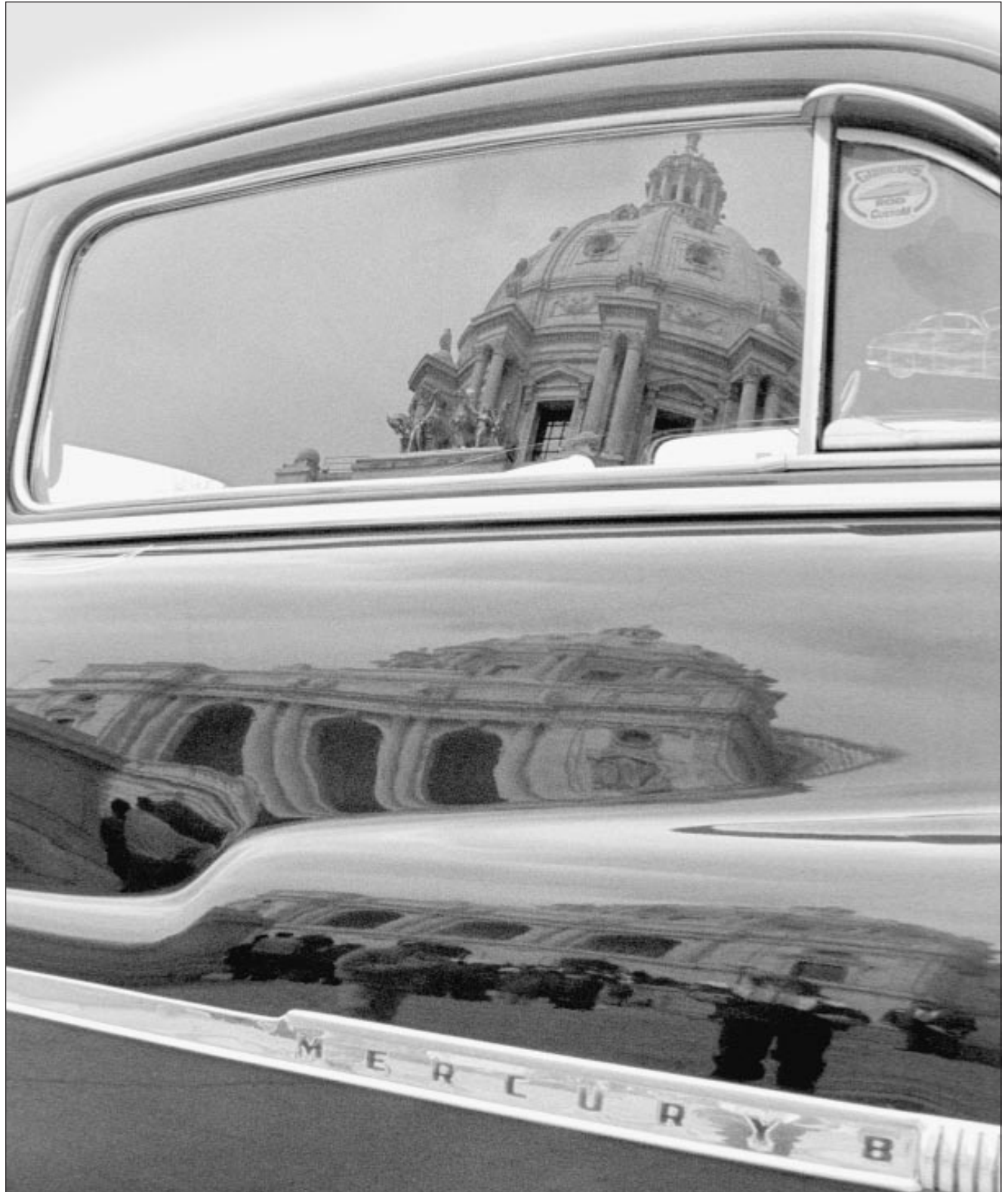


SESSION WEEKLY

A Nonpartisan Publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ April 11, 1997 ♦ Volume 14, Number 14



Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. During the 1997-98 Legislative Session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and upcoming committee meeting schedules, and provides other information. The publication is a service of the Minnesota House. No fee.

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Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Session Weekly, Public Information Office, Minnesota House of Representatives, 175 State Office Building, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.



Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled,
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Minnesota House of Representatives • April 11, 1997 • Volume 14, Number 14

Update

There are five weeks to go before the first part of the 80th Legislative Session is officially over, and legislators are now past the second deadline for bills to be out of committee. Their responsibilities now are to discuss fiscal issues on how to run the state efficiently. Much of this work will get done during many long nights for the next few weeks.

The nights are also getting to be long in the House chamber as some of the 2,135 bills introduced get a hearing, get debated, and possibly amended. As the working days and hours get longer for members and staff, tempers often flare, and simple courtesy and respect for another duly elected official may get tested.

In this legislative session, the speaker has called for less bitterness with more emphasis placed on less partisanship. As the members attempt to reform welfare, make changes to funding for education, devise some positive methods for property tax reform, provide bonds and levies for municipalities, or more dollars for crime and drug prevention, individuals may tend to lose sight of what it means to compromise or keep personal agendas out of the process.

While it appears that many legislators in general may be attempting (in the Hebrew phrase, *Tikkun Olam*) to fix the world, others are digging in and refusing to budge on issues that ultimately will need to be revamped in the future for the overall well-being of the citizenry.

The Minnesota Legislature has a long, proud, and positive history behind it. But a very negative picture of the Legislature was presented recently in a national government newsmagazine that compared previous sessions to the Tennessee Legislature. To make comparisons out of context, consider the pulse of the Minnesota Legislature back in 1868. Minnesota rises above the magazine's critique if the following example is used as a benchmark: Minnesota passed into law the right of its black population to vote two years before Congress passed the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1870. Tennessee just got around to it. Its Legislature finally approved the amendment last week, 127 years later!

If there are any lessons to be learned, our Legislature will continue to take its internal and external criticisms in stride, continue to do what it does best for the people of the state, and wisely take the words of author Robert Fulghum to heart:

Share everything. Play fair.
Don't hit people.
When you go out into the world,
watch out for traffic, hold hands,
and stick together.

—LeClair G. Lambert

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On the cover: The Capitol dome reflected in a shiny 1950 Mercury Coupe, one of many classic street rods on display in front of the State Capitol April 8. Members of the Minnesota Street Rod Association brought the automobiles to the Capitol to promote street rodding and inform lawmakers about this rapidly growing hobby.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank

Highlights

Early childhood funding . . .

Omnibus bill proposes record spending for child care

Requiring welfare parents to work is expected to move another 12,500 Minnesota children into day care over the next few years. To prepare for the onslaught, a House bill sets aside \$190 million over the state's 1998-1999 two-year budgeting period.

That's a 127 percent increase compared to 1996-1997.

Part of the pot of money — \$98 million — would pay for the child care needs of welfare parents now required to work under a new federal law. About \$90 million would be placed into an existing program that helps low- and moderate-income working families pay for child care using an income-based, sliding fee scale. There are currently about 5,600 Minnesota families on a waiting list for the program, which is called Basic Sliding Fee child care. The money in the bill is expected to eliminate most, if not all, of the waiting list.

The remaining \$2 million would be used to administer the programs.

The Basic Sliding Fee program has become a vital part of the state's efforts to trim down its welfare rolls. Without the program, the cost of child care can often push a working poor family onto welfare.

Providing the dollars for child care was in the state's best interest, lawmakers said. Under new federal welfare laws, states are punished for not getting their welfare parents to work. Specifically, Minnesota could lose millions in federal aid. Logically, if Minnesota expects its welfare parents to work, child care assistance will be essential.

The child care money is the major component of a \$390 million omnibus spending bill from the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Division. The bill (which has yet to be assigned a House File number) was approved by the division April 9 and next moves to the House Education Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids), the bill appropriates money for programs such as early childhood education, community education, after school programs, adult basic education, Head Start,



Kathryn Freeman holds her 10-month-old son, Tyler, during an Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) class at the Harding Community Center in East St. Paul. ECFE classes for parents and their young children would receive \$30.5 million over the next two years as part of the omnibus spending bill from the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Division of the Education Committee.

food shelves, and homeless shelters.

The bill's highlights include:

- A last-minute provision that encourages stay-at-home parenting for some low- and moderate-income families. In effect, it would pay parents on the Basic Sliding Fee child care program to stay at home with their child for the first year of life.

Eligible families already would have had to qualify for the Basic Sliding Fee program and received child care help for at least 30 days. They'd receive 75 percent of the average cost of licensed family home day care for an infant in their county.

The provision does ask for an unspecified sum of money, and as of yet, there is no clear answer as to how much it will cost.

- \$10 million to encourage child care worker training and expand child care facilities. Based on historical experience, the 12,500 more children expected in day care means an estimated 90 more child care centers, 650 more family child care homes, and 3,875 more legal unlicensed relatives and neighbors to take care of the children will be needed, according to the Department of

Children, Families, and Learning.

- A mandatory \$5 monthly co-payment for families using state-subsidized child care. Families with incomes between 50 and 100 percent of the federal poverty level would be required to make a \$5 co-payment each month, regardless of how many children they have. For a family of two, 50 percent of the poverty level equals \$5,305 and 100 percent equals \$10,610. The co-payments would increase based on income for families earning more than 100 percent of the poverty level.

This provision sparked debate between those who said \$5 to a poor family was too much and those who maintained it was necessary that families invest in themselves.

"Five dollars can mean a meal or a pack of pencils for school," said Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood) who tried unsuccessfully to lower the fee to \$1 a month.

But Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) said the \$5 is not designed to make money "but introduce personal responsibility into the system."

- \$30.5 million over the two-year budgeting

period for a program that brings babies and toddlers together with their parents to learn about a child's emotional, physical, mental, and educational development. The Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program is 23-years-old and designed for children from birth to kindergarten and their parents.

- \$2 million for a proposed early childhood infant grant development program. It would provide money to local ECFE programs that come up with creative ways to focus on infant development and a parent's role in stimulating and nurturing their infant's intellectual and emotional development.
- \$12 million for after-school enrichment programs. Grants are provided to select neighborhoods so they may offer after-school programs for 9- to 13-year-olds. The amount is \$7 million more than the 1996-1997 budgeting period. The program's purpose is to reduce juvenile crime, school suspensions, and increase student achievement.
- \$30.2 million for Head Start, a 31 percent increase from the previous budget. Head Start is a federal/state program that provides low income preschool children with emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological services.
- \$24.6 million for adult basic education over the biennium. The program provides educational opportunities for adults with low educational levels. Services such as literacy training, work force education, and General Educational Development (GED) preparation.
- \$250,000 for an adult basic education technology project to design and evaluate the use of on-line technology for adult learners. Over a three-year period, a working group of educators and technology experts would develop an adult learning curriculum that meets Minnesota's graduation standards and can be delivered using computers and telecommunications.
- \$2.3 million for Minnesota food shelves, a 65 percent increase over the previous two-year budget. The increase is in anticipation of an even greater demand on food shelves this spring when many of Minnesota's poor will see a cut in their federal food stamps.

— K. Darcy Hanzlik

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



AGRICULTURE

Legal hemp

A proposal to allow Minnesota farmers to grow hemp for industrial purposes stalled in the House Agriculture Committee April 9, but the committee approved a plan to study the issue.

HF349, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), was touted by supporters as a gateway to a valuable crop for farmers, but critics charged it would hamper drug enforcement efforts.

"This is really more of a movement than a crop," said Jeanette McDougal, chairperson for Drug Watch Minnesota, who linked the effort to legalize industrial hemp to supporters in a drug subculture.

McDougal's testimony flatly contradicted the message of bill supporters, who argued that industrial hemp is inherently different from the plant that yields marijuana.

