

SESSION WEEKLY

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Reflections

The State Capitol building has something for everyone. If you like art, it's a spectacular museum of some of the finest portrait paintings in the country. If you are an architecture buff or bricks and mortar aficionado, you can spend hours discovering the different types of marble, granite, and other stone used to erect architect Cass Gilbert's "great wonder" in the first five years of the 20th century.

Metallurgy, woodworking, historic preservation, agriculture, military history, design, artists' perspective, artistic license, ancient and modern history, meditation sights, places for soapbox oratory — all are integral parts of what can be found in the building. Even sociologists can find what life was like in the early 1900s through research and what diverse ethnic and economic groups left behind here "on the hill."

All of the above interests and more are a permanent part of the hallways and byways of the most successfully planned statehouse in the country.

Gilbert and the building's chief decorator, Elmer E. Garnsey, who also designed the U.S. Library of Congress, were very thorough in their quest to create a unique and sound edifice that would be a lasting tribute for generations to come.

For those so inclined to ponder, or who may want to do so while visiting the Capitol, a thought-oriented voyage of the "grand" second floor awaits. Take a seat on one of Gilbert's original oak benches on the east or west wing. Look upward and discover some 20 feet above, gold-inlaid inscriptions of well-known and little-known quotes by past leaders of government, law, and justice.

These ideas and thoughts of what government should do or how it should be for people command a nearly hidden presence below the vaulted ceilings of this noble building.

One inscription by educator, diplomat, and U.S. Secretary of State Edward Everett is worth remembering: "Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army." Daniel Webster, noted American legislator and orator is quoted often. One of his messages found on the walls above eye level states, "No government is respectable which is not just."

Another memorable civic idea by national lawyer and public official, Elihu Root is engraved for posterity: "Eternal good citizenship is the price of good government."

One final quote for legislators, staff, and visitors to ponder is by William E. Gladstone, British politician and four-time prime minister: "The proper function of a government is to make it easy for people to do good and difficult for them to do evil."

The Capitol building has something for everyone. All one needs to do is take the time to find it.

—LeClair Grier Lambert

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On the cover: Mary Wilmes, St. Paul, and Kathleen Quona, Minneapolis, get a close look at a quilt made by women whose lives have been affected by domestic violence. The quilt was displayed in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 18 as part of Battered Women's Action Day, an annual event organized by the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

—Photo by Laura Phillips

First Reading

From 0.10 to 0.08 . . .

Lawmakers debate legal blood-alcohol limit for drivers

By Grant Martin

Proponents of lowering Minnesota's blood alcohol concentration standard from 0.10 percent to 0.08 percent will tell you their strongest argument comes from the families of the victims.

"Every day my son looks in the mirror and sees his injuries and it reminds him of the crash," said Pat Budig, whose son was severely injured and whose husband was killed by an impaired driver who tested below the current 0.10 percent legal limit. "You don't have to be falling down drunk to kill someone."

HF2389, sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), would lower the standard for legal drunkenness in Minnesota from 0.10 percent to 0.08 percent. Budig testified in favor of the bill at the House committee hearing on the matter.

The bill was approved Feb. 13 by the House Judiciary Committee and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. That should be the bill's last stop before it goes to the House floor.

A similar measure was passed by the House last year. However, the provision did not survive a conference committee and was not included in the final 1997 omnibus DWI law.

If Entenza's current proposal is approved, Minnesota would join 15 other states in lowering the legal blood-alcohol limit for drivers from 0.10 percent to 0.08 percent.

Austria, Australia, Canada, Finland, Great Britain, Norway, Switzerland, and the Netherlands have a level that is at or below 0.08 percent. Sweden's level is 0.02 percent.

James Fell, a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) official, testified for Entenza's bill at a January committee hearing. He said that the 0.08 percent limit is a reasonable limit to set.

The average male would have to drink four standard drinks in an hour and the average female would have to drink three standard drinks in an hour to reach that level, Fell said.

A number of factors affect the body's ability to process alcohol, including duration of the drinking, weight, ingestion of food, and

gender. A standard drink would be a 12-ounce glass of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, or a one-and-a-half-ounce shot of hard alcohol.

Proponents of the 0.08 percent legislation argue that 0.10 percent standards were based on compromise and not on informed scientific studies.

"When the 0.10 standard was established, it didn't reflect the knowledge that scientists now have," Entenza said. "That is that drivers at 0.08 are impaired."

The first law that established a level for which drivers were presumed impaired in Minnesota was passed in 1955. It established a level of 0.15 percent blood alcohol concentration.

In 1967, the level was changed to 0.10 percent, based on new evidence of the effect of alcohol on driving skills. Very few studies at this time examined the effect of alcohol levels lower than 0.10 percent.

Earlier versions of the law were presumptive, meaning the courts were to assume the person charged was intoxicated at that standard unless evidence was offered otherwise.

"Per se" laws — such as the current Minnesota law — mean that regardless of behavior or visible impairment, a person is legally considered intoxicated at the standard. The person is considered drunk regardless of any evidence to the contrary that may be offered. Minnesota's law was changed from presumptive to per se in 1971.

Supporters of 0.08 percent say the new scientific information shows that the limit should be lowered.

Studies done by the NHTSA show that most drivers, even experienced drivers, are significantly impaired at the 0.08 percent level. They also show that the risk of being killed in a single-vehicle crash for drivers at concentration levels between 0.05 percent and 0.09 percent is 11 times higher than drivers with no alcohol.

Fell told lawmakers that the risk of being in a crash greatly increases at each blood-alcohol concentration level, and that it rises very rapidly after a drinker reaches the 0.08 percent level.

Most importantly, proponents argue that the change to the 0.08 percent standard will send a strong message that society will not tolerate drinking and driving.

"The new law would simply send a message to the public that the state is getting tough on DWI," Fell said.



Minnesota drivers would be subject to a more strict definition of legal drunkenness, under a bill advancing in the House.

—Photo illustration by Tom Olmscheid and Andrew Von Bank

But Minnesota is already a leader in DWI legislation, according to John Berglund, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association.

He testified against the bill at a House Judiciary Committee meeting. Berglund argued that the laws currently on the books should be allowed to work to catch the repeat DWI offenders and problem drinkers. And, he said, the state should not target safe, social drinkers.

Berglund and other opponents point to the fact that NHTSA studies also show that the average blood alcohol content found among drunk drivers is 0.18 percent and that 80 percent of all DWIs are over 0.14 percent.

"By shifting the focus away from the alcohol abuser to the moderate, social drinker, we are shifting resources from the real problem," he said. "Changing the legal limit to 0.08 does not get at the problem of the chronic offender, because they ignore the 0.10 limit."

Opponents of the legislation also point to the fact that eight out of the 10 states that ranked lowest in alcohol-related traffic fatalities have 0.10 percent. They argue that if the 0.10 percent standard works so well in these states, there is no need to lower the standard to 0.08 percent.

The debate in Minnesota may become purely academic. A bill supported by the president has been introduced in Congress which would withhold 5 percent of federal highway funding for states that do not set a standard of 0.08 percent.

If the federal legislation passes, Minnesota lawmakers may have to act just to save the highway funding. 🐼

Committee deadlines

Each year, the House sets deadlines by which most bills must be heard in a committee and forwarded. At the first deadline, which was Friday, Feb. 13, bills must have been passed out of policy committees in their house of origin.

The second committee deadline is Friday, Feb. 20, and by then all bills other than those containing appropriations must be passed out of policy committees in both houses. The deadline does not apply to the finance divisions of the committees or the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee, the House Taxes Committee, and the House Ways and Means Committee.

By the third committee deadline, Friday, Feb. 27, all appropriations bills must clear their policy and finance committees and move to either the Taxes Committee or the Ways and Means Committee.



By Nicole Wood

Former Rep. Ann Wynia has found a perfect fit in her new job as president of North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park.

Being a college president wasn't something Wynia imagined she'd do when she grew up, she said in a recent interview.

"I don't fit the typical profile," she said.

But when the opportunity to lead the institution where she has taught since 1970 presented itself last year, she realized the relevance of her legislative and executive branch experience as an administrator.

Wynia was first elected to St. Paul's District 63B House seat in 1976. During her 13 years in the House, she was twice elected majority leader. She was the first DFL woman to hold a leadership position in the House.

Her public service record doesn't end there. Wynia also has been a commissioner of the Department of Human Services and a University of Minnesota regent. She was defeated by Rod Grams in a hard-fought 1994 U.S. Senate race.

In many ways, Wynia said, her new job duties are familiar territory: figuring out competing needs, reconciling available resources, establishing priorities, and working with other people to move an agenda forward.

"That's what you do in the Legislature, and that's a lot of what you do as a college president," she said. "So far it feels like a pretty good fit."

Looking back at her years in the House, Wynia said she found it most satisfying to work on human services issues, particularly on questions of health care access.

In 1987, she sponsored the Children's Health Plan, the first program in the nation to provide basic preventive care to the children of the working poor.

Wynia realizes value of past in new job as college president

"It was very satisfying to be able to say, because we were able to pass this legislation, literally thousands of Minnesota children who wouldn't have had health care now are able to go see a doctor," she said.

Wynia also recalls that the plan had overwhelming bipartisan support.

"It was an opportunity to work on a problem and to present a reasonable cost-effective solution and to see how, by golly, in this process it is possible to bring that kind of thoughtful solution before a large group of legislators and get them to agree," she said.

In addition to such powerful committees as Taxes and Ways and Means, Wynia served on the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee during her legislative career.

She said she joked with then-Speaker Martin Sabo that she was perfect for the assignment because she was typical of so many Minnesotans — she had a car insurance policy and a home insurance policy and she had never read either one.

"I was a consumer of both banking and insurance services and I brought that perspective to the committee," she said. "That's what I think in some ways is the beauty of the citizen legislature. They're really very much representative of the people of this state."

Wynia also said she is excited about her future at North Hennepin.

"At a community college, where we provide open-access, affordable education, I have this wonderful opportunity to try to create an educational institution here in the metropolitan area that is going to be of real opportunity for a lot of people to improve their lives," she said. "What a wonderful job to have. I am so lucky."



Former Rep. Ann Wynia takes time out of her busy schedule as president of North Hennepin Community College to reflect on her years in the House.

Highlights



AGRICULTURE

Feedlot regulation

Two bills that would place more regulation on agricultural feedlots continue to advance in House committees.

But a third bill (**HF3320**) was pulled by its sponsor, Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), during a Feb. 13 meeting of the House Agriculture Committee.

Peterson's bill would place a moratorium on any new permits for construction of feedlots for 750 animal units or more (one animal unit equals one slaughter steer or heifer) or the expansion of open-air manure storage structures. The moratorium would last until July 1, 2000, or after the Environmental Quality Board has given the Legislature a timeline and cost for doing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), which would outline the types and locations of feedlots in the state and assess their impact on air and water.

Feedlots, which are grounds or buildings or a combination of grounds and buildings used to feed, breed, raise, and hold animals, are designed as confinement areas.

Feedlots have manure basins, often made of clay or earth, to hold the waste from the livestock. There are an estimated 45,000 feedlots in Minnesota.

Peterson withdrew the moratorium legislation when it was apparent the bill did not have the support to survive the Agriculture Committee.

"There are some people who believe it is the right thing to do and the right time to do it," Peterson said. "The issues will not go away. The issues will be in front of the Legislature again. The people who have asked for the moratorium have shown the grass roots support for the moratorium."

Later, Peterson said he wouldn't rule out reviving the bill — possibly as an amendment to separate legislation — later this session.

"Never say never," he said, adding that the debate on the issue has shown the Legislature the depth of concern in rural Minnesota about feedlots and the impact of corporate farming on the environment.

Meanwhile, a bill (**HF3421**) sponsored by House Majority Leader Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) was approved Feb. 13 by the Agriculture Committee and Feb. 16 by the House

Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee. The bill next moves to House Governmental Operations Committee.

Winter's bill would forbid permits to increase or establish feedlots over certain capacities until the environmental effect of the feedlot could be examined. The original bill would have required an Environmental Impact Statement to be completed, but the bill was amended to instead require an Environmental Assessment Worksheet, which costs less.

The bill also would ban earthen or clay-lined manure storage facilities after July 1, 1998. And the measure would call for a GEIS to be conducted.

Another separate bill (**HF3441**) sponsored by Peterson was approved Feb. 13 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and awaits a hearing in the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

The so-called "Living with Livestock" bill would require that after March 1, 2000, those who manage and apply animal wastes hold a valid animal waste technician license issued by the Department of Agriculture. Most family farmers would be exempt.

The bill also would prohibit the issuance of a permit for clay, earthen, or plastic-lined animal waste lagoons. No permit would be issued for a feedlot with a design capacity of 1,000 animal units or more until the applicant received a federal permit under the Clean Water Act. The bill also would establish a statewide contingency plan to deal with animal waste spills, a county-by-county inventory of feedlots, an option for counties to establish their own feedlot ordinances. Also, the bill would require a GEIS to be conducted.

Minnesota grown coupons

A pilot project that would establish a program for low-income families to get "Minnesota grown" food supplies with state-funded coupons was approved Feb. 16 by the House Agriculture Committee.

The bill (**HF3449**), sponsored by Rep. Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls), calls for the Sustainable Resources Center in Minneapolis to administer the program.

"It promotes our Minnesota foods and

healthy nutrition for all families. It helps our farms," Wejcman said.

Under the bill, the Sustainable Resources Center and the Minnesota Food Association, also in Minneapolis, would work together and pick two rural and two urban communities to establish models for the system.

The organizations would work to set up pipelines between the producers and the low-income customers, work with food processors in the selected cities to hire low-income people, and help grocery stores get authorization to accept food stamps and the Minnesota grown coupons.

Coupons worth \$10 would be issued each month by the state Department of Agriculture to people in the selected communities who are eligible. Eligible people would include those now getting food stamps whose income is not higher than 120 percent of the federal poverty level.

The Department of Human Services would provide to the Department of Agriculture the names of eligible families. The coupons could be used only for products using the Minnesota grown logo. The coupons could be redeemed by food processors, community-supported farms, grocery stores, and other retailers.

"We do want to promote the Minnesota agricultural products," Wejcman said. "[The program] is a connecting point for people in agriculture and people who need the food."

Total costs for the program have not yet been determined. The bill now moves to the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.



BONDING

Bonding recommendations

Members of the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee have joked that their \$503 million bonding recommendation plan has started to look like the Titanic.

Currently, it remains to be seen which projects will finally make it to the lifeboats.

The plan, approved by the division and the full committee Feb. 18, now sets sail for the House Capital Investment Committee, where the final cut will be made for the House version of this year's bonding bill.

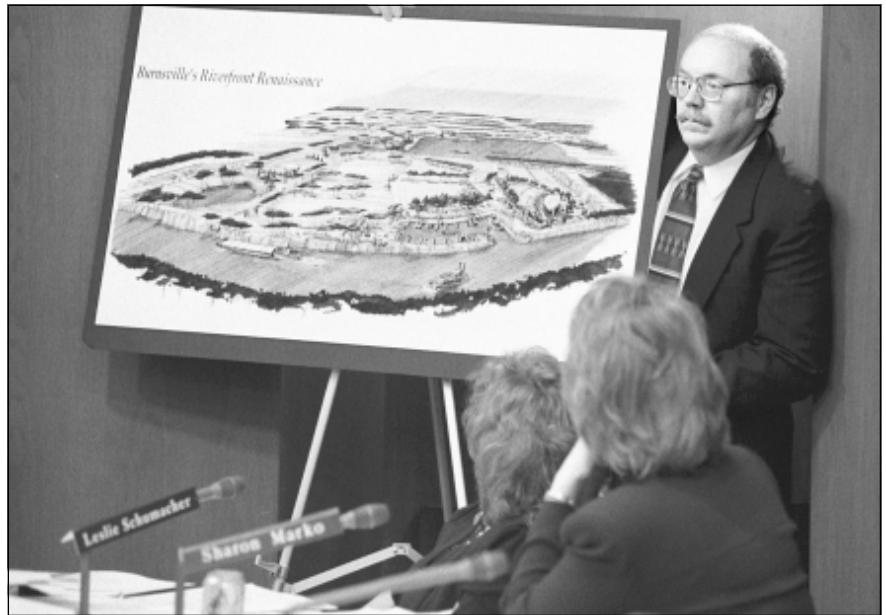
The largest portion of the economic development finance recommendations, a sum of \$379 million, would be given in the form of grants made to cities and other political subdivisions for a variety of projects. The remaining portion would be awarded to state agencies to distribute through agency grants.

Here are some highlights:

- Consistent with the governor's proposal, convention centers received a good deal of attention. The city of Minneapolis would receive \$87 million to help finance the completion of the Minneapolis Convention Center. St. Paul would get \$65 million for the construction of the new RiverCentre Arena which would host the new NHL hockey team.
- Duluth would receive \$28 million for the expansion of the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center. Other convention center funding would be provided to the cities of Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Hutchinson, Lake Crystal, Proctor, Rochester, St. Cloud, and Windom.
- The Department of Trade and Economic Development would receive \$60 million to finance three direct iron processing facilities in the state. These plants would produce a more pure form of iron than that produced currently, and, supporters argue, give the Iron Range an economic edge over other iron-producing regions.
- Several local governments would be provided funding for wastewater treatment projects. The city of Renville would receive \$19 million for their facility. Austin would get \$6 million for the completion of their wastewater treatment facility. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency would be given \$9 million to fund the wastewater infrastructure program which would finance projects statewide.
- The city of St. Paul would receive \$8 million to help finance the Penumbra Theater expansion. Also, the St. Paul Port Authority would be awarded \$10 million to redevelop the Stroh Brewery site. The funds would be used to attract businesses to the site and to assist in job creation for former Stroh employees.
- The Minnesota Historical Society would receive \$25 million to fund improvements statewide, including projects at Split Rock Lighthouse, the Glensheen Mansion, Fort Snelling, and St. Anthony Falls.

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

Burnsville renaissance



Burnsville City Engineer Chuck Ahl describes his city's proposed riverfront renaissance project. The proposal calls for 226 acres of trails, a park, and an amphitheater to be built along the Minnesota River. Members of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee discussed the plan Feb. 17.



CONSUMERS

Health care help for patients

When patients or their relatives have a question about a charge from their health care plan, they often don't know who to contact to get the problem solved.

A bill passed by the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee Feb. 17 (**HF2649**) might give those people someone to call.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls), would establish an office of health care consumer assistance, advocacy, and information.

The bill comes from a working group convened by the commissioners of the state health and commerce departments to offer options to the Legislature on developing a health care complaint resolution process for consumers.

Wejcman termed the bill "a further effort for the consumer of health care to get the care that they want in a timely manner."

Susan Stoudt, of the Minnesota Nurses Association, said her organization favors the bill.

"The [working] group was formed with the idea that we want to make our health care system work better for consumers," she said. "It became clear that each health plan has a fairly complex system for solving problems.

"If a bill isn't real high, most people just pay it rather than spent a lot of time."

She also said that what people need is someone to help them figure out what the plan offers and what it doesn't.

"[People need] someone who, as an advocate, will help them wind their way through the system," Stoudt said.

The new office would have no regulatory power and would not provide legal representation, but it could act as an advocate in a dispute resolution process. The bill also stipulates that the office would be run by an executive director, who could hire nine advocates to work in the office.

The office would try to help consumers understand their legal rights and get health care referrals. The office also would attempt to identify patterns of complaints and recommend possible changes to health care companies.

The committee heard some opposition to the bill, specifically from Twila Brase, a public health nurse from Citizens for Choice in Health Care, a St. Paul-based group.

"If passed, citizens would be paying twice: once in taxes, once in premiums. The cost estimates we heard are \$700,000, and as we know, real costs exceed estimates," Brase said.

The bill calls for a still-unspecified appropriation to fund the new office.

"It's a bad policy and will not help protect people and may increase healthcare costs," Brase said.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), who is a doctor, said he opposes the bill because it is

adding a level of bureaucracy. Health care companies should be answering their consumers' questions and helping solve their problems on their own, he said.

The bill now moves to the House Governmental Operations Committee.



CRIME

Repeat violent offenders

The House Judiciary Committee approved two bills Feb. 13 that would crack down on repeat violent offenders.

HF24, sponsored by Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka), would require life imprisonment for criminals convicted of three violent felony-level crimes.

Responding to the concerns of the members of the committee, Weaver amended his bill to exempt some felony offenses from the list of applicable crimes. Weaver also added provisions that would give judges discretion in applying the life prison term under certain circumstances.

Scott Swanson, an attorney with the state public defender's office, testified in opposition to the bill. He told the committee that the penalties would not always be proportional.

"It doesn't matter if my third offense is selling a line [of cocaine] or murder, I still get life in prison," he said.

Deb Dailey, of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, said that it is difficult to estimate the increase in prison population that could come from Weaver's bill because of the many factors involved. She told the committee that it could mean as many as 2,300 additional prison beds over the next 30 years.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said that people who come from violent backgrounds often turn their lives around and become productive members of society. He said that he thinks the three strikes approach is simplistic.

"We're using baseball analogies to apply to the violent problems that exist in our nation," he said.

Weaver said that a strong message must be sent. "I don't mind that this is simplistic," Weaver said. "We need to lay down a clear line to what is acceptable."

Weaver's bill was approved by the committee on a 17-2 vote.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a separate bill that also would address repeat violent offenders. **HF2286** would restructure current law that requires tougher penalties for "career criminals" and would reduce the number of violent crimes required to receive these harsher sentences.

Both bills are set to be included in the omnibus crime prevention bill.

Searching adults, juveniles

Officer Mark Klukow, of the Minneapolis Police Department, told members of the House Judiciary Committee Feb. 13 that he found it difficult to understand why adults and juveniles are treated differently when it comes to search law.

He said that he was surprised to see cases against juveniles thrown out of court because, under current law, pat down searches can be performed only on adult offenders.

Klukow, who frequently is forced to detain truant juveniles in his squad car, said he always does a pat down search before putting a suspect in his car.

"It's an officer safety issue," Klukow said. "It's probably done at least once a week where a weapon is found."

Klukow testified in support of a bill (**HF2330**) sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) which would authorize pat down searches of juveniles.

"I don't understand why a juvenile is any different from an adult," he said. "In fact, I think a juvenile is more likely to shoot someone. They don't understand the consequences."

The committee approved the bill, which is set to be included in this year's omnibus crime prevention bill.

Prostitution penalties

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill Feb. 13 that would increase penalties for engaging in the business of prostitution in a residential area or near children.

HF2375, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), borrows from current law the notion that crimes committed in school zones, park zones, and public housing zones should be sentenced more severely.

The bill also would make changes to make it easier to get juveniles who are involved in prostitution into the child protection system.

Clark said that while the harsher penalties are necessary, she is also concerned about children being used as prostitutes.

"Young children are being solicited into prostitution. The average entry age is 14 years old," she said.

Clark told the committee that the law needs to view children involved in prostitution as victims and not as criminals.

HF2375 is set to be included in this year's omnibus crime prevention bill.



EDUCATION

State Board of Education

A proposal to abolish the State Board of Education has been scaled back to call only for a task force to study the agency's effectiveness and report back to lawmakers by next year.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) said he was under the influence of "freshman zeal" when he included a provision to abolish the board in **HF1678**, which was introduced last year.

The amended version of his bill is now being considered by the K-12 Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee for inclusion in this year's omnibus education funding bill. The board itself supports the proposal.

The plan now calls for a 15-member task force to examine alternatives for governing the state's K-12 education system. The group would be assembled by this summer and would report its findings by February 1999.