"In the United States, when you say hemp you think of marijuana, but in much of the rest of the world that is not the issue," said David Morris, vice president of the Institute for Local Self Reliance.

Morris said industrial hemp is now grown in 26 countries around the world, and that Canada is moving toward allowing hemp as an agricultural crop. The plant is valuable in the production of a variety of goods ranging from paper to clothing to twine, he added.

"The jury is still out right now as to whether this is a niche crop or more than that," Morris said. "But the jury is not out the on potential uses."

As originally written, the bill would have allowed Minnesota farmers to grow industrial hemp and set up a registration process for farmers wanting to grow the crop.

That plan was supported by officials from two major agriculture groups in the state. Tom Cochrane, executive director of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, called the bill "a slam dunk."

And Chris Leifeld, director of legislative affairs for the Minnesota Farmers Union, said industrial hemp would have several benefits for farmers. The crop could be easily integrated into rotation and would be good for a variety of products.

"It's a good opportunity for our farmers to have access to a new market," Leifeld said.

But a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) official's testimony questioning the state's ability to regulate the growth of industrial hemp dealt Kahn's original proposal a blow.

"There are plenty of scoundrels out there who will divert this product into the illegal drug market," said Michael Campion, an assistant superintendent for the BCA.

Several committee members also questioned whether industrial hemp could really be kept separate from its biological cousin, marijuana.

"If there's nothing wrong with [hemp], why does it have to be regulated?" Rep. Michelle Rifenberg (R-La Crescent) asked. "It just doesn't make any sense."

A tie vote of 6-6 killed Kahn's plan to allow farmers to begin growing hemp. After the vote, Kahn maneuvered to have the bill reconsidered and offered an amendment that would allow a study of the issue to be conducted. With the amendment attached, the bill passed and now moves to the House floor.

Kahn said the study could provide lawmakers with more information about industrial hemp and should help in the effort to legalize the crop.

"I think people will be more comfortable with it at that point," she said.



CHILDREN

Adoptions and race

A bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee April 7 would significantly reduce the role that race plays in placing children for adoption or foster care.

HF209, sponsored by Rep. Barb Vickerman (R-Redwood Falls), would delete current law that says a child's best interests are met by giving consideration to race or ethnic heritage when making foster care or adoption placements. Instead, the bill would require "an individualized determination of the needs of the child" to be conducted, detailing "how the selected placement will serve" those needs.

The bill also says that placement of a child in foster care could not be delayed or denied because of the race, color, or national origin of the child or potential parents.

However, adoptions involving Indian children, governed by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act, which allow for racial preference regarding placements, would not be affected. Prospective foster parents of Indian children would be required to attend training on understanding the cultural heritage of the children and the importance of the Indian Child Welfare Act. Also, in such cases, the foster care agency would be re-

quired to defer to tribal judgment regarding the suitability of a home when the tribe intervenes on a child's behalf.

In adoptions involving non-Indian children, the bill says a child's best interests would be served first by looking for relatives with whom to place the child; second by looking for a close friend. The bill also provides for a specialist to recruit a diversity of families for adoptions and foster care, but deletes language regarding race.

The bill lists the following as factors to be considered in determining the needs of a child: the child's functioning and behavior; medical, educational, and developmental needs; history and past experience; religious and cultural needs; connection with a community, school, and church; interests and talents; relationship to current caretakers, parents, siblings, and relatives; and reasonable preferences of the child if of an appropriate age.

The emphasis on race or ethnic heritage in child placements has become controversial in recent years. Critics have said that a shortage of minority foster and adoptive families has caused children to languish needlessly while interested families were disqualified on racial grounds, and that race is not important in family bonding.

Vickerman explained that the bill would bring Minnesota into compliance with federal legislation. In 1994, Congress passed the Multiethnic Placement Act, provisions of which are incorporated into **HF209**. Failure to comply with the act could result in federal violations and reduced federal funding. "The federal regulations say you cannot deny a person the opportunity to be adopted based on race," Vickerman said. "Minnesota's laws do not comply at this time."

HF209 now moves to the House floor.



CONSUMERS

Rent-to-own

The rent-to-own industry soon could be back in business under legislation approved by the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee April 8.

HF997 would regulate rent-to-own contracts. Currently, such contracts are prohibited by court order. Rental stores that previously offered rental-purchase agreements, such as Rent-a-Center, now simply rent, offering the consumer no chance to own the merchandise.

Bill sponsor Rep. Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) said the effort was designed to protect buyers from predatory rent-to-own

retailers who — prior to the injunction — financed purchases at exorbitant interest rates after tacking on a variety of costs to a product's base price.

"This is a ceiling for the rates that could be charged," Pugh said. "It would be a cap, and we would hope that the competition generated by the market would drive that down."

Under **HF997**, approved by a 16-7 vote, rent-to-own retailers would have to limit their purchase agreements' ancillary charges, such as setup, delivery, and finance fees, to an amount equal to the original cash price of the items. Current law has no fee limit. The seller also would have to disclose detailed information about the number and amount of payments due, in addition to various statements about the legal details of such arrangements.

Rental-purchase stores offer their merchandise without credit checks, deposits, or down payments. Instead, customers agree to lease the goods for a specific period of time with the option to either renew or discontinue the agreement at the end of the term. The lease payments are based on the store's listed purchase price of the item, plus any additional fees, plus interest.

For many people, Pugh said, especially those living paycheck to paycheck, a rent-to-own contract is often the only way to purchase big-ticket household items such as furniture or home electronics. Information provided by the Minnesota Rental Dealers Association indicates that the typical rental-purchaser is a blue-collar worker between 25 and 44 years old who lives in rental housing.

Yet **HF997**, critics said, would do nothing to protect these consumers. In fact, they argued, the bill would allow the rental-purchase companies to charge even higher annual interest rates, some of which exceed 700 percent.

Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis attorney David Ramp said that since rental-purchase companies are currently prohibited from entering into usurious rent-to-own agreements, **HF997** would simply be an end-run around that injunction, setting in law a practice that exploits low-income consumers.

"**HF997**, if adopted, would authorize even higher charges . . . and set price by statute rather than in the market," Ramp said. "The state of Minnesota should not be setting prices. It's bad public policy and it's bad economics."

The bill goes now to the House floor.



DEVELOPMENT

Expanding conventions

The city of Minneapolis' bid to garner state dollars — \$37.5 million — to help expand its convention center is not only alive this session, it's even popular with some rural Minnesota lawmakers.

The House Economic Development Finance Division April 9 heard **HF1529**, which would appropriate an as yet unspecified amount of money from the general fund to help expand the Minneapolis Convention Center.

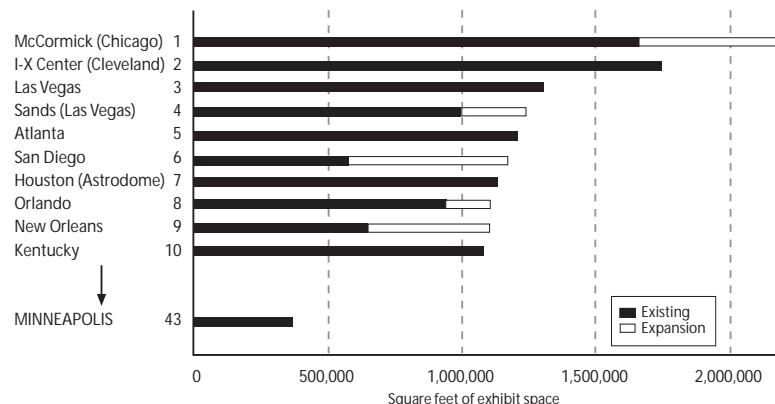
Committee members did not vote on the bill but are considering it for inclusion in the omnibus economic development budget bill due out later this session.

Rep. Richard Jefferson (DFL-Mpls), the bill's sponsor, said 10 years ago the Minneapolis Convention Center was the 17th largest facility of its kind in the country. Today, it ranks 43rd.

"That shows you what our competition is doing," Jefferson told committee members.

He added that of all the major convention

Prime exhibit space comparison



Source: Major Exhibit Hall Directory 1996.

In 1986, Minneapolis had the 13th largest convention facility in the country. Today, it ranks 43rd.

centers across the country, Minneapolis is the only host city that solely absorbs its convention center's construction costs. Others split the costs with county and state governments.

The planned two-story addition would include two new exhibit halls and would increase exhibit space by 200,000 square feet over the existing 300,000 square feet.

The current convention center "is a beauty. It is well operated, but it is too small," said Minneapolis City Council member Alice Rainville.

Jefferson said the convention site should be called the *Minnesota* Convention Center because the majority of its exhibitors are from outside Minneapolis and the center brings in money for the entire state.

Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton agreed, adding that the convention center has lost numerous conventions in recent years because it is too small.

The mayor noted that outstate areas such as Duluth, Fairmont, Fargo/Moorhead, Winona, and Worthington all support expanding the facility because they know the state needs a convention center big enough to attract large national conventions.

If it's not big enough, it will fall back into the regional market and compete with cities like Duluth, Fargo/Moorhead, and Winona for conventions.

Referring to the handful of local projects this session requesting state help with construction, such as the Twins wanting a new baseball stadium, Rep. Ken Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) said the Minneapolis Convention Center expansion is the only one about which he's received support from his rural constituents.

Comprehensive planning

Two bills approved by the Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division April 8 would change the way Minnesota communities approach urban planning.

Both **HF217**, sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), and **HF1000**, sponsored by Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls), would adopt the 10 recommendations for long-range planning outlined by the Metropolitan Council as the framework for a solution to urban sprawl. Yet, beyond this, the bills employ divergent tactics to accomplish their common goal.

Opatz's bill would allow local governments to form "joint planning districts" that would, in turn, control development decisions such as zoning and subdivision regulation. The

state Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning would oversee the planning districts, and any community that elected to form the joint planning district would have to agree to the requirements defined in **HF217**, including:

- submission of a comprehensive plan to the office for approval;
- periodic reviews and updates of those plans; and
- a provision allowing adjacent governments — including the Metropolitan Council — to review and comment on any growth plans.

The bill also requires participating cities to define urban growth areas and details a mediation process designed to mitigate any conflicts that result from any planning decisions.

Opatz's bill would appropriate \$500,000 for three joint-planning-district pilot projects in the St. Cloud area, the Sherburne-Benton-Stearns County area, and a community to be named later.

"If we can get . . . [the] counties to do what this bill asks," Opatz said, "it really bodes well for what can happen in the rest of the state."

Long's bill, **HF1000**, known as the "Community-based Planning Act," also would employ joint planning districts and the oversight of the strategic planning office, but would rely, instead, on a series of incentives to encourage participation. Local governments could receive grants administered through the planning office to help defray the expenses associated with community-based planning, in exchange for following the council's recommendations.

HF1000 would establish a 22-member advisory council to develop the details of the planning effort with an eye toward the Met Council goals, and provide grants to local governments that choose the community-based path. As yet, the proposal contains no specific appropriations.

"The framework is for a voluntary program with an emphasis on joint powers," Long said of the bill. "A city, county, or joint planning entity will plan and be eligible for funds covering assistance and technical assistance — but they would have to adhere to some defined goals."

The division retained both bills for inclusion in its omnibus finance bill.

Check your local listings to watch the House committee and floor sessions on TV.



DRUGS

Needles for drug users

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill April 7 that would allow pharmacists to sell hypodermic needles and syringes without a prescription. The panel's Judiciary Finance Division approved it a day later.

Contained in **HF1150**, sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), the proposal is aimed at illegal drug users and is intended to prevent the spread of AIDS and other diseases.

Under the bill, pharmacists would be allowed to sell unused needles and syringes in quantities of 10 or less, but could not advertise their availability. Pharmacists also could give purchasers information on drug counseling, disease testing sites, and the state's HIV hotline.