"I think a lot of people have been looking at the State Board of Education, trying to discern what its role really is," Biernat said. "Maybe this will lead to abolishing the board, but that will depend on the [results of] the study."

The bill would direct the task force to look specifically at three areas: the current role of various government agencies in shaping education policy; the effectiveness of the current structure; and how to improve collaboration between schools and social service agencies serving the same populations.

The task force would include educators, government representatives, and community members. Those members would be appointed with input from the governor's office, the speaker of the House, and the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

On-site suspension programs

Suspending students from school has little effect if they're merely sent home, but keeping them in a supervised in-school suspension program can both help them improve academically and deter future suspensions.

That's what Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) said is the premise behind his bill to encourage schools to implement on-site suspension programs.

"We realize that a full reform [of Minnesota's K-12 system] is really needed, but until then, this is an important Band-Aid," he said.

His bill (**HF3664**) would give schools \$4 per day for each suspended student placed in an in-school program.

The K-12 Education Finance Division of

the House Education Committee discussed the proposal Feb. 18 and is considering including it in this year's omnibus K-12 education finance bill.

Gordon Leverets, who supervises such a program at St. Paul's J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School, told the panel that the funding would allow improvements in existing programs.

"Sometimes my room becomes a dumping ground," he said. "A lot of times there is no work sent with the students."

He said funding could help develop a solid, school-wide program involving more teachers.

But any in-school program, he said, is better than sending students home, or, more likely, onto the streets.

"There's no doubt that students who get sent home too often will begin to feel alienated from the school," he said.

Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), who chairs the division, said she believes many districts have moved away from the in-school suspensions common in past decades because of money shortages.

Other lawmakers agreed that keeping suspended students in school is preferable to sending them to unsupervised homes.

"But we need to look at how to make these become places of learning," Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said. "It does no good to have a dumping ground."

'No-man's-land'

Several Minnesota school districts got caught in what one superintendent called "no-man's-land" after a 1997 law required them to pay state prevailing wage labor rates for construction projects.

About 14 districts faced unexpectedly higher price tags on building projects because they had passed bond referendums for estimated costs before the law's July 1, 1997, effective date. By the time they signed contracts, the prevailing-wage law had inflated labor prices in those districts.

"I don't argue with prevailing wage. I believe people have a right to earn a living," Lake of the Woods Schools Superintendent Ralph Christofferson told a House panel Feb. 19. "But we went to the taxpayers with one set of rules, and then they changed. We were unable to deliver to our constituents what we promised."

HF2822, sponsored by Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester), would bring relief to Christofferson's district and others around the state.

The bill proposes awarding grants to dis-

tricts that can prove they either incurred extra costs or had to scale back construction plans due to the prevailing wage law. So far 14 districts — mostly in rural areas of the state where labor wages were low to begin with — have said they would qualify.

The plan calls for \$6.6 million in grants to be awarded. Districts could only use the funds to meet increased costs due to the prevailing wage requirement.

The K-12 Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee is considering the proposal for inclusion in this year's omnibus K-12 education finance bill.

Extra-curricular activities

A slightly watered-down proposal aimed at assuring home-schooled students access to public school extra-curricular activities is being considered by state lawmakers.

HF2836, sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), would require school districts to charge home-schooled and public school stu-

dents the same fee for extra-curricular activities.

House Speaker Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), a co-sponsor of the bill, said some districts set prohibitive fees for home-schoolers to participate in activities.

"But these parents pay property taxes like everyone else," he said.

When the House Education Committee first discussed the bill Feb. 3, the proposal called for school boards to allow all home-schooled students residing in a district to participate in extra-curricular activities.

But school board officials objected to that language and said schools could find themselves forced to allow any home-schooled child to participate in any activity, regardless of other qualifications.

The amended bill calls for home-school and public school students to be equally eligible for participation.

"It's acceptable to those who were interested in securing some changes for home-schoolers, but also addresses those concerns raised by school boards," Opatz said.

The Education Committee's K-12 Education Finance Division debated the new plan Feb. 18 and is considering the bill for inclusion in this year's K-12 omnibus funding bill.

Black history



Toinette Battle Bettis, office manager for the House Public Information Office, portrays abolitionist Sojourner Truth delivering her speech, "Ain't I a Woman?" in the House chamber. Bettis' performance, marking Black History Month, served as the invocation to open the House floor session Feb. 16.



EMPLOYMENT

Unpaid parental leave

A bill that would grant more workers the option of taking up to 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave was approved Feb. 13 by the House Labor-Management Relations Committee.

Currently, employees of firms with more than 50 workers are entitled under federal law to 12 weeks of leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

Minnesota law provides up to six weeks of unpaid leave for parents working for companies with 21 to 49 employees. **HF3444**, sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), would extend that to 12 weeks and allow the leave to begin at any time within 12 weeks of birth or adoption.

"This is a bill which is in conformity with the history of this body," Mullery said.

Minnesota was one of the first states to grant any parental leave, but in the last decade, the federal government and several other states have passed laws allowing longer unpaid leaves.

Pat McGovern, of the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, said studies show longer leaves significantly improve both the mother's health and the baby's development.

She also cited a study showing that more than 90 percent of employers reported little or no increased costs or disruptions associated with parental leaves.

But Michael Hickey, of the National Federation of Independent Business-Minnesota, said the proposal would have "very negative implications" for small businesses.

"How do these businesses try to continue on and remain profitable with the loss of a key person for three months?" Hickey asked. "On a six-week basis, you probably haven't heard any complaints because anyone can carry on for six weeks."

Tom Hesse, of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, said requiring employers to allow unpaid leave may eliminate explorations of other options — such as flexible scheduling and job sharing — that may be more beneficial for everyone.

Mullery said his bill would not affect those employers already making acceptable arrangements for new parents.

"But if we relied solely on the goodwill of employers, we wouldn't need unions, we wouldn't need labor laws, we wouldn't have slave shops around the world," he said.

The bill, which now moves to the House floor, was approved by the committee on an 11-6 vote.

Workplace breast-feeding

New mothers may soon find it easier to continue breast-feeding their infants once they've returned to work, under a plan approved Feb. 16 by a House panel.

HF3459, sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), would require employers to "make reasonable efforts" to provide space and unpaid break time at work for mothers to pump breast milk that they could later feed to their babies.

"This is an attempt to put some minimal standards in place," Greiling said. "'Reasonable effort' means just that. We're not asking for anybody to build an extra room onto a workplace."

The bill does specify that the space provided should be other than a toilet stall and should be close to the work area. It would not require employers to provide break time if to do so would "unduly disrupt" the business.

With several national studies showing the benefits of breast-feeding to include healthier babies, more productive employees, and a smarter future workforce, there was no outright opposition to the bill during the hearing before the House Labor-Management Relations Committee.

But some lawmakers and small-business



Joanne Wesley, a lactation specialist at the Minnesota Department of Health, testifies about the benefits of breast milk for infants. She appeared in support of a bill that would require employers to provide reasonable unpaid break time and a private space for nursing mothers to pump breast milk. The bill was before the House Labor-Management Relations Committee Feb. 16.

lobbyists voiced concern about vague language in the bill.

"We want lactation, not litigation," Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) said. "I don't think we're going to get very far if all we do is create more reasons for litigation."

Michael Hickey, state director of the National Federation of Independent Business-Minnesota, said he was also concerned about potential court battles over the interpretation of the bill's call for "reasonable" accommodations.

"We think the goals of the bill are very laudable," he said. "But the smaller you are, the more difficult it's going to get. We're concerned for the two-person gas station or retail shop."

He said eventually he may seek an exemption for businesses with 10 or fewer employees.

The bill now moves to the House floor. A companion Senate measure — sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) who breast-fed her son, Jack, while serving at the Capitol last year — is headed for the Senate floor.

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

Raising the minimum wage

A proposal to raise the minimum wage by 75 cents was approved by the House Labor-Management Relations Committee Feb. 13, but even some supporters of the plan say it's unlikely to get past the governor's desk.

The bill (**HF3440**), sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), would set the minimum wage for large employers at \$5.90 per hour beginning Sept. 1, 1998, and for small employers at \$5.65 per hour beginning Jan. 1, 1999. But the measure would allow employers to pay workers under age 20 a wage of \$5 an hour for the first 90 days of employment.

"You know [the bill] will pass the committee, and you know it will pass the House. But if it goes to the governor and gets hammered, we've accomplished nothing," Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) said, during the House Labor-Management Relations Committee meeting.

In light of the fact that federal lawmakers are considering a 50-cent minimum wage hike this year, Osskopp suggested Rukavina's bill may have a better chance at becoming law if it simply set Minnesota's minimum wage at 25 cents higher than federal minimum wage.

But Bernard Brommer, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, said that historically the federal government has increased minimum wage only after several states have led the way with increases.

The committee also rejected an amendment that would have built a so-called tip credit into the proposed increase. Rukavina said that allowing employers to pay tipped workers less than minimum wage would lead to labor exploitation and "drag everyone else's wages down."

Rukavina's bill now moves to the House floor.



ENVIRONMENT

Transport packaging waste

A bill that aims to reduce the amount of transport packaging waste the soft drink industry creates was approved by the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee Feb. 17.

"Of all the major pieces of legislation I've carried over the years, this is the first time I've had a bill with the support of the environmental people and the industry," said Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), the sponsor of the bill (**HF2696/SF2402***).

In 1995, Munger said, 22 percent of municipal solid waste consisted of transport packaging.

ing such as wood pallets and corrugated cardboard.

Dave Locey, of the Minnesota Soft Drink Association, said the industry is considering a \$15 million investment in reusable, recyclable plastic pallets.

The plastic pallets would cost about \$32 each, Locey said, compared to \$5 to \$7 each for the wood pallets the industry currently uses to transport their goods to retailers.

There is a system in place, Locey explained, where third parties collect used pallets from retail sites and then resell them to soft drink companies.

Under the bill, third party collectors would be prohibited from taking those plastic pallets which are labeled as private property.

The plastic pallet would have to clearly show the owner's name and address or telephone number, as well as a notice that the unauthorized possession of the pallet is a violation of state law.

The rightful owner of a stolen plastic pallet would be entitled to damages equal to three times the cost of the pallet, in addition to legal expenses.

Some on the panel questioned the need for special legislation to protect owners of plastic pallets, but Locey answered many of the concerns.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont), a grocer, wondered whether a deposit system between manufacturers and retailers would work instead.

Locey said retailers would not accept a deposit system.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) asked why unlawful pallet possession couldn't be prosecuted under existing theft laws.

"An old system already exists that's working against us," Locey said. "We're in the position of trying to make a pro-environmental system work. What we want to do before we make this \$15 million investment in plastic pallets is make sure we can control them."

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Gypsy moths

The gypsy moths are coming, and the Department of Agriculture wants \$325,000 to stop them at the border.

The leaf-eating insects have already infested Michigan and Wisconsin and are slowly marching westward at the rate of 12 miles per year, according to Daniel Stoddard of the Department of Agriculture's gypsy moth trapping and eradication program.

Armed with a jar full of moths and a brochure entitled "Gypsy Moth: Street, Yard and Forest Tree Enemy #1," Stoddard brought the

program's funding request to the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee Feb. 18.

The committee took no action on the matter.

Gypsy moths are transported by human activity, Stoddard explained. The metropolitan area and southeastern Minnesota are at highest risk of an invasion.

Although female gypsy moths cannot fly, they frequently deposit their eggs on objects such as grills and picnic tables that are near the trees on which they feed. Thus, gypsy moths earned their name due to their preferred mode of migration — tagging along on outdoor objects.

Wisconsin spends over \$2 million per year for gypsy moth control, Stoddard said, and Minnesota would already be infested without previous eradication efforts.

In past years, the department has sent out field workers to capture male gypsy moths in sticky traps that are baited with female moth scents.

To date, the program has discovered and exterminated 19 startup gypsy moth populations, Stoddard said.

The agriculture department's lab is developing biological control agents such as parasites that feed on gypsy moth eggs.

The money would supplement the biological control program and allow for more field personnel.

The funding request will be considered again later this session.

Personal watercraft measures

A bill that would strictly limit the use of personal watercraft on Minnesota's lakes is headed for the House floor.

HF1351, sponsored by Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), was approved by the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee Feb. 19.

The bill is made up of provisions that were formerly part of **HF1690**, Hasskamp's original bill related to personal watercraft.

In order to separate the financial considerations from the policy debate, the personal watercraft legislation has been divided into two separate bills.

Among its policy provisions, **HF1351** would ban personal watercraft from lakes of 200 acres in size or less, limit the hours for full-throttle operation, and increase the no-wake zone to 200 feet from shoreline, docks, swimmers, or other watercraft.

The financial implications of the personal watercraft legislation remain in **HF1690**. Under that bill, personal watercraft operators would be required to pass a mandatory safety course and pay a \$10 fee for a certificate, and a \$30 fee for three-year personal watercraft licenses would be established. The fees would be earmarked for counties and the Department of Natural Resources for personal watercraft law enforcement costs.

HF1351 — the policy bill — now moves to the House floor.

HF1690 remains before the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

Rain makers



A second grade class from Mora Fairview Elementary School makes the sound of rain with their long rattles as Peg Paulson reads "Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain" in the Capitol rotunda. The performance was one of several by students from around the state as part of Arts Education Day Feb. 17.



GAME & FISH

Hunting, fishing privileges

A bill that aims to amend the Minnesota Constitution to protect hunting and fishing privileges is one step closer to being placed on the ballot in the November 1998 general election.

HF326, sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), was approved by the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee Feb. 18.

The bill would submit the following constitutional amendment to voters: "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to declare a privilege of legal residents to take game and fish in accordance with law and regulations?"

The committee focused its discussion on the bill's potential financial implications rather than policy concerns.

The Department of Finance estimates that the overall administrative costs to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot would equal \$114,300.

Roger Holmes, director of the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said there would be no extra enforcement expenses if voters approved the amendment.

The DNR supports the bill in the hope that "some of the efforts to reduce hunting and fishing opportunities would cease," Holmes said. "It would send a clear message to anti-hunting groups that they should back off."

The bill now moves to the House Judiciary Committee.



GOVERNMENT

Residency requirement

Despite opposition from Minneapolis city officials and legislators from the city, a House committee approved a bill Feb. 17 that would repeal the authority of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul to require their employees to live within city limits.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee's vote to approve the bill (**HF2055**) came after nearly 90 minutes of testimony from the opponents of the measure.

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) was among those who urged committee members to reject the bill.

"We believe that if they desire to work for the city of Minneapolis, they should live with us," he said. "If they feel it's a terrible place,

perhaps they needn't work for the city of Minneapolis."

Proponents, mostly police officers, testified at an earlier meeting. They argued that the residency requirements make life difficult and sometimes dangerous for their children because the officers' families must live in the same neighborhoods as people the officers have arrested in the past or otherwise encountered on the job.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), a Minneapolis police officer, would also repeal residency requirements for employees of the Minneapolis School District, the city's library board, and the city's park and recreation board.

Similar residency requirements for the city of St. Paul also would be wiped out.

A 1993 law established the residency requirements in Minneapolis, and St. Paul's residency requirements were added in 1994. Employees hired before the requirements took effect can live anywhere they want.

Opponents of Stanek's bill said the residency requirements are a local issue that can be negotiated by the employee bargaining units, and the state should not interfere.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) noted that one city employee had said previously, "It's bad enough I have to work in the city; I shouldn't have to live in it, too."

Skoglund said that remark offended him deeply.

"They're wrong. They're completely wrong. Think how you would feel if they said that about your city," he said.

He said it was good to see off-duty police officers in the neighborhoods and at the community functions as citizens.

Leonard Mangum, a community organizer who works with gang members, said the relationships he has established with the police since more of them started living in the city are valuable.

"I've had a chance to witness the interaction between police officers and inner-city youth. It's not about forcing [police officers] to live there; it's about trying to build relationships," he said.

Mangum said he was aware of the problems police officers had voiced about safety in an earlier meeting, and he said he understood.

"We have a great relationship now and what that allows us to do is effectively promote change," he said.

Minneapolis City Council member Jackie Cherryhomes said when city employees live in the city, it promotes "a deeper understanding of the problems facing our city, but also a deeper commitment to helping solve them."

The bill moves to the House floor.



HEALTH

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Minnesota first lady Susan Carlson said women of childbearing age need better information about the danger of drinking during pregnancy, but the word isn't getting out.

She said a birth defect caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy is "100 percent preventable," and she is supporting a bill that would raise public awareness of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

The House Health and Human Services

Minnesota screenwriters



David Grant and Jeanne Grimm, members of the nonprofit Screenwriters Workshop, perform a mini-script in front of the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee. The pair testified Feb. 12 on behalf of a bill sponsored by Rep. Alice Hausman that would help develop Minnesota-made screenplays.

Committee approved a bill Feb. 18 that would provide \$5 million for a statewide campaign to expand awareness of the disease. The bill (**HF3343**) is sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior).

Carlson was co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on FAS, which conservatively estimated the disease costs Minnesota \$45 million annually in health, judicial, and social services.

"This is very costly," Carlson said. "You can't repair brain damage once it occurs."

FAS is a series of birth defects that can include mental retardation, central nervous system dysfunction, behavioral problems, and deficient growth. Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) is a less severe set of the same symptoms.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports FAS is the leading known cause of mental retardation. It is found in all races and economic groups.

Dr. Pi-Nian Chang, a pediatric psychologist, told legislators he sees 30 children monthly who, because their mothers consumed alcohol during pregnancy, have IQs as low as 66.

Chang said those with FAS or FAE who are not mentally retarded have learning disabilities and often exhibit impulsive behavior. He said studies indicate FAS is present in 1 to 3 percent of all live births Chang called drinking for all pregnant women "Russian roulette."

Sykora said studies show at least 25 percent of death row inmates and youths in correctional facilities have FAS or FAE.

Of the \$5 million request, \$850,000 would

establish a grant program for community-based organizations to specialize in prevention and intervention of both FAS and FAE. Another \$850,000 would expand treatment services for pregnant women and women with children, and \$800,000 would be used to raise public awareness.

The bill also includes funding requests for the study of FAS and FAE, the establishment of diagnostic clinics, and training for health care providers. According to the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, less than 10 percent of medical schools require students to complete a course on the proper diagnosis and referral of individuals with alcohol addiction.

The House Governmental Operations Committee also approved the bill, which now is headed to the Health and Human Services Finance Division.

Battling AIDS

Although progress is being made in the fight against AIDS, the battleground is constantly shifting.

Dr. Timothy Schacker, medical director of the University of Minnesota Delaware Street Clinic, said there are misconceptions about new AIDS medications, and because AIDS patients are living longer, the chances of sexual contact with an HIV-infected person have risen.

Schacker testified in support of a bill (**HF3022**) sponsored by Rep. Ruth Johnson (DFL-St. Peter) that would appropriate \$550,000 from the general fund for prevention initiatives against sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

The House Health and Human Services Committee approved the bill Feb. 16.

Schacker said most new cases of AIDS occur in women and teens. And he said transmission of AIDS through heterosexual sex is an issue that needs amplification.

Schacker said it is important that the public not become complacent because of so-called "AIDS cocktails" and other advancements in drug treatment of the disease.

The bill requests \$250,000 for the state commissioner of health to conduct research on the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases in the state, and \$125,000 to conduct laboratory screening.

The committee was told some community clinics reject people who want testing but can't pay for it. Another \$125,000 would help the commissioner of health prepare a plan aimed at reducing all sexually transmitted diseases.

The bill moves to the committee's finance division.

Ephedrine-containing products

Sale of readily available products containing a Chinese herb that acts as a stimulant would be restricted under a bill the House Health and Human Service Committee approved Feb. 16.

The targeted products containing ephedrine are reportedly taken by teenagers and others looking to achieve a legal high.

Health food stores, supermarkets, and pharmacies stock products containing ephedrine, the extract of a Chinese herb that has been found to stimulate the heart and central nervous system. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has tried to build a case against ephedrine-containing products, which are marketed as diet products but are used by teenagers as a stimulant.

HF3549, sponsored by Rep. Thomas Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul), would allow products containing ephedrine to be dispensed only by prescription in most instances.

The bill would stipulate that drug products containing ephedrine could be sold without a prescription only if allowable under the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. Such products could not be marketed, advertised, or labeled for weight loss, appetite control, muscle enhancement, mental alertness, or energy.

Currently, marketers need not show ephed-



Minnesota first lady Susan Carlson, *left*, co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, testifies in support of a bill that would fund ongoing research on the disease. Rep. Barb Sykora, *center*, the bill's sponsor, and Dr. Pi-Nian Chang, director of pediatric psychology at the University of Minnesota, also appeared before the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 17.

drine-containing products to be safe or effective because the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 classified herbs, vitamins, and minerals as dietary supplements. The FDA cannot regulate dietary supplements unless it can prove a product is unsafe.

The FDA has tried to link about 36 deaths to the targeted supplements, which can contain widely varying degrees of the herb.

The bill moves to the House Judiciary Committee.



HIGHER EDUCATION

'Grade 13' credit proposal

Parents of college freshmen would be eligible for a new tax credit, under a bill that aims to make postsecondary education more affordable for Minnesota families.

HF3691, sponsored by Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal), would allow families of recent high school graduates to realize a state tax credit of \$500. The Higher Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee took no action on the bill Feb. 16.

Coupled with a newly established \$1,500 federal income tax credit — called the Hope Scholarship Credit — the bill would make the first year of postsecondary education more affordable for many Minnesotans.

Starting in 1998, most Minnesota students who enroll in a postsecondary institution in the fall after their high school graduation would be eligible. The students would have to be claimed as a dependent on their parents' income tax return.

Supporters claim the bill would, in effect, establish a grade 13 in Minnesota.

Carlson said the bill would cost the state between \$7.5 million and \$8.5 million annually. The first year of college or other training would still have to be paid for, but Carlson said the annual cost of one year of technical or community college typically runs about \$2,000. With the federal and state tax credits, a family could cover most of that expense, he said.

Under the federal Taxpayer Relief Act, taxpayers became eligible Jan. 1 to claim a Hope Scholarship Credit against their federal income taxes. The Hope Credit can be claimed for the qualified tuition and related education expenses of each student in the taxpayer's family. Taxpayers will be able to claim the federal credit for the first time when they file their 1998 tax returns next year.

Minnesota's proposed "grade 13 credit" would use the same income thresholds as the federal credit. For married couples filing jointly, the upper income limit for the full credit is \$80,000. For single parents, it is

\$40,000. Benefits are phased out above those limits, with total phase out at \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) questioned the need for the state to assist families who earn \$80,000 annually.

Carlson said he believes those families could use some "tuition relief." He also distributed a fact sheet indicating students who get through one year of postsecondary education are likely to complete their college education.

Carlson also said experts suggest the demand for technical skills means most future workers will need some postsecondary training and that his bill could help respond to that.

The proposal will be considered for possible inclusion in this year's omnibus higher education bill.

Campus law firm

Lawmakers are considering a proposal that would boost the University of Minnesota's law clinic, which is essentially a law firm on campus.

According to Steve Befort, director of the clinic, more than 700 low-income Minnesotans were represented by second- and third-year U of M law students in 1997. The students represent clients under supervision of clinic instructors.

Befort told the Higher Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee Feb. 16 that with \$250,000 from the state for fiscal year 1999 the school could add 80 more students to the law clinic. That would translate into an additional 6,000 hours of legal

services and another 200 clients, Befort said.