Bob Tracy of the Minnesota AIDS Project said the effort is crucial in preventing the spread of disease among drug users and others — including children — such as babies born to mothers who use illegal drugs. He presented evidence showing a sharp decrease in needle sharing in Connecticut after the state made clean needles available. According to a letter from Dr. T. Stephen Jones, of the National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention, "One of the most important ways to prevent the transmission of HIV among persons who inject illegal drugs is the use of sterile syringes and needles."

But committee members were sharply divided on the issue, with several saying the



Lorraine Teel, executive director of the Minnesota Aids Project, testified before the Judiciary Committee April 7 in support of a bill that would permit pharmacists and pharmacies to sell, without a prescription, unused hypodermic needles and syringes in quantities of 10 or less.

change would sanction the use of illegal drugs.

"I will not be part of the legalization of drug paraphernalia," said Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), a Minneapolis police officer. He said the provision also would worsen the problem of drug debris that already litters some public areas and streets. Stanek offered an amendment to strip the bill of the legal needle sales. It failed on a vote of 11-10.

The bill also would appropriate \$150,000 to the commissioner of Public Safety to conduct an evaluation of the needle program. The first report to the Legislature would be due Jan. 15, 2000, with a final report due by Jan. 15, 2002.

Other provisions of the bill would add prison guards and corrections personnel to emergency medical services personnel now covered by laws relating to HIV testing and exposure to the virus. The measure also describes how police and other emergency departments should proceed if an employee may have been exposed to the HIV virus. An appropriation of \$200,000 would be used to train police and criminal justice personnel in such matters.

Additionally, the bill would provide \$150,000 to train public defenders, county attorneys, victims advocates, and shelter personnel who deal with victims of crimes that involve HIV exposure; and \$25,000 would go to the Department of Human Services to provide testing and early intervention services to crime victims.

The measure will become part of the Judiciary Finance Division's omnibus bill.



EDUCATION

Omnibus K-12 bill assembled

Students who fail the state's basic standards tests required for high school graduation would be the subject of new remedial efforts, under an omnibus K-12 education funding package being compiled by a House panel.

HF1684, sponsored by Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), would spend \$51 million to assist students who fail the tests or are considered to be at risk of failing.

"We're committed to doing everything we can to help those students who are at risk of not graduating in a couple years," said Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), who was Kelso's co-sponsor on a separate bill containing the remedial education plan.

The House K-12 Education Finance Division began the final stages of assembling the omnibus spending bill April 10. Members of

the division had not completed the bill when this edition of *Session Weekly* went to press.

However, the division had voted to include several major education initiatives in the bill.

Under the bill, all school districts would be required to lengthen the school year for all students, and pupils who fail the basic skills tests in reading and math would spend even more additional time in the classroom.

Beginning with students who entered the ninth grade in 1996, Minnesota's graduation standards require all students to pass reading and math tests before they are eligible to receive a high school diploma.

The tests are first given to students when they are in the eighth grade. Eighth graders taking the test in January 1997 fared somewhat poorly, with 41 percent failing the reading test and 30 percent failing math. The results were similar when the tests were given to eighth graders in 1996.

The \$51 million included in Kelso's bill would go to remedial programs for those students who must retake one or both of the tests and students who are in danger of failing the tests.

Those students would be required to spend the equivalent of three weeks of extra time in the classroom, with additional hours being logged after school, on Saturdays, or during the summer.

Funds for the remedial programs would be distributed to schools on the basis of each school's percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch programs.

The bill also would add three days to the school year for all students. Currently, the

state sets no minimum for the number of days in the school year, but most districts hold classes about 170 days a year, among the lowest in the country.

HF1684 is expected to provide a 13.5 percent increase in education funding for the 1998-99 biennium, according to figures released by Kelso and others April 9.

The governor's proposals to expand education tax deductions for private school tuition, tutoring, or other educational expenses and to provide new tax credits for parents who send children to private schools are not expected to be included in the bill.

The omnibus bill was slated to emerge from the division by April 11. It will go next to the full House Education Committee.



ENERGY

Funding windmills

The House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee approved a bill April 8 to enhance the wind-energy industry in Minnesota.

HF1925, sponsored by Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), would help the industry in three ways.

First, the bill would establish a pilot incentive loan program. The Rural Finance Authority could lend up to \$3 million for wind energy conversion systems producing no more than two megawatts of electricity, with no more than \$500,000 going to any one entity. "It's a modest project that will probably involve six to 10 loans," said Michael

Differing opinions



Matt Swedlund, a home school student from Plymouth, Minn., took a break from passing out stickers that read "School Choice, Put Kids First" during a school choice rally on the front steps of the State Capitol April 9. He stopped to debate with Charlotte Scheithayer, of Rochester, about their differing views on state funding for private schools.

Noble of Minnesotans for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

Second, the bill would add small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and tribal councils to those who would qualify for loans to establish wind-energy facilities. Current law says that a qualified wind-energy facility must be owned by the person who owns the land upon which the facility stands. An underlying goal is to promote local ownership. "We want to make sure these facilities are owned by farmers before corporate conglomerates step in," Peterson said.

"The bill provides for state support in helping small wind farms compete with larger interests," Noble said. "It also creates a broader range of entities eligible for the wind incentive program."

Finally, the bill would require utilities that purchase wind energy to develop a standard contract that enumerates the basic terms and conditions for the purchases, as well as other information necessary to ensure reliability and safety. (Minnesota law requires that large energy suppliers like Northern States Power Co. purchase a certain amount of wind energy.)

The wind-energy facilities included in the bill must produce no more than 2 megawatts of power per year between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 1999. By Jan. 15, 1999, the finance authority will report on the status of the loans and make recommendations on the continuation of the program.

"Minnesota is the national leader in the development of wind energy," Noble said. "Thousands of state-of-the-art turbines could be created in the next five years."

HF1925 now moves to the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

Nuclear waste waits

Companies in Minnesota that generate high-level, nuclear waste or spent nuclear fuel pay a fee to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to take care of long-term storage and disposal of the waste. The DOE, however, has failed to provide the service, according to Minnesota's Department of Public Service. The state continues to store the waste.

HF1879, approved by the House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee on April 9, would place the proceeds from the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. The money would be released to the DOE "upon a showing . . . that the federal repository for the long-term storage and permanent disposal [of nuclear waste] is operating

and currently accepting such materials," the bill says.

"We and other states have been paying a lot of money to the nuclear waste fund that's been diverted for other uses," said bill sponsor Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) at an earlier committee meeting.

Mike McCarthy, of the public service department, said \$600 million per year is paid into the account nationwide. Minnesota has paid \$253 million since 1982, and continues to pay \$15 million per year. Last year, less than a third of the money paid actually made it into the program, he said.

Some of the debate surrounding the bill, however, centered on the possible outcome of a pending lawsuit against the DOE, to which Minnesota is party. Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) suggested that a lawsuit win could actually mean a loss for the state. Proving that the DOE breached its contract could result in a monetary award, and along with it, state responsibility for disposing of the waste, she said.

HF1879 will next be heard on the House floor.

Brownfields



La Shella Sims of Interfaith Action, a coalition of socially active religious groups, testified in favor of a bill that seeks money to clean up vacant contaminated industrial sites (brownfields) and redevelop them into new businesses with new jobs. Tom St. Aubin, Minneapolis, dressed in a contamination cleanup suit and held a container of dry ice to simulate pollution during the April 7 hearing of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.



ENVIRONMENT

Livestock odor research

Julie Jansen's family has experienced headaches, nausea, blackouts, and diarrhea since a hog confinement facility opened near their Granite Falls, Minn., home two years ago. She blames the combination of foul odor and hydrogen sulfide emitted by the feedlot, and has turned to her legislator, Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) for help.

Kubly brought a bill (**HF913**) to study the livestock odor problem before the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee April 4. The bill, approved by the panel, would appropriate \$200,000 to the University of Minnesota for the research and development of an odor rating system for livestock production facilities. Information generated by the research would be used by local governments to determine setbacks and other zoning requirements for livestock facilities. The study also would help livestock producers determine the best management practices to control livestock odor.

The bill would mark another \$200,000 for the university to research, develop, and promote low-emission and low-energy hog production systems. Alternative hog production is often done on a smaller scale and does not carry as much potential for a negative environmental impact, Kubly said.

One of Jansen's chief complaints concerned the lack of enforcement of existing laws by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The bill was amended to require the MPCA to better enforce existing limits on hydrogen sulfide emissions.

Dave Nelson of the MPCA encouraged the panel to stick to the original intent of **HF913** — to provide \$400,000 for odor research. He said that the MPCA has encouraged local governments to use zoning laws to control odor problems. Researching alternative production models should be a separate matter, he told the panel.

He also cautioned against setting a precedent by mandating that the agency enforce certain laws. "Hydrogen sulfide is already regulated," he said. "You could start to create a situation where the MPCA would only enforce laws that they are ordered to."

David Priceler of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association told the committee that his organization supported the original bill with \$400,000 for odor research.

The bill's next stop is the House Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Finance Committee.



FAMILY

Who am I?

Members of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Data Practices grappled April 4 with a bill that would make it easier for adoptees to discover their origins. No vote was taken on the proposal.

HF727, sponsored by committee chair Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), would eliminate a current requirement that a birth parent be notified before an adoptee could receive his or her original birth certificate. The certificate would reveal the names of an adoptee's birth parents.

"We're about to enter a new century. This is the information age. I don't see how we can continue to deny adoptees critical information about themselves," said Sandra Sperrazza of Concerned United Birthparents. "This is an adoptee's civil right."

The committee heard passionate testimony from people for and against the bill. At issue was how to weigh an adoptee's right to information against birth parents' right to privacy.

A 1977 law requires birth parents to sign an affidavit stating either a willingness or unwillingness to have their identities disclosed in the event a child should later try to find them. This would not change under the terms of McGuire's bill.

However, the bill poses a big question regarding those who relinquished children before the 1977 law, when they were promised confidentiality.

"The new law would establish a presumption in favor of contact and force birth parents to involuntarily relinquish the privacy that was promised to them," said Catherine Schendel of the Children's Home Society.

McGuire said the issue was one of balancing rights. "Personally, I think a person has a right to access their own birth certificate."

But the most compelling testimony came from people who had firsthand experience with the adoption process.

Sandra Lee Kimble said she struggled for years to find the identity of her birth mother. When she did, "the first thing she said to me was, 'were they good to you?' She told me that my finding her was the best thing that ever happened to her," Kimble said. She also learned crucial information about her genetic history that spurred her to get a mammogram. The test revealed cancer. "I was literally dying to know the truth," Kimble said, adding that health considerations are equal to the emotional considerations of the bill. "I know of no other law or institution in

the United States that denies truth to individuals except this one. This is a request that we not languish in the dark ages any more."

One witness said that, in 1973, she gave up a daughter for adoption. "I knew I would never look for her or interfere in her life." But then she received a call from an agency saying that her daughter wanted to find her. "It was earthshaking. I was assured privacy."

Due of the complexity of the issue, committee members plan to consider the bill during the interim and re-introduce it next session.

"We'll try to find common ground and look at any compromises," McGuire said. "The people born before 1977 want their birth records. Others don't want to give them out. We may be able to come up with some interim steps to resolve the differences. The steps may revolve around the cost and time [that acquiring access can currently demand]," McGuire said. "But that doesn't solve the entire problem. People just want their birth certificates. I personally believe it's information they have a right to. But there's still that step that allows someone the power to say yes or no."

McGuire added that a possible solution would involve the use of intermediaries to make initial contacts with birth parents to reduce the likelihood of upset or trauma upon contact.

Fathers' registry

A bill to register the names of fathers — or potential fathers — with the state won approval from the House Health and Human Services Committee April 9.

HF296, sponsored by Rep. Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls), calls upon the Department of Health to establish a registry where men who want to be a part of their children's lives can be assured of notification if their child is put up for adoption.

It's called the putative father's registry. It applies to males (including minors) who may be fathers but are not married to their children's mother and have not otherwise established paternity. Putative means "supposed" or "presumed." The registry is a way to protect a birth father's rights in the event his child is put up for adoption, and to protect children from having adoptions unduly disrupted.

A typical scenario would involve the parents of a child who have had little or no relationship beyond the time of conception. The bill would allow a man to register anytime after conception until 60 days after a

child's birth. He can register without the certainty a conception took place. Under **HF296**, a father could not contest an adoption 60 days after the birth, (unless a good case is made for failing to register).

Registering also would serve as the first step in a paternity claim. The bill says that within 30 days of registering, the father must file an intent to claim parental rights with the court. That way, he would preserve the right to maintain an interest in the child and would receive notice of a pending adoption proceeding. A man could use the registry to deny paternity, as well. Listing false information with the registry would be a misdemeanor.

The bill applies only to adoptions — not to paternity, child support, custody, or other parental issues.

Originally, the proposal limited the opportunity to register after a birth to just 30 days. Some claimed that was not long enough.

Wejcman reminded the committee that bonding begins early. "We want to avoid situations where a child is ripped out of a home because a birth father suddenly shows up. We're dealing with [someone who becomes a father] after a short-term relationship. They have 10 months to register if they have any interest at all in the child," she said, adding, "They no longer have to rely on the actions of the birth mother."

HF296 will next be heard by the Health and Human Services Finance Division.



GAMBLING

Card club at the track

The House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee approved a bill April 8 to allow card clubs to operate at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, Minn.

HF967, sponsored by Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), would limit wagers during the games to no more than \$30 per hand, and specifies a maximum of 50 card tables at the track. The track would have to use some of the revenue for a breeder's fund and purse payments.

The card games would be "unbanked," which means the players would bet against each other rather than the "house."

The reason for the clubs, according to bill supporters? Horse racing is an ailing state industry. In 1986, gross revenue generated by horse racing in Minnesota reached a peak of \$133 million when it began a steady decline. In 1996, the total was \$64.8 million. The all-time low was \$36.3 million in 1994

(not counting when the track was closed in 1993). In 1986, the state gained \$8.9 million in income from horse racing; in 1996, \$1.05 million.

Supporters say the track is an important commercial entity that supports other economic interests, including horse breeders and farmers (grain, hay, and straw). It also employs thousands, including security officers, track officials, vendors, food service and maintenance workers, and clerical and management staff. The bill is regarded as a way to boost attendance and increase revenues through a fee that would be charged for playing. By one estimate, the track stands to make about \$5 million per year.

"This would help the horse racing industry simply by allowing people to play poker with each other," said Cort Holten, who represents the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association.

Responding to fears that the bill would, in fact, expand gambling in Minnesota, Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) said: "The cat's already out of the bag as far as gambling is concerned. I don't see this as an expansion. I see it as a way to do what we already do."

Earlier this session, the committee approved **HF613**, which allows betting on card games such as euchre and pinochle. In those cases, also, gambling is limited because the hosts can't collect money.

HF967 next will be heard on the House floor.



GAME & FISH

No Indian fishing

A bill passed by the House April 7 now is moot due to a federal court ruling.

Hoping to forestall tensions when Indians in 12 Minnesota counties began to exercise their fishing rights under an 1837 treaty, the House voted 114-14 for a \$6.5 million bill (**SF1645**) to fund public information and law enforcement efforts in the affected area.

But there will be no netting or spearing this spring, due to a ruling April 9 by the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In January, a federal court ruled that an 1837 treaty permitted the Indians to hunt, fish, and harvest wild rice off the east-central Minnesota reservations covered in the treaty. The appellate court put a hold on the January ruling, and has agreed to hear arguments on the case June 9.

SF1645, sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), would have, in part, funded overtime pay and equipment costs had De-

partment of Natural Resources (DNR) enforcement officers been needed at boat landings to keep the peace. While the DNR said they anticipated no such problems, all parties were set on avoiding the violent outbreaks Wisconsin experienced several years ago. Funds were to have been expended first on an informational campaign to counter inaccurate perceptions of the rights of Indians under the 1837 treaty.



GOVERNMENT

Tracking corporate welfare

The Legislature would keep closer tabs on "corporate welfare" (tax breaks or other state aid to businesses) under a bill approved by the Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division April 4.

HF1473, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) and Rep. Kevin Knight (R-Bloomington), would create a 19-member commission to evaluate selected corporate subsidy programs to ensure that businesses had used the money effectively. The commission would examine tax breaks as well as direct spending and loans made to the private sector to encourage economic development.

The commission, Clark said, would make sure the subsidies actually benefited the general public.

"It's nothing against providing this kind of assistance," Clark said. "It's just saying we want some type of accountability."

The bill would require the commission to submit to the Legislature by Dec. 15, 1997, a report of its findings, including any recommendations for improved oversight.

HF1473 will be included in the committee's omnibus finance bill.

Meetings via interactive TV

The House Governmental Operations Committee approved a bill April 8 that would authorize legislators to conduct meetings via interactive television. The technology is like telephone conference calling with the addition of live video. Meeting participants at different places can talk to and hear each other through television.

Under the bill (**HF829**), sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), regular, special, and emergency meetings could be held via interactive technology. That means committee members could vote on bills while in locations other than a legislative committee room.

The House has used the technology in a limited capacity over the past few years, with legislators meeting in the State Office Building linking to remote locations around the state. There is currently one House hearing room equipped for interactive television hearings.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) said the bill **HF829** would enable legislators to spend more time with their constituency while continuing to conduct legislative business.

"You can have whole groups of people in one place that would have been unable to participate," said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), one of the bill's sponsors, adding the bill could dramatically "increase participation relative to what people are used to."

"One of the problems we have here [at the Capitol] is the inability to reach some constituents like the elderly and disabled," said Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Intl Falls). "This is an excellent idea."

The proposal also would apply to other local units of government, such as counties, cities, and school boards.

Under the bill, meetings would be open to the public and subject to the same notification requirements as other meetings. It also requires that all participants and observers be able to see and hear each other. Further, at least one legislator or member of a local government unit would have to participate from the committee's "home" location where the meeting would normally be held.

HF829 now moves to the House floor.



HUMAN SERVICES

Naming the dead

A bill to replace the unmarked or numbered graves of thousands of mentally retarded people who died decades ago while patients in Minnesota's state hospitals is moving through the House.

The Health and Human Services Com-

Correction

A story on pages 10-11 of the March 28 *Session Weekly* titled "Higher education direction," misquoted Rep. Betty Folliard, (DFL-Hopkins) who spoke in favor of a bill that would set up a commission to design a master plan for higher education. The quote read: "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." What Folliard said included legislators among those who should not have their own scenarios. We regret the error.

mittee April 9 approved **HF1930** which would set aside an as yet undetermined amount of money to mark grave sites with names.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), is on its way to the Health and Human Services Finance Division where a dollar figure is expected to be attached. A similar bill in the Senate sets aside \$100,000.

The bill would withhold state dollars until private money, raised to replace the grave sites, has been exhausted. It instructs the Department of Human Services to make efforts to raise private dollars. It also would leave unmarked the graves of those whose relatives object to any changes.

State officials estimate that some 9,000 graves are unmarked or numbered at former hospitals, and it would cost about \$2 million to replace them.

The measure is a spin-off of one that failed during the 1996 Legislative Session that called for a state public apology to mentally handicapped people whom the state involuntarily committed to state hospitals and later buried in unmarked or numbered graves.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) urged lawmakers "to be very cautious about this bill." She said there are data privacy issues in releasing names, and she added that the legislation is not coming from family members. "This is going to be a very costly endeavor" to replace all the graves.

But other lawmakers saw the issue differently. Rep. Ken Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) called the bill a "sad situation" and said "there should be some dignity" for those who died while in the state's care.



INSURANCE

More MinnesotaCare members

A bill that would expand eligibility for MinnesotaCare and abolish the Minnesota Health Care Commission was approved April 9 by the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

HF1441, sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), would extend MinnesotaCare eligibility to more low-income individuals and couples without children.

"We can afford to cover these people," Greenfield said. "It was always the intention to expand [eligibility] beyond where we are now."

Current law sets a maximum income of 135 percent of the federal poverty line for single people (\$10,651) and couples without children (\$14,323) to qualify for the state-

subsidized health insurance plan. The bill would boost the income limit for those people to 175 percent of the poverty level, or \$13,807 and \$18,567, respectively, using 1997 guidelines.

The income limit for MinnesotaCare enrollees was last increased in 1995, when the Legislature passed a measure lifting the limit for single people and households without children from 125 percent of the federal poverty level to 135 percent. (Current law sets a cap of 275 percent of the poverty level for families with children younger than 21.)

In 1996, Gov. Arne Carlson vetoed a bill that would have increased the income limit for people without children to 150 percent of the poverty level.

MinnesotaCare is a state-subsidized insurance plan created in 1992 to extend coverage to the uninsured. Enrollees pay premiums based on income and must provide co-payments for some services. Currently, the program serves more than 97,000 people.

Greenfield's bill also includes a separate provision that would eliminate the Minnesota Health Care Commission, created by the 1992 legislation, which advises legislators on health care policy.

The request to eliminate the commission came from the commission itself, which is made up of representatives of business, health plans, unions, state agencies, and consumers. Its members now cite a lack of consensus on health care issues as a reason to dissolve the commission.

"They have done some very important work for this state and this Legislature, but it does seem time" to eliminate the commission, Greenfield said.

HF1441 now moves to the House Governmental Operations Committee.



SPORTS

Stadium revival

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, which last week rejected a bill that would have publicly financed a new stadium for the Minnesota Twins, reversed itself April 9 and approved a heavily amended version of the measure by a vote of 12-6.

The committee revisited the bill, at least in part, at the behest of Gov. Arne Carlson, who urged lawmakers to give the measure the full consideration of the legislative process.

"We've been meeting with people over the last week," said **HF1367** sponsor Rep. Ann

H. Rest (DFL-New Hope). "We've been trying to respond to questions and concerns about the public obligation . . . trying to decrease it."

The version of **HF1367** approved by the committee does, in fact, reduce that obligation. The bill specifically states that the public authority shall not "assume any obligation or liability for bonds issued or sold" to finance the stadium's estimated \$400 million construction cost. Moreover, the bill removes from the public the obligation to purchase the team from the Pohlad after 2006.

However, **HF1367** retains most of the public financing devices outlined in the version previously rejected by the committee — a special scratch-off lottery game, taxes on tickets, parking and Twins memorabilia, among others — and requires the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission to sell the old Met Center land. After paying off whatever debt remains from building the Metrodome, the proceeds from the sale would be applied to the new stadium.

The bill also requires the Pohlad to contribute \$50 million to the effort, a number Jim Pohlad has, in the past, called a "deal



Jim Pohlad, left, son of Twins owner Carl Pohlad, told the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee that his family was not committed to a \$50 million contribution to a new Twins baseball stadium unless a stadium bill moving through the House is substantially changed. Pohlad has called the contribution a "deal breaker." The bill sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest, right, and Rep. Dan McElroy, was passed by the committee April 9.

breaker." Indeed, pressed by Rep. Kevin Knight (R-Bloomington), Pohlad once again refused to commit himself to the amount.

"If you're asking, at this particular time, if we agree to the \$50 million, the answer is no," Pohlad said.

The bill goes now to the House Taxes Committee.



TAXES

Sales tax changes

On Feb. 17, the Sales Tax Advisory Council, after studying the system for more than eight months, issued its recommendations for a more efficient sales tax model.

On April 8, the House Taxes Committee accepted those recommendations in the form of **HF2066**, sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope).