The request is part of **HF3251**, which is sponsored by Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr. (DFL-Winona), who chairs the finance division. The proposal will be considered for inclusion in this year's omnibus higher education funding bill.

Jeffrey Brockmann, a third-year U of M law student, testified that the clinical education he acquired was crucial to his scholastic advancement in the program and better prepared him to practice law.

"It has made me aware of the diverse need of a clientele that generally goes unnoticed," Brockmann said.

Tom Sullivan, dean of the law school, added the clinic work "helps us understand the ethical obligation we have to support our community."

Sullivan said only 25 percent of law school graduates nationally have any clinical exposure, but 65 percent of U of M students have the opportunity.

Sullivan also said 50 percent of the clinic's current \$900,000 annual budget comes from tuition, with 15 to 17 percent from the state. The rest comes through private contributions and through a federal grant.



HOUSING

Substandard housing

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) told a House committee Feb. 17 that housing agencies all over the country are looking at ways to rehabilitate housing and that sometimes demolition is the only option.

Trimble is sponsoring a bill (**HF3565**) that

Brain power



Rep. Alice Johnson plays a computer game with her brain waves while hooked up to a neuro-feedback machine. New Visions School provided an opportunity at the Capitol Feb. 16 for lawmakers and the public to learn about their program designed to help students boost academic performance by helping them focus and concentrate.

would provide an appropriation to the community rehabilitation fund. The program is used by cities to purchase substandard multiple housing units for either rehabilitation or demolition.

"I just feel in some cases, in some situations, it makes more sense in the long run to get rid of substandard housing," he said during testimony before the Housing and Housing Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee.

Often times, problem housing is removed to make green space or community parks for public housing, Trimble said.

St. Paul city councilwoman Kathy Lantry said that her city would benefit from the program. She told the committee that she has toured some of the troubled properties in St. Paul.

"The conditions of those properties made me mad. The fact that housing like this exists in St. Paul should make us truly ashamed," she said. "Sometimes the right answer is to tear down the building."

She said that in some situations housing is "affordable by accident" because the poor condition of the property drives the rent down.

Lantry said that the property owners need to be held accountable for disrepair and need to be encouraged to develop proper screening policies to keep problem tenants out of the properties.

Charles Disney, of the Minneapolis Property Rights Action Committee, said that city governments and neighborhood organizations are attempting to place the blame solely on the property owners. He said the true problem is crime and a lack of law enforcement.

"We've criminalized housing to solve our social problems because the criminal justice system is not working," he said. "I think it's adding fuel to the fire to tear down housing. It's not getting at the problem."

Karla Wiegold, of Brooklyn Park, said she is concerned about reducing the level of affordable housing. She told the committee that the housing complex where she lives is scheduled for demolition as a substandard property.

Wiegold said that there needs to be a standard set so that low income housing is not razed just to provide land for more expensive development.

The bill was laid over by the committee but could be considered again later in the session.

If you will be visiting the Capitol in the near future, call the Capitol Historic Site Program at (612) 296-2881 to schedule a tour.



INSURANCE

Auto insurance break

The break on insurance premiums that drivers over the age of 55 get when they take an accident prevention course would be available to drivers of all ages, under a bill passed by the House Feb. 19.

HF2846, sponsored by Rep. Mark Mahon (DFL-Bloomington), passed on a 71-59 vote.

Mahon said most people, after taking driver's education in high school, rarely get further driving instruction throughout their adult lives. Getting a refresher course in safety might make the roads safer, he said.

The courses now offered for older drivers are often called "55 Alive" courses, and drivers 55 or older get reduced auto insurance premiums by taking an accident prevention course every three years.

Drivers of any age who take the safety course would get a 10 percent discount on their automobile insurance premiums, under Mahon's bill. The Department of Public Safety would adopt rules establishing and regulating the accident prevention course. Those rules would establish curriculum requirements and hours for the course.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) questioned whether the bill would provide real savings for consumers.

"They might increase the rates for everybody," Swenson said. "I understand [Mahon's] intentions are well-meant, but I'm just concerned we may have the opposite impact of what we're intending."



SAFETY

'R-Bar' restraint system

School districts could apply for grants to demonstrate the effectiveness of a passive restraint system on school buses, under a bill advancing in the House.

HF2638, sponsored by Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park), was approved Feb. 17 by the finance division of the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

At least six school districts have expressed interest in the program, according to Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), a co-sponsor of the bill.

The proposal calls for a total of 20 buses used in urban and rural settings to be used to test the restraints, which are similar to the bars used on roller coasters.

The "R-Bar" passenger restraint system costs \$200 per seat, and there are 24 seats on an average school bus. Under the bill, \$200,000

would be appropriated for restraint system grants, with up to \$40,000 to be used for the evaluation of the system's effectiveness.

The R-Bar system has undergone 11 years of testing and development. Its stated advantage over seat belts on school buses is that the system contains riders but does not confine them. Because a passenger can easily slide sideways out of the bus seat, the R-Bar system reduces the likelihood a child would be trapped on a school bus.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), school bus transportation is among the safer modes of highway transportation in the country. Its figures indicate 394,000 public school buses travel 4.3 billion miles to transport 3.5 million children annually.

Since 1984, an average of 11 children have died each year in school bus crashes. In comparison, the NHTSA figures for 1995 show 8,168 children between the ages of 5 and 20 died as passengers in all other types of motor vehicles.

A 1989 National Academy of Sciences study concluded potential benefits from seat belts on large school buses did not justify a federal requirement for mandatory installation. A subsequent NHTSA study concluded the best way to provide crash protection for school bus riders was to protect the occupants without making them buckle up.

Luther sponsored a bill during the 1997 session that included a call for lap and shoulder safety belts to be installed on school buses beginning this year. But the seat belt provisions in that bill were deleted in a House committee.

The R-Bar proposal now moves to the full Transportation and Transit Committee.



TAXES

Charitable gambling

The state taxes the money raised by charitable gambling in Minnesota, and most of the remaining proceeds go to whatever charity the gambling supports.

Some lawmakers are looking to reduce the overall tax burden on organizations that conduct charitable gambling.

Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul) and Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee) are sponsoring separate bills that would reduce tax rates on lawful gambling by 25 percent.

Both bills were approved Feb. 17 by the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The bills are identical for except for one

thing: Daggett's bill (**HF3107**) would take effect June 30, 1998, and Milbert's bill (**HF3024**) would be retroactive to July 1, 1997.

"The money that is raised through lawful gambling is used back in communities for a variety of things," Milbert said. "The money raised by lawful gambling stays in the community. This is a good tax to reduce. This money does go back to pay for the schools."

Daggett said that charitable gambling helps nonprofit organizations in her district pay for charitable projects.

"When we need some funds, we have somewhere we could go to, to get some consideration for our project," she said.

Milbert cited one of the cities in his district, South St. Paul, which is home to the South St. Paul Educational Foundation. That organization raises money for scholarships and the South St. Paul Public Schools through charitable gambling.

"It was set up and designed specifically to promote and support education," Milbert said.

There are now more than 1,500 licensed organizations in the state, such as the Lions Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion, that use lawful gambling to raise money for community causes, including charities.

Money is raised through the sale of pull-tabs, which account for 92.5 percent of charitable gaming, and through bingo, paddle wheels, raffles, and tipboards.

In combination, the games have raised more than \$843 million in "lawful purpose contributions," which include charitable and community causes, since 1985.

Organizations that run charitable gambling operations are taxed 2 percent of the revenue from pull-tabs and tipboards under current law. Both bills would reduce that to 1.5 percent.

The tax on revenue gathered from bingo and other games is now 10 percent, but it would drop to 7.5 percent under both bills.

The bills call for the tax on combined receipts between \$500,000 and \$700,000 to go from 2 percent to 1.5 percent. The tax on combined receipts of \$700,000 to \$900,000 would go from 4 percent to 3 percent and the tax on combined receipts of more than \$900,000 annually would go from 6 percent to 4.5 percent under both proposals.

King Wilson, executive director of Allied Charities of Minnesota, said he believes it is time to give some money back to the charitable organizations. "We believe 1998 is the year to come up with some [tax] relief," he said.

If either bill is passed, the state would lose an estimated \$15 million in gambling taxes annually.

But, Wilson said, that money would be going back to the organizations "to be spent back in the communities for a variety of projects."

Both bills now move to the full Taxes Committee.

Tax reductions, rebates

Two bills the House is considering would reduce income taxes and property taxes and provide for property tax rebates.

HF2322, sponsored by House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), and **HF2325**, sponsored by Rep. Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth), were debated Feb. 16 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Financing Division of the House Taxes Committee.

Both bills were referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

Sviggum's bill calls for a permanent reduction in taxes for low- and middle-income people and provides a one-time rebate for property taxes paid in 1998 matching the one approved for property taxes paid in 1997.

"This bill seeks to deal with the \$1.3 billion surplus. That surplus ought to be turned back to taxpayers," Sviggum said.

The bill also would reduce property tax rates for some commercial and industrial property and apartment buildings with four or more units. And the measure would cut the statewide educational levy by \$100 million in fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

Sviggum's bill would make \$500 million available for the payment of property tax rebates.

Van Dellen's bill would set priorities for using surplus revenue in state coffers. The bill would first devote a set amount of funds to the state's budget reserve account and require additional surplus funds to go to an income tax reserve account that could be used only for income tax rate reductions.

Van Dellen's bill also would reduce property taxes for some commercial and industrial property and apartment buildings with four or more units. The bill would provide income tax reductions and property tax rebates similar to those called for in Sviggum's bill.

Each bill would cost more than \$800 million a year in tax revenue, according to state estimates.

Van Dellen said with the state looking at six straight years of a budget surplus, it's time for a permanent tax cut.

"People I speak with in the private sector, they think this is getting a little ridiculous," he said.

Motor vehicle sales tax

When school districts buy buses, they have to pay a motor vehicle sales tax, but some lawmakers are trying to change that.

"We come to government taxing government to transport children to school," said Marty Seifert (R-Marshall). "This money could have been saved for the schools, but instead that money went to St. Paul. This would [be] a small way of helping our school districts and helping our taxpayers."

Seifert is sponsoring a bill (**HF2911**) that would exempt school buses with a capacity for more than 10 people from the state's motor vehicle sales tax. The bill was approved Feb. 17 by the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The bill would cost the state an estimated \$3.2 million in tax revenue during fiscal year 1999 and \$6.7 million during the 2000-2001 biennium.

Smaller vehicles — such as vans, cars, and buses carrying fewer than 10 passengers — would still be taxed under the bill.

Rep. Gail Skare (DFL-Bemidji) said she thinks the bill is a good idea.

"The small districts that I know felt it was a great onus for them to pay motor vehicle taxes," she said.

The bill now goes to the full Taxes Committee.



TOURISM

Repairing Glensheen

A proposal to provide \$750,000 for repairs at the Glensheen Mansion in Duluth was considered by the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee Feb. 16.

Glensheen Mansion was built in 1908 by mining executive Chester Congdon and his wife, Clara. The 39-room mansion sits on a 22-acre estate overlooking Lake Superior.

In 1977, Glensheen was donated to the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD), which opened the historic facility to the public. UMD took over the mansion after an infamous double murder took place involving members of the Congdon family.

The bill (**HF2974**), sponsored by Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth), would authorize the state to issue bonds for the amount of the repairs. The proceeds of these bonds would go to the Minnesota Historical Society, which would provide a grant to UMD.

William Miller, an official from Glensheen of UMD, testified in support of the bill. He

told the committee that the mansion averages about 100,000 visitors a year.

Miller said that the bonding proposal is about maintaining state assets.

"Glensheen is owned by an institution of the state," he said, "and we are trying to preserve it for future generations."

HF2974 was approved for inclusion in the division's 1998 bonding recommendations. The measure likely will be considered for inclusion in omnibus bonding legislation to be assembled later this session by the House Capital Investment Committee.