While several of the bill's provisions, such as changing the date of some tax refunds and permitting some direct tax payments, have no impact on state revenues, the rest of the bill — if accepted in its entirety — would cost Minnesota more than one-third of a billion dollars in the 1998-99 biennium.

The Sales Tax Advisory Council, which Rest chaired, was created by the 1995 Legislature. The 16-member board held a series of meetings, taking testimony from the public about how to more efficiently administer the sales tax. **HF2066** is the result.

Although the bill includes an array of sales-tax exemptions, the most costly provision, by far, would change the way vendors pay the state its cut of the gross revenue. As it now stands, retailers with an annual sales tax liability over \$120,000 must estimate their tax for June and remit at least 75 percent of that electronically to the state by June 28. **HF2066** would eliminate this annual accelerated payment.

According to an analysis provided by the Department of Revenue, the move would cost the state more than \$130 million in 1998 alone and about \$6 million per year thereafter through 2001.

The bill also contains a fistful of exemptions, including one for the replacement of capital equipment.

Currently, the state draws a distinction between capital equipment, which is already exempt from sales tax, and replacement capital equipment, which is subject to a declining rate that is administered through a refund mechanism.

HF2066 would eliminate this distinction and the refund process, exempting all capital equipment at the time of purchase, effective

June 1, 1997. The revenue department estimates this move would cost the state more than \$76 million in the coming biennium.

"Inputs" used for taxable services, such as laundry, dry cleaning, building maintenance, telephone and cable television, and country club dues also would be exempted from the sales tax. Thus, the chemicals used in dry cleaning or building maintenance, for example, would become tax-free. According to the revenue department estimate, this provision translates into a loss of more than \$96 million over the next two years.

The bill would extend the sales tax to certain items that are now tax-free. For instance, unheated, ready-to-eat food, such as sandwiches and salads sold at supermarkets, would become taxable as would pre-paid telephone cards.

"This bill is not an attempt to extend the sales tax, but to apply consistent tax policy," Rest said, adding that the changes need to be made now while the state enjoys a budget surplus.

The committee retained **HF2066** for consideration in its omnibus tax bill.

Extended filing date

The House of Representatives unanimously approved an emergency measure April 10 that would give victims of the 1997 flood additional time to file their tax returns.

"My heart goes out these people," Rep. Dee Long said of **HF2132**. "... I think it's the least we can do."

If enacted, **HF2132**, sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), would allow residents and businesses located in counties that had been declared disaster areas until May 30 to file their state tax returns.

The bill, which Tunheim said mirrors a federal declaration issued recently by President Bill Clinton, goes now to the Senate for approval.



TRANSPORTATION

Seat belt offenses

A proposal to allow for tougher enforcement of the state's mandatory seat belt law has stalled in the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF1066, sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), would allow police to pull over motorists who fail to comply with state law requiring all front seat occupants to buckle up.

Committee members April 9 rejected the plan by an 11-6 margin. Similar legislation introduced by Greenfield in recent years has met the same end.

Current law requires all front seat passengers to wear a seat belt, but police can only issue a citation for seat belt violations after stopping a motorist for another offense.

(Current law also requires children between the ages of three and 11 to wear a seat belt no matter where they are seated in the car. Children three and under must be secured in child car seats.)

Greenfield has pushed to make seat belt violations a primary offense — allowing police to pull over violators — in hopes of prompting greater compliance.

The Department of Public Safety estimates that 64 percent of Minnesota motorists complied with the seat belt law in 1996. Greenfield said his bill would prompt a 15 percent increase in compliance.

And that, he said, would save lives.



Tom Baker and Nancy Mulder testified in favor of a bill that would make not wearing a seat belt a primary offense for which police can stop you. The two spoke to the Transportation and Transit Committee April 9 about Pat Mulder, their son and friend, who won't be able to graduate with his class because he has to relearn simple tasks after suffering a head injury in a car accident. He was not wearing a seat belt.

Greenfield supports his case with public safety department statistics showing that in 1995 car accidents claimed the lives of 239 people who were not wearing seat belts and only 134 people who were.

"There are few people with an opportunity to save lives with a single action or a single word," said Christine Krueger, coordinator of the Minnesota Safety Belt Coalition.

"You have such an opportunity," she told members of the committee.

But the committee was not swayed. Proposals to make seat belt violations a primary offense have consistently drawn opposition from lawmakers who are hesitant to give police new power to pull over motorists.

Greenfield's bill drew little debate before being rejected by the committee.

Young farming drivers

A bill to ensure that 15-year-olds are allowed restricted driver's licenses to help out on the family farm was approved April 9 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF768, sponsored by Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake), would provide an exception to a new state law requiring anyone under age 18 to hold a learner's permit for at least six months before becoming eligible for a driver's license.

The 1996 Legislature passed the new learner's permit requirements, which took effect Feb. 1, 1997, with hopes that the law would give teenagers more driving experience before they hit the road on their own.

But the law had an unintended side effect, according to Westrom. It cuts in half the time farm families can benefit from a long-standing state law allowing 15-year-olds to get restricted driver's licenses to help with farm business.

That law allows 15-year-olds whose parents are farmers to drive only during daylight hours and only within 20 miles of the family farm.

Westrom's bill would temporarily exempt 15-year-olds who are eligible for a restricted farm driver's license from the new six-month learner's permit requirement. The exemption would stay in place until the end of 1997.

Another change prescribed in the bill would allow eligible 14-year-olds to receive learner's permits so they can prepare to get a farm driver's license when they turn 15. (Current law sets age 15 as the minimum age for driving instruction.)

After April 1, 1998, anyone applying for a

farm driver's license would be required to have held a learner's permit for six months, under the bill.

Westrom's bill now moves to the House floor.

Selling abandoned cars

Minneapolis and St. Paul police would be required to hold impounded vehicles for only 15 days before putting them on the auction block, under a bill approved April 9 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF342, sponsored by Rep. Jim Farrell (DFL-St. Paul), was crafted to address a problem that has Minneapolis and St. Paul impound lots overflowing with cars abandoned by their owners.

Current state law requires a 45-day wait before an impounded vehicle can be sold. Farrell's bill would exempt Minneapolis and St. Paul from that law and set a 15-day limit for those cities.

The bill would require local approval by the city councils in Minneapolis and St. Paul before it could take effect.

Farrell said current law causes real problems in the cities, especially during winter months. A winter that brings heavy snowfall — such as this winter — leads to a lot of parking violations and a lot of cars being towed from city streets to the impound lot.

In St. Paul, where the city impound lot holds 750 vehicles, space in the lot can run out quickly, said St. Paul Police Deputy Chief Ted Brown.

Most people pay the fine and pick up their cars from the impound lot within a few days,

but others would rather lose their vehicles than pay up, according to Brown. As a result, vehicles that — in effect — are abandoned must be allowed to take up valuable lot space for 45 days before they can be sold off.

"The 45-day rule simply makes it too difficult to operate efficiently," Brown said.

Farrell's bill now moves to the House floor.

Mama D



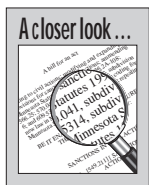
At a press conference April 9 in the State Office Building, Giovanna D'Agostino, otherwise known as Mama D, urged legislators to dedicate more welfare dollars for legal immigrants cut off by a new federal law. Mama D, a metro area restaurateur, spoke about the obstacles and racism her family faced when they immigrated from Italy to this country in 1912.

House chamber music



Eiji Oue, conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, and violinist Fleeznis Jorja, right, perform a piece by Mozart for legislators and staff during a recess of the House floor session April 10.

Smart card debate: privacy versus convenience



In less than a year, Minnesota state employees could be asked to take part in a pilot project testing the leading edge of modern technology. It would involve credit card sized MNCards, which would replace the cards employees now use for identification, and building and parking access.

But the cards also could be used for placing long-distance telephone calls, monitoring employee attendance, identifying medical insurance coverage and medical information, making vending machine and cafeteria purchases, and bank and credit union transactions. In the future, they could be inserted in an employee's computer as a means of access and security. All that remains to be decided.

In fact, there's almost no limit to the potential information the cards can hold and functions they can perform. That's because of the 1/2" square computer chip each card would contain. "This is the next generation" of cards that currently function by a magnetic strip, said John Gunyou of the Minnesota Office of Technology. "It looks like a credit card, but the chip can hold a ton of information." Often called smart cards, they're in limited use around the country, most commonly on college campuses.

The goal of the pilot project, in which participation would be strictly voluntary, is to determine which functions people desire and are comfortable using, and to deal with any glitches or drawbacks, he said. "There are a number of issues that have to be worked out regarding security, data, and privacy. That's why we're doing a pilot."

HF635, the bill that makes the project possible, was debated extensively in the House Judiciary Committee's Data Practices Subcommittee. On April 8, it was approved by the House Governmental Operations Committee and now rests in the committee's State Government Finance Division. (**HF635**, sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), also establishes the North Star government on-line service and information initiative and sets up a telecommunications community resource initiative to promote electronic information about health care, education, and commerce.)

The committee meetings resulted in several important provisions regarding MNCards, Gunyou said. One ensures that



State employees who choose to participate in Minnesota's smart card program may soon carry cards similar to the University of Minnesota's UCard (pictured), which uses a magnetic strip to store data.

cardholders have access to the information on the cards through "card readers" at each participating state agency.

The bill also sets up a broad-based steering committee to develop the MNCard project and report back to the Legislature with its recommendations. The committee would include representatives from the Minnesota Office of Technology, the Department of Administration, the Office of the State Treasurer, the Information Policy Council, the University of Minnesota (which already uses Smart Cards on campus), Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, health insurance providers, financial institutions, state employees, technology groups and other interested parties.

"One key is that groups will decide what will go on the cards and whether sensitive information will be included," Gunyou said. Plus, he added, "nothing exempts the project from data practices laws. The law is the law and isn't changed by technology." The challenge, he said, is for the law to keep up with the technology, which creates new possibilities before language is on the books to govern it.

A larger issue is the implications of the cards' expanded use by the general public in years to come. Gunyou isn't impressed by fears that the technology threatens personal privacy. "People are raising legitimate issues regarding privacy, but they have to be addressed logically. Some people are opposed to technology in any form. In a few years, the cards will become so common the fears will be lost," he said. "I think there's some irrational Big Brother concerns. But, to me, the cards are a godsend." He thinks cards that carry medical information, for example, would be life-saving. In his case, Gunyou said, the cards could inform emergency personnel of his life-threatening allergies.

While security enhancement — personal and professional — is at the center of the benefits the cards could provide, according to Gunyou, threats to security are the center of card's drawbacks, according to others.

"It's the whole idea of carrying a card that can have large quantities of personal information on it that I have to present to strangers," explained Don Gemberling of the Public Information Policy Analysis Division of the Department of Administration. "How do I know the stranger's machine can't overcome [the card's] security measures? How do I trust that? That's the biggie."

Gemberling also said that smart cards present a whole series of difficult security issues that, without protective measures in place, could turn the cards into "bad dream" cards.

"Will the technology dog wag the privacy tail, or will we finally recognize the right of privacy to be the dog and technology to be the tail?" Gemberling asks in a report about smart cards. "Who controls access to the cards? Who controls what goes on the cards? How does the person carrying the card really know what is on [it]?" Further, he asks, will driver's licenses end up carrying all that additional information, as well as welfare benefits, social security information, and other sensitive information? Can, for instance, an agency punish someone for not paying a bill by "zapping" parts of the card's information?

"I'm not suggesting the whole idea is bad," Gemberling said. "Over time, the cards could offer real benefits," including Gunyou's example of medical emergencies, and by reducing bureaucracy and the number of cards people will have to carry with them. "But I don't want my gas station, for instance, to have access to my medical information."

But Gunyou said that the level of security provided for any one aspect will match the level of security that is needed. He's looking forward to cards providing users with exclusive access to their computer stations and the ability to conduct business transactions over the Internet.