TRANSPORTATION

Vehicle registration evasion

Just because a motor vehicle on the highway bears an Oregon license plate doesn't mean the driver is here to explore Minnesota, said state trooper Brad Ferris.

Ferris told the House Transportation and Transit Committee Feb. 18 that Oregon license plates cost just \$10, and some Minnesota residents know how to get them.

Many more Minnesota residents register their cars in North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wisconsin, where licensing also is cheaper than in Minnesota. He said registration evasion costs Minnesota \$4.1 million to \$21.7 million annually.

"And I believe these figures are very conservative," Ferris said.

HF2796, sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would establish a one-year task force of four state patrol members in the Department of Public Safety to investigate dealer fraud and registration evasion. The committee approved the bill.

Ferris said he counted 15 Wisconsin license plates during his drive from Mankato to the committee meeting in St. Paul.

"These people didn't look like they were on vacation, they looked like they were on their way to work," he said.

He detailed a typical traffic stop in which the driver of the vehicle had a Minnesota driver's license and Wisconsin plates.

"She told me, 'All my friends do it,'" Ferris said. And, he added, Minnesota was losing \$275 in licensing fees on just that one car.

Ferris said there were 4.7 million vehicles within Minnesota in 1996, and if just 1 percent were illegally registered, it cost Minnesota at least \$2 million dollars.

Ferris estimates that at least 5 percent of the cars sold privately never have the title properly transferred. He put a minimum price tag of \$1.2 million on that illegal practice.

It is a gross misdemeanor for vehicles owned and operated in Minnesota to be registered in another state. Violators also can be forced to pay Minnesota registration for all preceding years for which the state can prove evasion.

The bill moves to the Transportation and Transit Finance Division.

Making cars available

Welfare reform measures that became effective in recent months encourage work and set lifetime limits for receiving welfare checks. But many people moving off welfare could find it difficult to work without a car.

Legislation moving to the House floor would exempt nonprofit organizations from obtaining a motor vehicle dealer's license for the sale or lease of cars and trucks valued at \$1,000 or less. Such a move could make more vehicles available for people "with a demonstrated need for assistance," according to Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan).

Pawlenty sponsors **HF3028/SF2163***, which was approved by the House Transportation and Transit Committee Feb. 18.

Pawlenty said certain organizations repair and recondition older cars that are donated to them. These organizations then sell the vehicles at low prices to people moving off public assistance or to those with other needs.

Expansion to four lanes

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) encouraged members of the finance division of the House Transportation and Transit Committee to drive on up and visit the Brainerd area.

"But don't come on a Friday or a Sunday night," he said. At those times, the lake country highway is often jammed with weekend travelers.

Wenzel appeared before the panel Feb. 13 to request \$22 million in bonding revenue to expand to four lanes Trunk Highway 371 between Little Falls and Brainerd. Wenzel sponsors **HF3144**, which requests that the road construction project begin around July 1, 2000.

No action was taken on the bill.

Wenzel told the committee that there have been four fatalities on the 28-mile stretch of road in the past year.

"We've had promises from other governors to expand this to four lanes for over 30 years," he said.

According to numbers from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, traffic doubled on stretches of Highway 371 from 1977 to 1994. One section of 371 had a 4.6 fatality rate

per 100 million travelers between 1992 and 1996. The statewide fatality rate for a rural two-lane road is 1.5 per 100 million travelers.

Wenzel said construction to expand the highway has been tentatively set for 2003, but his bill requests that construction begin three years earlier.

Memorial highway

State trooper Dennis O'Brien wanted a lasting memorial to his slain partner. He moved closer to getting it Feb. 16 when the House passed **HF2612** on a 128-0 vote.

The bill calls for a stretch of Trunk Highway 95 to be designated in honor of Timothy Bowe, a Coon Rapids resident who, last year, became the first Minnesota state patrol officer to be killed in the line of duty since 1978.

Under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), a 14-mile stretch of Highway 95 between Cambridge and North Branch would become "Timothy J. Bowe Memorial Highway."

Bowe, 36, was shot to death last summer in Chisago County while answering a call about a shooting at a rural home. Bowe, a 15-year veteran, was the seventh Minnesota trooper ever to be killed in the line of duty.

"His partner approached me about it," Jennings said. "This was something we'd never done before, but after [O'Brien] came to me it seemed like it was a good idea and probably something that we should do in the future."

Under the bill, the commissioner of transportation would adopt a suitable marking to designate the highway and erect the signs, which would be paid for by the community of Cambridge.

The bill now goes to the Senate.



There was little drama when Rep. Thomas Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) presented **HF2390/SF2031*** before the House Judiciary Committee Feb. 16.

The bill would make mostly technical changes in the Uniform Limited Partnership Act, which defines the way businesses can organize for tax and liability purposes.

As the noise level in the hearing room grew, Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), chair of the committee, gently rapped his gavel to remind attendees to keep quiet.

"These types of bills typically bring a lot of chatter in the background," Pugh said. "It's too early in the day to sleep."

Past governor creates statewide direct primary

It's a fact!

In 1912, Gov. Adolph O. Eberhart brought the legislature back in special session to create a direct primary process to nominate candidates for state-

wide office. He won re-election that year, becoming the first Minnesota governor to be nominated in a primary election.

In 1914, he became the first Minnesota governor unseated in a primary election when he lost the Republican gubernatorial primary. Two years later, he attempted a political comeback and lost the primary election for a U. S. Senate seat.

Born under the name Adolph Olson, Eberhart immigrated to the United States from Sweden at age 11. As a teen, he worked as a cowboy in Nebraska.

In 1891, he enrolled in Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. At that time, he changed his last name to Eberhart because the name Olson was too common at the school.

After graduating, Eberhart moved to Mankato to practice law. In 1902, he was elected to the Minnesota Senate representing Blue Earth County. The youngest member of the Senate at the time, Eberhart gained notoriety as an effective legislator. His track record included sponsorship of legislation aimed at curbing the power of the railroads by increasing the state's ability to regulate railway rates.

When he completed his Senate term in

1906, the Republican Party nominated him as its candidate for lieutenant governor. He won the election and served for three years under Democratic Gov. John A. Johnson. In 1909, Johnson died unexpectedly, and Eberhart was sworn in as governor on Sept. 21.

As governor, Eberhart continued many of the policies of the popular late governor, including the creation of a state government efficiency commission and the passage of a workers' compensation law. But Eberhart's most notable accomplishment was the creation of the statewide direct primary in 1912.

The goal of the direct primary was to take the nominating process out of the hands of the political party elite and place it in the hands of the people. Eberhart, however, may have preferred the direct primary for fear that his nomination at the

party convention could be jeopardized if other candidates teamed up against him. He won both the primary and general election in 1912.

While party power had earlier dominated the nomination process, it soon became clear that issue politics would be the dominate force in the era of primary elections. And in 1914, the issue was prohibition

William E. Lee, representing the "dry" Republican faction, challenged the incumbent Eberhart in the 1914 Republican primary. Lee, a former speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, advocated county option, which would allow each county to enact its own prohibition laws. Eberhart preferred to leave the prohibition question up to localities.

Republican primary voters went dry and nominated Lee over Eberhart. In the general election, however, dry voters split their votes between Lee and a Prohibitionist Party candidate, and a Democratic and former member of Congress named Winfield S. Hammond was elected governor.

Eberhart later took one more swing at elective politics. After his 1916 primary defeat to Frank B. Kellogg, who went on to win election to the U.S. Senate, Eberhart returned to private life. He later moved to Chicago and worked in the insurance and real estate businesses. He died in 1944 at the Masonic home in Savage, Minn.



Gov. Adolph O. Eberhart

Photo from *Men of Minnesota*, R. L. Polk & Co.

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How to get here

Location

The Capitol complex is north of I-94, just minutes from downtown St. Paul. It is accessible from the east and west on I-94, and from the north and south on I-35E.

I-94 eastbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn left. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-94 westbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn right. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-35E northbound: Exit at Kellogg Boulevard. Turn left. Go to John Ireland Boulevard and turn right. Metered parking spaces line both sides of the boulevard.

I-35E southbound: Exit at University Avenue. Turn right. Go to Rice Street and turn left. Go one block and turn left to enter Parking Lot D.

Visiting the Minnesota State Capitol complex can be a rewarding and educational experience for everyone. There are buildings to explore and tours to take almost any time you choose to visit. And when the Legislature is in session during the first part of every year, there are floor sessions to observe, committee meetings to attend, and legislators to meet. Remember that this is your state Capitol, and you are always welcome.

Parking

Public metered parking is available in Lot Q, north of the Capitol at Cedar Street and Sherburne Avenue; Lot D, next to the State Office Building off Rice Street on Aurora Avenue; Lot K, across from the Armory on Cedar Street (enter from 12th Street); and on the orange level of the Centennial Office Building Ramp at Cedar Street and Constitution Avenue. All-day parking is available in Lot Q and in the Centennial Office Building Ramp. Capitol Security personnel will issue tickets for expired parking.

Outdoor handicapped parking is available in Lot N (about three spaces), which is directly behind the Capitol, and in Lot F, which is directly behind the Transportation Building.

Indoor handicapped parking is available on the lower level of the State Office Building Ramp (use the call box at the ramp entrance to gain entry); on the blue level of the Centennial Office Building Ramp; and on the entry level of the Administration Building Ramp (two stalls).

There are two handicapped entrances to the Capitol. One is on the north side of the build-

ing, just off Lot N; the other is a drop-off entrance under the south main steps at the front of the building.

Since parking is limited during legislative sessions, busing may be easier. Freeway express bus service is available. Bus number 94B takes you to the Capitol and the State Office Building. Call the Transit Information Center at (612) 349-7000 for schedule and route information.

What to do

Tours

Tours of the Capitol are offered through the Capitol Historic Site Program of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Tour guides lead the 45-minute tours on the hour Mondays through Fridays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (last tour leaves at 4 p.m.); Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.); and Sundays between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.). The tours are free of charge and begin at the Capitol's information desk at the end of the corridor to the right of the main entrance. Brochures in about 21 foreign languages also are available there.

Tour participants may request customized tours that emphasize either the building or state government.

Historical society officials ask that groups of 10 or more call at least two weeks in advance to reserve a tour time.

The society offers "Voice of the People: Your Role in Minnesota Government," a half-day session for students in grades 9-12.

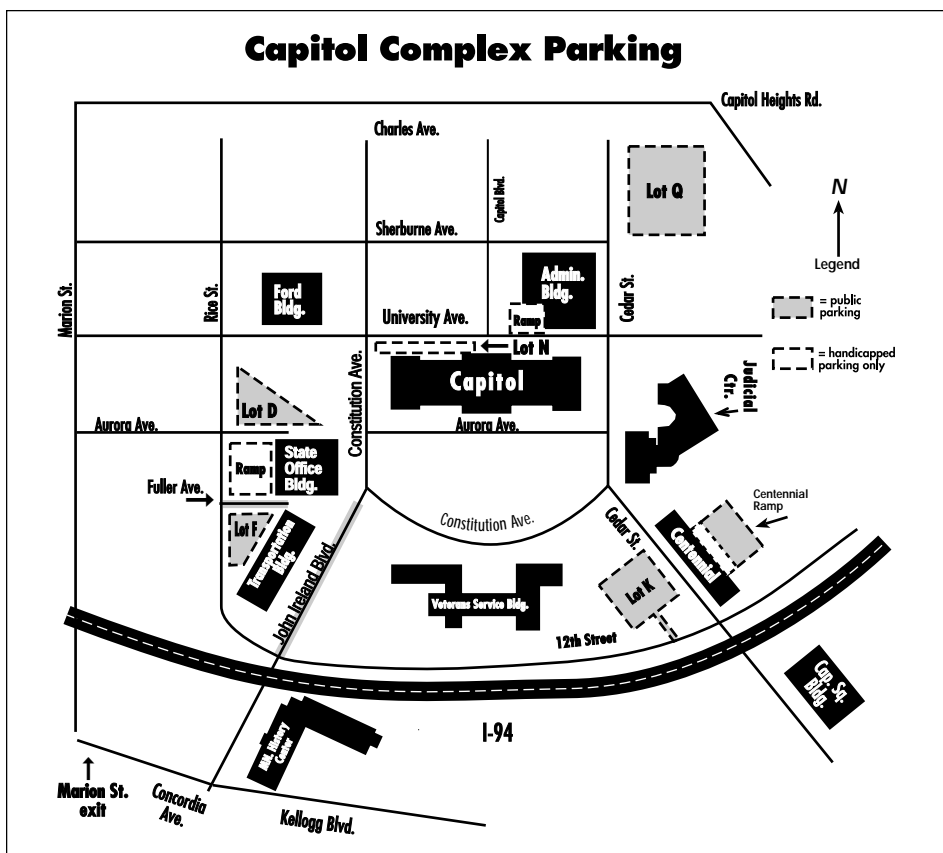
Also, special tour events are scheduled monthly throughout the year. Some of these events entail admission fees; others are free. A special events guide is available upon request.

For a recorded message regarding tours and events, call (612) 297-3521.

For more information about the tours or to reserve a time, call the Capitol Historic Site Program, (612) 296-2881.

Legislators

Representatives and senators are busy but look forward to meeting with their constituents. You should contact your legislator's office to set up an appointment.



Legislative sessions

Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate debate bills when the Legislature is in session.

At the beginning of a legislative session, the pace of floor sessions is generally slow as new bills are assigned to committees and non-controversial items are discussed. At about the session's midpoint, however, the legislative pace quickens.

The House meets at 2:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and the Senate meets at 10 a.m. Mondays and at 8 a.m. Thursdays during the first few weeks. House floor sessions are scheduled for the afternoon because committees meet in the morning and early afternoon. As the session nears the end, however, both bodies will meet several times a week, often into the night.

All House and Senate floor sessions are open to the public. Visitors interested in observing these sessions may call the House Chief Clerk's Office, (612) 296-2314, or Senate Information, (612) 296-0504, with questions. Spectators may sit in the galleries of either chamber.

Committee meetings

Visitors wanting to attend a committee meeting may call the committee hotlines for prerecorded messages with the meeting times and agendas for each day: House, (612) 296-9283; Senate, (612) 296-8088. Printed agendas for the week also appear in each issue of the *Session Weekly* and the *Senate Briefly*.

Anyone with e-mail can receive both House and Senate committee schedules.

To receive the House schedule, send a message to:

listserv@hsched.house.leg.state.mn.us

Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, enter:

subscribe h-schedules

To receive the Senate schedule, send a message to:

listserv@senate.leg.state.mn.us

Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, enter:

subscribe sen-schedules

Committee meetings are open to the public. When a public hearing is scheduled the committee may listen to comments from the audience (when time permits) in addition to the scheduled speakers. Committees have different policies on hearing testimony depending upon their size and workload. Some committees hear general testimony at the subcommittee level, while others allow general testimony during meetings of the full committee. Informational handouts that committee members receive during meetings or hearings are considered public information and are available to the audience on a first-come, first-served basis.

Major proposals on issues often have several public hearings so committee members may listen to all arguments for and against a bill.

Each committee has a chair, vice chair, administrator, and legislative assistant. A list of committees and members is available in the House Public Information Office in Room 175, State Office Building or the Senate Information Office in Room 231, State Capitol.

Groups and individuals wishing to testify before a committee should call the appropriate committee's legislative assistant well in advance of the meeting and ask to be placed on the agenda. Committees prefer requests one week in advance but will accept later notification when unexpected issues appear on the committee schedule. A brochure containing tips on testifying at legislative committee hearings is available from the House Public Information Office.

Dining

All buildings in the Capitol complex have their own cafeterias. The Capitol and State Office Building cafeterias are in the basement. The Transportation and Centennial buildings' cafeterias are on the ground floor of each building. The Judicial Center's cafeteria is on the first floor. The Veterans Service Building cafeteria is on the fifth floor, and the Capitol Square Building's dining area is on the lower level. The Capitol also has a snack bar on the second floor (where the House and Senate chambers are located) during the session. The Café Minnesota is on the first level of the Minnesota History Center. All cafeterias serve breakfast and lunch.

Group visits

Sometimes groups plan a "legislative day" at the Capitol in order to express a particular viewpoint to legislators.

Rooms for special conferences or speakers can be reserved by calling Sean Rahn, (612) 296-5974, room scheduler for the State Office Building; or Nancy Bigelow, (612) 296-0866, room scheduler for the Capitol.

If group members want to meet with their individual legislators or testify before a committee (see "Committee meetings"), arrangements should be made at least a week in advance.

Often such groups have members wear a distinctive name tag or badge to indicate their concern about a particular issue.

Groups planning a trip to the Capitol should remember that seating is fairly limited in some committee rooms — particularly when the topic is controversial.

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(612) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

The House Public Information Office is a nonpartisan office that provides: committee meeting schedules; legislator information; and publications, including the *Session Weekly* news magazine, educational brochures for all ages, and member directories. All information is available at no charge.

Most of what this office publishes can be viewed on the Legislature's World Wide Web page. To connect, point your web browser at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

House Television Services

216C State Capitol (612) 297-1338

House Television Services is responsible for live coverage of House floor sessions and some committee hearings. Such coverage is aired in the Twin Cities area on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. The House also broadcasts via satellite statewide. Outstate residents should check with local cable operators for time and channel information or the office's Web site at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hvtv/hvtv.ssi>

All televised floor sessions and committee hearings are close-captioned for people with hearing impairments.

Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (612) 296-2314

The Chief Clerk's Office provides copies of bills at no charge, all agendas for House sessions, and the Journal of the House.

House Index Department

211 State Capitol (612) 296-6646

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

Senate Information Office

231 State Capitol (612) 296-0504

The Senate Information Office is responsible for all information about the Senate, including the committee schedule, bill status, legislator information, and the distribution of bill copies.

Senate Media Services

B-44 State Capitol (612) 296-0264

Senate Media Services, a bipartisan office, produces television programs, multimedia production, scriptwriting, photography, and graphics. It offers live coverage of the Senate floor sessions and some committee hearings.

Bill Introductions

HF3704-HF3778

Monday, Feb. 16

HF3704—Carruthers (DFL) Economic Development & International Trade

Equity take-out loan availability extended, low-income housing tax credit allocation procedures modified, federally assisted rental housing program provisions modified, tenant relocation assistance permitted, and money appropriated.

HF3705—Milbert (DFL)

Taxes

Television commercials and production materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3706—Bakk (DFL)

Taxes

County authority to grant economic development tax abatements eliminated.

HF3707—Sviggum (R)

Taxes

Special levy authorized for new detention center staffing, and joint law enforcement center construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3708—Murphy (DFL)

Taxes

Hermantown construction purchases sales tax exemption provided.

HF3709—Kahn (DFL) Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture Finance

Mississippi whitewater trail established in Minneapolis, and money appropriated.

HF3710—Rest (DFL)

Education

Grade 13 program created to provide new high school graduates with the first year at a public two-year college tuition free, and higher education income tax credit allowed.

HF3711—Greenfield (DFL)

Capital Investment

Health and human services bonding bill.

HF3712—Stanek (R)

Judiciary

Correction officers discipline procedures act adopted.

HF3713—Dawkins (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Office of health care consumer assistance, advocacy, and information created, health maintenance organization enrollee complaint system modified, informal complaint resolution process establishment date extended, and money appropriated.

HF3714—Erhardt (R)

Taxes

Non-mixed-municipal incinerated solid waste tax rate clarified.

HF3715—Workman (R)

Health & Human Services

Minnesota Family Investment Program-Statewide payment method modified.

HF3716—Workman (R)

Health & Human Services

Abstinence education grant requirements established.

HF3717—Kalis (DFL)

Education

Independent School District No. 2860, Blue Earth, levy reduction authorized.

HF3718—Bishop (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Rochester; Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Department of Agriculture consolidated office constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3719—Carruthers (DFL)

Education

Office of research and technology transfer administration provided funding for international technology acquisition and transfer system development, and money appropriated.

HF3720—Milbert (DFL)

Taxes

Property tax market value increases limited.

HF3721—Macklin (R)

Taxes

Seasonal recreational residential property tax class rate reduced.

HF3722—Daggett (R)

Local Government

& Metropolitan Affairs

Detroit Lakes authorized to impose additional sales and use taxes.

HF3723—Skoglund (DFL)

Health & Human Services

General Assistance, General Assistance Medical Care, Group Residential Housing, and Minnesota Family Investment Program-Statewide ineligibility provisions modified.

HF3724—Biernat (DFL)

Education

Joint school and recreation year-round youth athletic demonstration program established at Waite Park School in Minneapolis, and money appropriated.

HF3725—Long (DFL)

Taxes

Minnesota vendor printed materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3726—Kelso (DFL)

Education

Deaf and hard of hearing teacher licensure requirements modified.

HF3727—Ness (R)

Education

Community education instructors considered teachers for contract and tenure purposes upon school board and exclusive bargaining representative approval.

HF3728—Pelowski (DFL)

Education

Grade 13 program created to provide new high school graduates with the first year at a public two-year college tuition free, and higher education income tax credit allowed.

HF3729—Greenfield (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Neighborhood Health Care Network and Minnesota Primary Care Association provided bridge funding for uncompensated member care distribution, and money appropriated.

HF3730—Lieder (DFL)

Education

Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, and independent school district Nos. 2854, Ada-Borup, and 595, East Grand Forks, flood-related grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3731—Carlson (DFL)

Education

Pell Grant percentage excluded from student financial aid calculation, grade 13 program created, higher education income tax credit allowed, and money appropriated.

HF3732—Tomassoni (DFL)

Education

School bus advertising requirements modified, and revenue to be deposited in the district general fund.

HF3733—Ozment (R)

Environment & Natural Resources

Public waters wetlands illegal activities enforcement procedures and penalties modified, and criminal penalties provided.

HF3734—Mares (R)

Governmental Operations

Public employees insurance program expanded to include county and municipal hospital employees.

HF3735—Anderson, I. (DFL)

Taxes

Enterprise zone additional allocations for property tax reductions authorized.

HF3736—Juhnke (DFL)

Education

School district compensatory revenue allocation alternative established.

HF3737—Johnson, A. (DFL)

Education

Grade 13 program created to provide new high school graduates with the first year at a public two-year college tuition free, and higher education income tax credit allowed.

HF3738—Greenfield (DFL)

Transportation & Transit

Seat belt violation made a primary offense.

HF3739—Skare (DFL)
Taxes

Property tax system public education material production grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3740—Long (DFL)
Taxes

Motor vehicle registration tax rate reduced, technical corrections provided, and money appropriated.

HF3741—Chaudhary (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Council on Black Minnesotans Martin Luther King Jr. holiday observance activities planning and coordination provided, and money appropriated.

HF3742—Dawkins (DFL)
Taxes

Corrections industry manufactured products purchased by government entities sales tax exemption provided.

HF3743—Olson, M. (R)
Judiciary

Juvenile programming grant program developed, and money appropriated.

HF3744—Finseth (R)
Economic Development & International Trade

Red Lake Falls events center construction funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3745—Weaver (R)
Judiciary

Gasoline theft provided criminal penalties.

HF3746—Osthoff (DFL)
Capital Investment

Environment and natural resources bonding bill.

HF3747—Slawik (DFL)
Taxes

School district debt service levy equalization modified.

HF3748—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Trust companies organization, powers, and duties provided, and interstate trust offices regulated.

HF3749—Jennings (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Major League Baseball stadium construction, funding, maintenance, and governance provided, Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission and Metropolitan Council powers and duties provided, taxes imposed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

HF3750—Tingelstad (R)
Health & Human Services

Chiropractor discipline prohibited for expressing a professional opinion in an independent exam for automobile insurance purposes.