No one knows whether, if the cards become widely used, they would remain voluntary.

Sydney Jensen of the Office of Technology, said that the project expects about 10,000 of the state's 50,000 employees to volunteer. The pilot project would end June 30, 2001.

— Celeste Riley

Income tax sponsor briefly held state's top office

Hjalmar Petersen rose from humble origins to become the state's chief executive, but didn't stay there very long. He has the honor of holding the shortest gubernatorial term ever in Minnesota — 134 days.

Although his stint as head of state was short, Petersen stands tall as a symbol of immigrant success, a small-town newspaperman-turned-politician, buoyed by the waves of populism his immigrant community helped create.

His journey from print shop boy at a remote newspaper in northern Minnesota to head of state in 1936 took place during one of the nation's most exciting times. Industrialization, massive immigration, the First World War, the Depression, and the seeds of the Second World War all occurred during Petersen's professional life. Just as those events played a role in the strength of the populist movement, they contributed to Petersen's transformation from business-oriented Republican to Farmer-Labor representative.

Also influencing his political ideals and practices was Petersen's experience as founder and editor of the *Askov American* weekly newspaper. Whether it was his weekly column for rural newspapers or his aversion to business and political monopolies, Petersen never lost his journalistic instincts.

The literature on Minnesota's 23rd governor is brief. Perhaps that is because he stepped into the office in August 1936 after the revered Gov. Floyd B. Olson died. In Petersen's five months in office, he didn't do anything remarkable — he called a special session, appointed a state Supreme Court judge, an attorney general and helped settle a few metro-area labor disputes. When his term expired, he chose not to immediately run for re-election. He would, however, run later but would not succeed at regaining the governor's office.

But his contributions to Minnesota span decades before and after his gubernatorial term. As a state representative from Pine County from 1930 to 1934, he was a strong Farmer-Labor party member. His second term ended 42 years of Republican dominance in the House of Representatives and he was a key player in electing Charles Munn as Speaker of the House. Naming the former



Hjalmar Petersen, Minnesota's 23rd governor had a rather uneventful five months as the state's chief executive, but was a lifelong champion of populist causes.

Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Republican to the post drew conservatives to support some Farmer-Labor causes and some say it helped pass the session's most important piece of legislation — the state income tax, sponsored by Petersen himself.

The state income tax, last debated in the 1891 session, was a controversial measure that "in the area of government finance . . . 'was to become the single most important contribution of the Farmer-Labor party during its tenure in office,'" according to Petersen's biography, *Hjalmar Petersen of Minnesota*, by Steven Keillor.

As chairman of the powerful Taxes Committee, Petersen argued the lack of purchasing power was at the root of the nation's problems. An income tax would bring aid to public schools and property tax relief to farmers who, according to the *Askov American*, were paying 20 to 50 percent of their incomes in taxes (compared to 4 percent or less for non-farmers.)

Like he did with many issues, Petersen used the pages of his newspaper to promote the income tax. He refuted the charge that an income tax would hurt the masses by hurting the wealthy.

"If we have to bow and scrape and be afraid of the millionaires and billionaires . . . and if

we can't tax them so it will stick under our present form of government then it is high time to make a right about face and change the system," Petersen said, according to Keillor's book.

Petersen spoke for independence from Wall Street interests, big government, and even media monopolization from his first day in public office as village clerk through his term as governor. His fight for incorporation and thus independence from a township board won him the clerk post in Askov in 1918. Years later, he expressed his independence from big business by switching from Republicanism to what he called the "independent" Farmer-Labor Party.

"The farmer by his vote shows that he regards the Farmer-Labor party as the independent party — the one that represents the cause of the masses," Petersen said.

He used the *Askov American* to oppose U.S. involvement in every war, from World War I to the Vietnam War. As biographer Keillor put it, "being against war was almost a religion" for Petersen.

And he fought to make changes in the systems — political and editorial — of which he was a part. He fought against the Farmer-Labor Party's political patronage machine in the 1936 and 1938 campaigns. He criticized the dominance of Knight Ridder and Cowles media companies in Minnesota journalism. He also favored the right to challenge endorsed candidates at primaries, seeking to open up the system to more and purge the system of powerful political bosses.

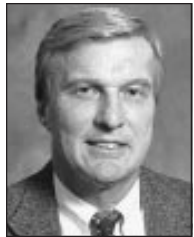
Petersen tried more than once — albeit unsuccessfully — to round up support for an independent party.

Born in Denmark on Jan. 2, 1890, Petersen came to the United States as a baby with his parents. His father, who had worked hard as a farm laborer to become a small merchant, moved the family to Chicago and soon after settled in Tyler, Minn. There, the family was part of a pioneer community where Danes numbered high and American culture was slow to settle in. The language of the Old Country prevailed and debates over whether to adopt mainstream American ways were always under way.

Continued on page 23

Biernat unites legal know-how, teaching, lawmaking

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) may be a legislator, but he's also a teacher. The first-term District 59A representative is on the faculty at Hamline University Law School, where he teaches property law, family law, and legal ethics. In fact, he said, his experience in the Capitol makes him a more effective instructor.



Rep. Len Biernat

Take, for example, the revamped anti-stalking legislation that emerged from the House Judiciary Committee at the beginning of the session. Lawmakers were forced to revisit the issue after the Minnesota Supreme Court all but erased the version passed by the 1993 Legislature for being overly broad.

"I see that as a marvelous opportunity to show [students] the relationship between the courts and the Legislature — to illustrate the separation of powers," Biernat said, adding that the recent effort to recodify Minnesota's set of landlord/tenant laws also provided a measure of practical insight that he shared with his students.

Of course, the legislator/lawyer nexus works two ways. At virtually every turn, Biernat said, he draws on his legal background in some manner, particularly in his capacity as a member of the Judiciary Committee.

"It helps me enormously," he said, "especially in the family law aspect, for example,

with the right-to-privacy matters."

Privacy, he said, is something that has been in the forefront of much of the Judiciary Committee's work this session. The issues surrounding privacy tend to call into question the relationship between citizens and their government, he explained, drawing on another academic experience to illustrate the point.

"I used to bring groups of students over to Norway," Biernat said, "and they have something there called the Data Inspectorate, which is a government agency that makes sure all the citizens' records collected by business are complete."

It is, he said, the Norwegian government's job to examine information on its citizenry.

"It's just the opposite here," he said. "We don't trust the government at all."

Yet, Biernat is more than just another lawyer turned lawmaker. It could be said that politics runs in the family, and that his role as a legislator is nothing less than a family legacy.

His father served in the House for eight years, from 1948 through 1956, and the young Biernat grew up working on campaigns. His brother, Joe, currently serves on the Minneapolis City Council, and Biernat himself sat on the Minneapolis School Board for seven years before throwing his hat into the legislative ring.

That background, Biernat said, gave him the opportunity to get right to work, rather than having to spend his first term learning the ins and outs of the legislative process.

Indeed, for a first-term legislator, Biernat, who also sits on the Education Committee and its K-12 Education Finance Division, has been exceptionally busy. He has sponsored, or co-sponsored, more than 60 pieces of legislation — including one that drew national attention.

"It's interesting," Biernat said of **HF446**, his bill that linked students' grades to their eligibility for a driver's license. "I was getting calls on that from all over the place. It's just an example of what one legislator can do . . . in terms of getting a good policy discussion going."

Biernat hopes to get many more such policy discussions going, particularly on education, although his legislative priorities have shifted since he received his committee assignments. The committee is where the real work is done.

"It's real intense," he said. "But, I'm enjoying it a lot."

— F.J. Gallagher

District 59A

1996 population: 32,699

Largest city: Minneapolis

Counties: Hennepin

Location: northeast Minneapolis

Top concern: "I would rather see education dollars spent where they do the most good . . . improving student performance."

—Rep. Len Biernat

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New members . . .

Nornes considers legislative post a 'rare privilege'

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) has gone from broadcasting Minnesota Twins games over his own radio station to debating whether the team deserves a new outdoor stadium.



Rep. Bud Nornes

Now out of the broadcasting business, in which he spent 35 years, Nornes said his tenure as a school board member influenced him to run for the Legislature.

"I believe you always have to have goals . . . and this seemed like a possibility," he said.

At times, though, the possibility must have seemed distant at best to the former KJJK-AM owner and station manager. Nornes ran for the District 10A seat twice before. In 1992, he lost by fewer than 700 votes, and in 1994, he fell short by a mere 73 votes. The decision to try again did not come easily.

To become a three-time loser could be embarrassing, he said. Yet, Nornes was not embarrassed. In fact, he won by a substantial margin in a district where nearly an equal number of Republicans and Democrats live.

"I don't regret it," he said. "To have a goal, work hard, and achieve it, well, that's the only way I'd have it."

Now that he's here, Nornes said his goal is to effectively represent the people of his district.

"I came into this job without any axes to grind," he said, "or any agenda, other than to represent my district."

And the people in his district, he said, pulling out a survey he recently sent to his constituents, are concerned with welfare reform and education. In fact, he continued, the survey showed that 96 percent of the 1,500 or so respondents support the notion of requiring able-bodied people to work.

The calls he receives reflect the same sentiment, he said, although lately, he's been getting a lot of calls from people expressing their opinion on the proposed publicly financed stadium for the Minnesota Twins. For the most part, they're against it, he said.

"Some of them want to keep the Twins," Nornes said, adding that the role of government is to guide the process and find the proper funding mechanism — which, according to the people in his district, is one that doesn't include any public dollars.

From all he had heard about life at the Capitol, Nornes said, he expected to spend most of his first term just learning the ropes of the legislative process.

"Once you're elected," he said, "you hear

you'll be ineffective in your first term. I really didn't find that to be the case."

In fact, he said, legislating runs in his family. His great-grandfather represented Albert Lea in 1903. Recently, in between committee hearings and floor sessions, he spent some time in the Capitol, looking at the portraits of the former governors. Eventually, he said, he found the governor of his great-grandfather's era.

"It was interesting to learn the issues of that day," he said, adding that he hopes to spend more than a single term working on the issues of his day. "Fewer than a thousand people have served here, and I have the opportunity to put in a few years . . . it's a rare privilege that very few people get."

— F.J. Gallagher

District 10A

1996 population: 33,047
Largest city: Fergus Falls
Counties: Douglas, Otter Tail
Location: northwestern Minnesota
Top concern: "To honestly do the best job that I can."

—Rep. Bud Nornes

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How a Bill Becomes

Idea

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

General Orders

7 On General Orders, all House or Senate members, acting as the “committee of the whole,” have a chance to debate the issue, offer amendments, and present arguments on the bill. Afterwards, they vote to recommend: passage of the bill, progress (delay action), or further committee action. And sometimes they recommend that a bill not pass. Members' votes on General Orders are usually not recorded unless there is a specific request to do so. From here, the bill is placed on the Calendar.

Legal form

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

Calendar

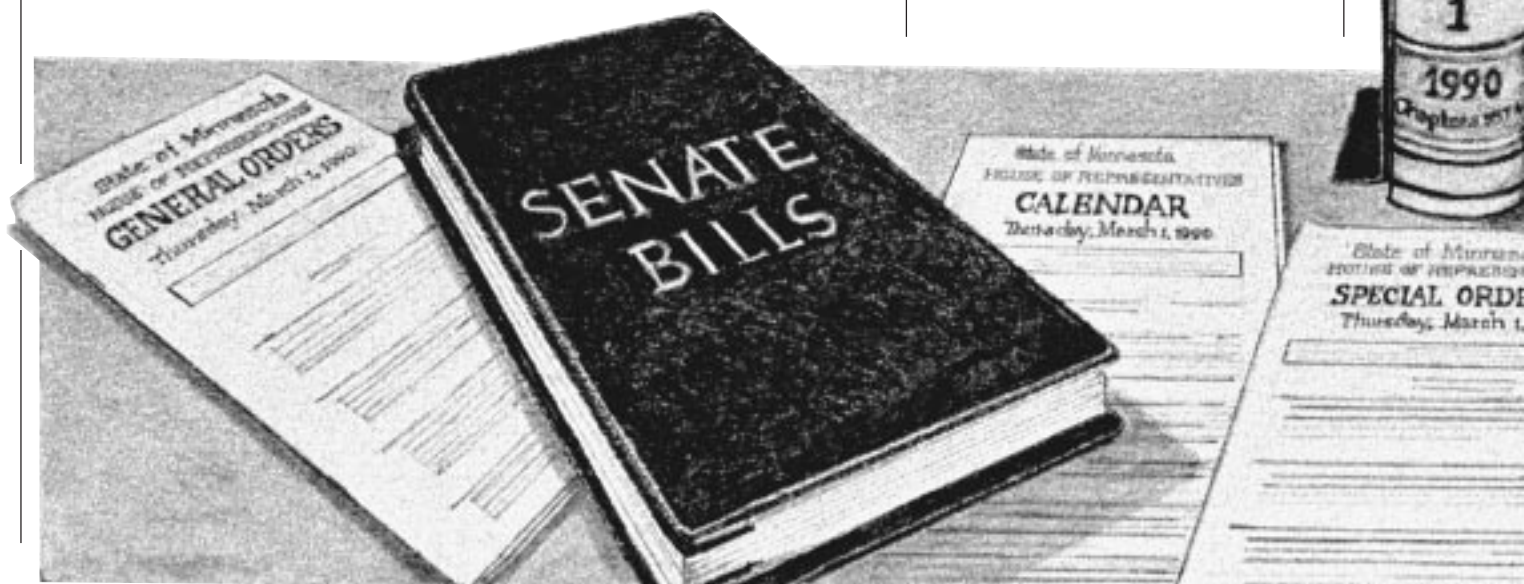
8 The Calendar is a list of bills the full House and full Senate vote on. At this point, the bill has its *third reading*. The bill cannot be amended unless the entire body agrees to it. Here, representatives and senators vote on the bill for the last time. A bill needs 68 votes to pass the House and 34 votes to pass the Senate. If the House and Senate each pass the same version of the bill, it goes to the governor for a signature.

Authors

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

Special Orders

9 Toward the end of the session, the rules committees of the House and Senate designate bills from the General Orders calendar to receive priority consideration. These Special Orders bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day. The House also has a Rule 1.10 calendar which allows the chairs of the Taxes and Appropriations committees to call up for consideration any tax or appropriations bill that has had a second reading. These Rule 1.10 bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.



a Law in Minnesota

Introduction

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

Conference

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

Committee

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

Floor

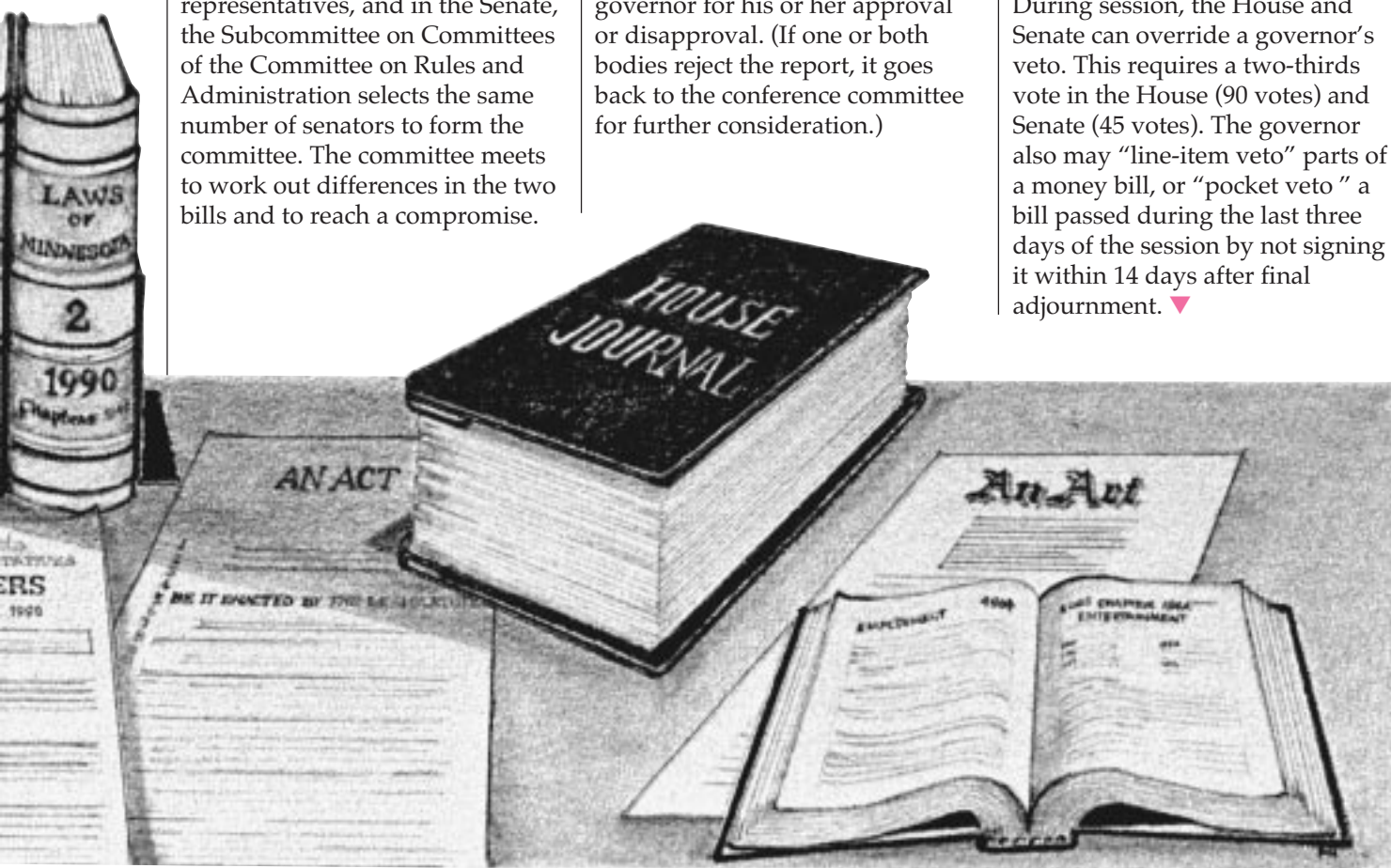
11 The conference committee's compromise bill then goes back to the House and the Senate for another vote. If both bodies pass the bill in this form, it is sent to the governor for his or her approval or disapproval. (If one or both bodies reject the report, it goes back to the conference committee for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

Floor

6 After the full House, or Senate, accepts the committee report, the bill has its *second reading*. From here, the bill is usually placed on the House and Senate agendas called General Orders. (A committee can recommend that a local or non-controversial bill bypass General Orders and go onto the Consent Calendar where it usually passes without debate.)

Governor

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



1997 Minnesota House Membership by Seniority

21st term

Munger, Willard (DFL)*

13th term

Anderson, Irv (DFL)*
Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)
Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)
Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)

12th term

Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)
Osthoff, Tom (DFL)

11th term

Jaros, Mike (DFL)*
Murphy, Mary (DFL)
Skoglund, Wes (DFL)*

10th term

Greenfield, Lee (DFL)
Long, Dee (DFL)
Sviggum, Steve (R)

9th term

Clark, Karen (DFL)

8th term

Bishop, Dave (R)
Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)
Tunheim, Jim (DFL)

7th term

Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)
Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)
Olson, Edgar (DFL)
Ozment, Dennis (R)
Rest, Ann H. (DFL)
Tompkins, Eileen (R)

6th term

Carruthers, Phil (DFL)
Dawkins, Andy (DFL)
Dorn, John (DFL)
Jefferson, Richard (DFL)
Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)
Kelso, Becky (DFL)
Kinkel, Anthony G. (Tony) (DFL)
Milbert, Bob (DFL)
Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)
Rukavina, Tom (DFL)
Swenson, Doug (R)
Trimble, Steve (DFL)
Wagenius, Jean (DFL)
Winter, Ted (DFL)

5th term

Abrams, Ron (R)
Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)
Hausman, Alice (DFL)
Macklin, Bill (R)
McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)
Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)
Weaver, Charlie (R)

4th term

Bettermann, Hilda (R)
Davids, Gregory M. (R)
Erhardt, Ron (R)
Farrell, Jim (DFL)
Garcia, Edwina (DFL)
Goodno, Kevin (R)
Koppendrayner, LeRoy (R)
Krinkie, Philip (R)
Leppik, Peggy (R)
Mariani, Carlos (DFL)
Orfield, Myron (DFL)
Peterson, Doug (DFL)
Smith, Steve (R)
Wejcman, Linda (DFL)

3rd term

Commers, Tim (R)
Dehler, Steve (R)
Delmont, Mike (DFL)
Dempsey, Jerry (R)
Finseth, Tim (R)
Greiling, Mindy (DFL)
Holsten, Mark (R)
Huntley, Thomas (DFL)
Knight, Kevin (R)
Lindner, Arlon (R)
Luther, Darlene (DFL)
Mahon, Mark P. (DFL)
McCollum, Betty (DFL)
Molnau, Carol L. (R)
Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)
Olson, Mark (R)
Opatz, Joe (DFL)
Pawlenty, Tim (R)
Rhodes, Jim (R)
Seagren, Alice (R)
Tomassoni, David J. (DFL)
Van Dellen, Todd (R)
Vickerman, Barb (R)
Wolf, Ken (R)
Workman, Tom (R)

2nd term

Anderson, Bruce (R)
Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)
Boudreau, Lynda (R)
Bradley, Fran (R)
Broecker, Sherry (R)
Daggett, Roxann (R)
Entenza, Matt (DFL)
Evans, Geri (DFL)*
Gunther, Bob (R)
Haas, Bill (R)
Harder, Elaine (R)
Knoblach, Jim (R)
Kraus, Ron (R)
Larsen, Peg (R)
Leighton, Rob (DFL)
Mares, Harry (R)
Marko, Sharon (DFL)
McElroy, Dan (R)
Mulder, Richard (R)
Osskopp, Mike (R)
Otremba, Ken (DFL)
Paulsen, Erik (R)
Rostberg, Jim (R)
Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)
Sekhon, Kathleen (DFL)*
Stanek, Rich (R)
Swenson, Howard (R)
Sykora, Barb (R)
Tuma, John (R)

1st term

Biernat, Len (DFL)
Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)
Folliard, Betty (DFL)
Hilty, Bill (DFL)
Johnson, Ruth (DFL)
Juhnke, Al (DFL)
Kielkucki, Tony (R)
Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)
Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)
Kuisle, William (R)
Mullery, Joe (DFL)
Nornes, Bud (R)
Paymar, Michael (DFL)
Reuter, Doug (R)
Rifenberg, Michelle (R)
Seifert, Marty (R)
Skare, Gail (DFL)
Slawik, Nora (DFL)
Stang, Doug (R)
Tingelstad, Kathy (R)
Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)
Westrom, Torrey (R)

* non-consecutive terms
House members serve two-year terms.

Bill Introductions

HF2089-HF2135

Monday, April 7

HF2089—Folliard (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism
& Consumer Affairs
Cigarette advertising restricted and regulated, and penalties provided.

HF2090—Macklin (R)
Taxes
Court-or-state ordered electronic monitoring services provided sale tax exemption.

HF2091—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Residential homestead property uniform property tax class rate established.

HF2092—Paymar (DFL)
Judiciary
Domestic abuse perpetrated by minors pilot program established.

HF2093—Entenza (DFL)
Education
Deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing children education bill of rights provided.

HF2094—Jennings (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Ozone; Environmental Protection Agency memorialized to exempt Minnesota from ozone transport provisions.

HF2095—Kahn (DFL)
Education
Torture Victim Center appropriated money.

HF2096—Dorn (DFL)
Education
Alternative school year calendar development working group established, and money appropriated.

HF2097—Harder (R)
Agriculture
Agricultural corporation land ownership limitations modified.

HF2098—Carruthers (DFL)
Environment, Natural Resources
& Agriculture Finance
State lottery proceed dedication to environment and natural resources trust fund duration extended, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2099—Mariani (DFL)
Education
Open enrollment opportunities expanded for students of color, and money appropriated.

Tuesday, April 8

HF2100—Osthoff (DFL)
Taxes
Lottery ticket sales tax exemption provided.

HF2101—Long (DFL)
Taxes
Cigarette, tobacco product, and liquor excise tax accelerated payment requirement eliminated.

HF2102—Bettermann (R)
Labor-Management Relations
Workers' compensation burden of proof requirements and third-party liability provisions modified, and cessation of benefit restrictions clarified.

HF2103—Bettermann (R)
Labor-Management Relations
Workers' Compensation claim time limitation provisions modified.

HF2104—Dawkins (DFL)
Taxes
Soils condition Tax Increment Financing districts eliminated, and redevelopment Tax Increment Financing district definition expanded.

HF2105—Evans (DFL)
Judiciary
Cooperative criminal justice and crime prevention grant program established.

HF2106—Bakk (DFL)
Taxes
Mining industry replacement equipment sales tax exemption application clarified.

HF2107—Tuma (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
BWCA; land use restrictions imposed within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, and penalties provided.

HF2108—Davids (R)
Health & Human Services
Abortion data reporting provisions modified, and criminal penalties provided.

HF2109—Jaros (DFL)
Economic Development
& International Trade
Employment training provided for certain public assistance recipients, and money appropriated.

HF2110—Kielkucki (R)
Education
Locally controlled graduation rule aid and district assistance provided, locally controlled graduation rule offered, and money appropriated.

HF2111—Rukavina (DFL)
Education
East Range Secondary Technical Education Center equipment purchase provided, and money appropriated.

HF2112—Broecker (R)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Lawful gambling net profit expenditure provisions modified.

HF2113—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Taxes
Education cost financing with property taxes prohibited, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Wednesday, April 9

HF2114—Lieder (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Norman County nursing facility interim and settle-up payment rate qualification allowed.

HF2115—Lieder (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Norman County nursing facility interim and settle-up payment rate qualification allowed.

HF2116—Jefferson (DFL)
Education
Northside Career and Technology Center appropriated money.

HF2117—Milbert (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy
State-run casinos established, lottery director duties provided, casino revenue use specified, and money appropriated.

HF2118—Osthoff (DFL)
Environment, Natural Resources
& Agriculture Finance
Water Access Community Initiative Program appropriated money.

HF2119—Chaudhary (DFL)
Education
School Enrichment Partnership Program appropriated money.

HF2120—Olson, E. (DFL)
Taxes
Education cost financing with property taxes prohibited, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2121—Stang (R)
Taxes
Community service organization property tax classification provisions modified.

HF2122—Stang (R)
Education
Independent School District No. 2364, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, fund transfer provided.

HF2123—Kalis (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Problem-gambling program transferred to health department, and money appropriated.

HF2124—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education
Nett Lake Community Center appropriated money.

HF2125—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 707, Nett Lake, appropriated money for a media specialist.

HF2126—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 707, Nett Lake, grants provided for insurance costs, and money appropriated.

Thursday, April 10

HF2127—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education
Northeast Minnesota Telecommunications Access Grant Governance Board appropriated money to establish telecommunication connections.

HF2128—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Homestead and agricultural municipal credit aid eliminated, and sales tax revenue dedication provided for municipal aid.

HF2129—Peterson (DFL)
Ways & Means
Flood-related disaster relief provided, and money appropriated.

HF2130—Dawkins (DFL)
Taxes
Low-income housing tax credit provided.

HF2131—Juhnke (DFL)
Taxes
Education cost financing with property taxes prohibited, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2132—Tunheim (DFL)
Taxes
Flood disaster area residents granted state tax filing and payment extension.

HF2133—Larsen (R)
Taxes
Flood disaster area residents granted state tax filing and payment extension.

HF2134—Dorn (DFL)
Taxes
Flood disaster area residents granted state tax filing and payment extension.

HF2135—Lieder (DFL)
Taxes
Flood disaster area residents granted state tax filing and payment extension.

Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.

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MONDAY, April 14

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: HF1397 (Osthoff) Petroleum-
contaminated site cleanup provided, and
money appropriated.
Omnibus bill.

HF1961 (Peterson) Rural policy and
development center established, and money
appropriated.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: K-12 Education Finance Division
Omnibus Bill.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee will meet in the evening at
an announced time, if necessary. Additional
bills may be added and the order is flexible.
Budget decisions. Funding allocations.

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

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: HF1392 (Kinkel) Exempt real property
and fire state aid property tax provisions
modified.

HF1994 (Jefferson) Minneapolis property tax
abatement of value and reduction period
extended.

HF1912 (Hasskamp) Unimproved real estate
bordering public water property tax rate
reduced.

HF1470 (Rukavina) Virginia-area ambulance
district establishment authorized, levy
authorized, and local approval required.

HF755 (Otremba) Sauk River Watershed
District levy authorized.

HF926 (Sviggum) Municipal Tax Increment
Financing district addition provisions
modified.

HF1798 (Murphy) City aid base definition
modified.

HF1732 (Evans) New Brighton Tax Increment
Financing district establishment authorized.

HF1663 (Bakk) Lake County redevelopment
project area and Tax Increment Financing
district established.

HF1469 (Rukavina) White Tax Increment
Financing district duration extension and
expansion provided.

HF816 (Finseth) East Grand Forks Tax
Increment Financing district duration
extended.

HF1265 (Swenson, H.) Gaylord Tax Increment
Financing district enlargement and duration
extension authorized.

HF1655 (Workman) Chanhassen housing Tax
Increment Financing establishment
authorized.

HF1546 (Jefferson) Minneapolis housing
transition Tax Increment Financing
established.

HF1739 (Schumacher) Foley Tax Increment
Financing district revenue expenditure
authorized outside of Tax Increment Financing
district.

HF1779 (Kahn) St. Paul and Minneapolis Tax
Increment Financing district establishment
authorized.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Allocations.

HF632 (Solberg) Environmental learning
centers previous appropriation provisions
modified.

Additional bills may be announced.

9 a.m.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Budget allocations.
Omnibus Budget Bill.

Additional bills may be added.

10 a.m.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: Family and Early Childhood
Education Finance Division Omnibus Bill. Tax
Increment Finance (TIF) reform update.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

Agenda: HF297 (Jennings) National Guard
member tuition and textbook reimbursement
grant program provisions modified.

HF864 (McGuire) Social work board provisions
modified, and civil penalties provided.
Higher Education Finance Division Omnibus
Bill.

HF2079 (Solberg) Finance department
expenditure forecast duties clarified.

TUESDAY, April 15

8 a.m.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee will meet in the evening at
an announced time, if necessary. Additional
bills may be added and the order is flexible.
Continuation of April 14 agenda.

Transportation & Transit Finance Division/ TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder

Agenda: Omnibus bill.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

Housing & Housing Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: Omnibus bill:

SF120 (Murphy); HF517 (Clark) Housing
accessibility loan fund eligibility modified,
equity take-out loans authorized for 236 rental
property, special needs housing for homeless
persons program repealed, and housing trust
fund project provisions clarified.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Omnibus Tax Bill.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: Hearing on House Rule 5.09.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg
Agenda: Family and Early Childhood
Education Finance Division Omnibus Bill.
Additional bills may be added.

WEDNESDAY, April 16

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: Omnibus bill.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Omnibus Tax Bill.

12:30 p.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros
Agenda: Economic Development Finance
Division Omnibus Bill. Housing and Housing
Finance Division Omnibus Bill.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius
Agenda: Transportation and Transit Finance
Division Omnibus Bill.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros
Agenda: Continuation of 12:30 p.m. meeting
agenda.

THURSDAY, April 17

8 a.m.

**Economic Development
Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: Omnibus bill.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: Bills passed out of Judiciary Finance
Division.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Omnibus Tax Bill.

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg
Agenda: Environment, Natural Resources, and
Agriculture Finance Omnibus Bill. Additional
bills may be added.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: Continuation of April 15 agenda.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: Bills passed out of Judiciary Finance
Division.

FRIDAY, April 18

10 a.m.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: Bills passed out of Judiciary Finance
Division.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Omnibus Tax Bill.

Continued from page 15

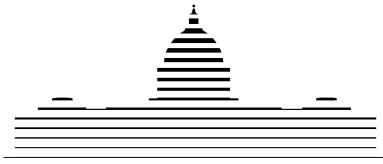
That background shaped Petersen's staunch anti-war sentiments. And no doubt his provincial ways fueled his efforts to keep rural Minnesota informed. During his legislative term, he wrote a column on state politics that was carried by a handful of outstate newspapers.

Before winning a legislative election in 1930, Petersen ran unsuccessfully in both 1926 and 1928. After his gubernatorial stint, he was elected the state's Railroad and Warehouse Commissioner and lost four attempts to win the governor's seat. In 1938, he lost the Farmer-Labor gubernatorial primary and in 1940 and 1942, he lost the election as the Farmer-Labor nominee to Harold Stassen. In 1946, he ran in the Republican primary and lost the governor's race to Luther Youngdahl. Eventually, Petersen was re-elected as

railroad commissioner and served two terms. His last big attempt at elected office was against Eugene McCarthy in 1958 when he tried but failed to get the Democratic-Farmer-Labor nomination for the U.S. Senate. He didn't oppose McCarthy on ideological grounds but simply because he loved the political life and wanted a part of it again, according to his biography.

Along with his wife, Medora, Petersen continued to publish the *Askov American* until his death in 1968. Medora continued to write for the paper until she sold it in the 1980s. A political activist herself, she died April 7, 1997, at a nursing home in Willmar, Minn. She was to turn 101 next month.

— Kendall Anderson



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MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota highways and byways

Areas of state and local government spending over the last 20 years that have grown more slowly than transportation spending	0
Percent of state and local government spending marked for transportation, 1972	13
Percent today	8
Miles of streets and highways in Minnesota	130,198
States with a larger road system	4
Percent of Minnesota roads that make up the trunk highway system	9
State and local government spending on highways, annually, in billions	\$2
Percent of highway and street funding paid for by user taxes, (gas tax, motor vehicle registrations)	40
by local property taxes and assessments	30
by federal funds	10
state funds	6
other	14
Fuel tax revenue marked for city, county, and state roads, FY1997, in millions	\$498
Amount spent per year by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for the construction, repair, and maintenance of state trunk highways, on average, over the last 10 years, in millions (in 1996 dollars)	\$775
Dollars spent or distributed by MnDOT, in billions, 1996	\$1.4
Percent of MnDOT spending on state and local roads	90
Full-time MnDOT employees, June 1996	4,991
Rest areas on state trunk highways	235
on interstates	35
Bridges statewide	19,775
Trunk highway bridges	4,614
Average age of those bridges, in years	34
Percent of those bridges that are deficient by federal standards, for structural or functional reasons, 1995	11.7
Percent of state trunk highway miles estimated by MnDOT to be in "poor or very poor" condition, 1996	6
in "good to very good" condition	71
Average age of trunk highway surfaces, in years, 1995	10.9

Sources: *Highway Spending*, Office of the Legislative Auditor; Minnesota Department of Transportation; *Minnesota Data Book for Legislators*, House Research Department.

For more information



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