HF3751—Wenzel (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Garrison wastewater infrastructure funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3752—Dempsey (R)
Education

School district additional school day revenue provided.

HF3753—Dempsey (R)
Education

School districts authorized to levy for crossing guards.

HF3754—Folliard (DFL)
Education

Grade 13 program created to provide new high school graduates with the first year at a public two-year college tuition free, and higher education income tax credit allowed.

HF3755—Stanek (R)
Judiciary

Law enforcement background investigation data retention required for a minimum of seven years.

HF3756—Leighton (DFL)
Taxes

Student loan interest deduction federal conformity provided.

HF3757—Chaudhary (DFL)
Education

Grade 13 program created to provide new high school graduates with the first year at a public two-year college tuition free, and higher education income tax credit allowed.

HF3758—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education

Year-round school provided, and intersession staff development, and student remediation guidelines required.

HF3759—Sviggum (R)
Education

School district reimbursement for mandated additional instruction days provided, and money appropriated.

HF3760—Otremba, M. (DFL)
Education

School district reimbursement for mandated additional instruction days provided, and money appropriated.

HF3761—Milbert (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Pari-mutuel pool tax abatement sunset removed.

HF3762—Johnson, A. (DFL)
Taxes
Manufactured homes sales tax application modified.

HF3763—Rukavina (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Carlton and St. Louis counties authorized to establish the Jensen-Nopeming special nursing home district.

HF3764—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Taxes
Tax study commission established to study state and local fiscal relations, and money appropriated.

HF3765—Wenzel (DFL)
Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture Finance
Morrison County; Sioux trail established from Genola to Stearns County border, and money appropriated.

HF3766—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

Thursday, Feb. 19

HF3767—Lieder (DFL)
Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture Finance
East Grand Forks and Breckenridge levee construction loan provided, and money appropriated.

HF3768—Kalis (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 2135, Maple River, coordinated facilities plan and grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3769—Dorn (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Statewide caregiver mentoring network grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3770—Macklin (R)
Taxes
Corrections industry manufactured products purchased by government entities sales tax exemption provided.

HF3771—Rifenberg (R)
Education
Independent School District No. 300, La Crescent-Hokah, debt service equalization calculation modified.

HF3772—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health plan independent review organizations established to review adverse health care services determinations, and treatment decision liability imposed.

HF3773—Clark, K. (DFL)
Judiciary
Same-sex marriages authorized.

HF3774—Peterson (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 62, Ortonville, graduation standards technology integration pilot project grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3775—Tunheim (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 390, Lake of the Woods, model distance learning program grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3776—Mullery (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Minneapolis; St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone visitor center constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3777—Long (DFL)
Taxes
Federal charitable contribution corporate income tax deduction rules adopted.

HF3778—Wagenius (DFL)
Taxes
Distressed homestead reinvestment temporary property tax exemption created.

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Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.

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tax class rules clarified, penalties modified, and fees and penalties deposited in the housing development fund.

HF3585 (Hasskamp) Legal nonlicensed family child care minimal safety standards required, and child care fund assistance receipt prohibited if standards are not met.

HF3595 (Long) Rent constituting property taxes calculation modified.

HF3462 (Greiling) Property tax refund formula alternative based on household income provided.

HF3659 (Murphy) Homestead and agricultural aid payments increased to certain statutory cities.

HF2687 (Milbert) County treasurer mortgage registry tax receipt payment obligations modified relating to multiple county mortgages.

HF3720 (Milbert) Property tax market value increases limited.

HF3041 (Johnson, A.) Local property tax levy limit growth factors modified.

HF2604 (Macklin) Property tax rebate and property tax reform provided, levy limits extended, individual alternative minimum tax calculation modified, tax receipts from certain athletic events dedicated, and money appropriated.

HF2838 (Tuma) Senior owned homestead estimated market value increase prohibited.

HF2900 (Krinkie) Income tax rates and brackets modified, property tax reform account repealed, and money appropriated.

HF2989 (Dawkins) Two and three unit nonhomestead property class rates reduced, class 4bb property target class rate eliminated, and city noncompliance provisions extended.

HF3169 (Larsen) Seniors provided an additional property tax refund.

HF3491 (Erhardt) Homestead property exceeding \$75,000 provided reduced property class rate.

HF3657 (Rest) Renter property tax refund increased.

HF3671 (McElroy) Property class rates and the education homestead credit modified, general education levy reduced, and money appropriated.

HF3672 (Kelso) Property class rates and the education homestead credit modified, general education levy reduced, and money appropriated.

HF3678 (Long) Uniform property tax class rate provided for all residential property containing single dwelling unit.

HF3735 (Anderson, I.) Enterprise zone additional allocations for property tax reductions authorized.

HF3739 (Skare) Property tax system public education material production grant provided, and money appropriated.

(This meeting will continue after session in Room 10 State Office Building.)

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: HF3633 (Wenzel) Morrison, Mille Lacs,

Kanabec, and Crow Wing counties provided funding for state forest land repair, and money appropriated.

HF3069 (Trimble) Small business owners with tanks located on their properties provided petroleum fund reimbursement eligibility.

HF3604 (Schumacher) Benton County required to apportion environmental response liability reimbursement among local units of government.

HF3709 (Kahn) Kayak whitewater park.

HF2713 (Westfall) Flood protection plan review provisions modified, flood hazard mitigation grant limits increased, and water use permit processing fee provisions modified. Supplemental bill.

9 a.m.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: HF3359 (Hilty) Occupational regulatory oversight council established to coordinate health-related and non-health-related occupation regulation boards, report required, and money appropriated.

HF3609 (Long) Community-based planning goals modified, notification provided, and money appropriated.

HF3348 (Kahn) Twins baseball franchise community ownership provided, stadium construction conditions established, and money appropriated.

Omnibus supplemental appropriations bill. Additional bills may be added.

10 a.m.

Health & Human Services

Finance Division/

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield

Agenda: Final budget allocations for Health and Human Services.

Additional bills may be added.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee priorities, recommendation, allocations and riders. Omnibus crime prevention bill. Other bills or issues may be considered.

12:30 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: To be announced.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

MONDAY, Feb. 23

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: HF3084 (Ness) Meeker County economic development authority authorized.

HF3246 (Lieder) Ada disaster loan guarantee provided for damaged public health care facility operating losses, and money appropriated.

HF3252 (Clark, K.) Municipalities assisted in implementing preferred economic development practices, businesses receiving public subsidies wage and job reporting requirements modified, inducing businesses to relocate penalized, and money appropriated.

HF3378 (Westrom) Vision Loss Resources, Inc. rehabilitation and community centers funded, and money appropriated.

HF3189 (Mullery) Summer youth employment programs appropriated money.

HF3587 (Trimble) Advocating Change Together, Inc. provided a grant to train people with disabilities, and money appropriated.

HF2898 (Gunter) Economic development supplemental appropriations bill.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: Supplemental higher education finance bill. Supplemental family and early childhood education finance bill.

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

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: HF3676 (Winter) Property tax simplification and reform provided, rebate specified, and money appropriated.

HF2954 (Wagenius) Metropolitan transit expenditures levy reduced or eliminated with property tax reform account funds.

HF3240 (Rest) Low-income housing property

TUESDAY, Feb. 24

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

400N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: HF216 (Mariani) Employment contract provisions modified.

HF3114 (Skare) Workforce center programs school-to-work initiatives support provided, and money appropriated.

HF3157 (Winter) Luverne provided an exemption from the Minnesota Investment Fund Grant limit for job loss offset, and appropriation reallocated.

HF3545 (Winter) Southwestern Minnesota soybean oilseed processing and refining facility established, and money appropriated.

HF3741 (Chaudhary) Martin Luther King Jr. holiday observance and money to Council on Black Minnesotans.

HF3537 (Gunther) Department of Economic Security school to work transition assistance pilot project developed, report required, and money appropriated.

HF3177 (Mullery) Job-training programs study requirements modified to include wage rate and group breakdown information.

HF3447 (Mullery) Women encouraged to enter nontraditional careers, grant requirements and information provided, and money appropriated.

HF3200 (Munger) Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad improvement grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF3153 (Huntley) On-the-job training program for skilled trades developed, and money appropriated.

Additional bills may be added.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: Supplemental K-12 education finance bill.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee priorities, recommendation, allocations and riders. Omnibus crime prevention bill. Other bills or issues may be considered.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: HF3407 (Solberg) Optional and special function school sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3705 (Milbert) Television commercials and production materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3473 (Milbert) Junior golf programs certified by the Amateur Sports Commission, and golf facilities provided partial sales tax refund for qualifying junior programs.

HF2369 (Kubly) Employer contribution for employee housing tax credit provided.

HF3118 (Olson, E.) Counties provided unorganized town road maintenance funding through natural resources land payments in lieu of taxes.

HF3160 (Bishop) Hospital sales tax exemption

effective date modified.

HF3492 (Erhardt) Capital gains tax exclusion provided for the sale of property used as a principal residence.

HF3493 (Erhardt) Student loan interest and education savings account income tax deduction provided.

HF3533 (Abrams) Non-gambling prize awards considered purchases for resale and exempt from sales tax.

HF2572 (Kelso) Counties with Indian casinos payment conditions modified relating to revenues under tribal tax agreements.

HF3556 (Hausman) St. Paul RiverCentre Arena construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3575 (Johnson, A.) Ready-mixed concrete trucks considered capital equipment, motor vehicle sales tax exemption provided, and sales price definition expanded.

Transportation & Transit Finance Division/ TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder

Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: HF2515 (Bakk) Minnesota Forest Resources Council membership expanded to include a representative from the Indian Affairs Council.

HF3583 (Bakk) Minnesota Forest Resources Council provided a grant to implement timber harvesting guidelines and recommendations, and money appropriated.

HF3441 (Peterson) Animal waste technician training and licensing provided, feedlot expansion permits limited, cleanup fund created, ordinance update assistance provided, and generic environmental impact statements required.

Supplemental bill.

10 a.m.

Housing & Housing Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: HF2342 (Clark, K.) Family homeless prevention and assistance program funding provided, and money appropriated.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Omnibus supplemental appropriations bill.

Additional bills may be added.

(This meeting will continue into the evening.)

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: HF3746 (Osthoff) Environment and

natural resources bonding bill.

(This meeting will continue after session in 5 State Office Building.)

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 25

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: To be announced.

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

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: Continuation of agenda from Feb. 23.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Supplemental bill markup.

9 a.m.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

Room to be announced.

Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee priorities, recommendation, allocations and riders. Omnibus crime prevention bill.

10 a.m.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Omnibus supplemental appropriations bill.

Additional bills may be added.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Room to be announced.

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: HF2502 (Rukavina) Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board Giants Ridge cross-country ski event facility enhancement provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros

Agenda: Division reports from Economic Development Finance Division and Housing and Housing Finance Division on their finance bills.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: To be announced.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

4:30 p.m.

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

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: HF2416 (Kubly) Renville tax-increment district parcel original local tax rate and certificate date set, and collection deadline extended.

HF3648 (Otremba, M.) Browerville tax increment financing district authorized expenditures outside the district.

HF2336 (Leppik) Golden Valley authorized to collect an additional tax from the Valley Square tax increment financing district.

HF3495 (Pugh) West St. Paul and Dakota county housing and redevelopment authority provided exemption from tax increment financing district requirements.

HF2504 (Sykora) Deephaven tax-increment financing district revenue expenditures authorized.

HF3602 (Long) Minneapolis phased redevelopment district for the Sears project established.

HF2783 (Carruthers) Brooklyn Center tax-increment financing districts class rates specified.

HF3439 (McElroy) Burnsville amphitheater admissions tax imposed and tax increment finance district established.

HF2463 (Marko) Authorizing the inclusion of certain property in tax-increment districts; extending payment of deferred taxes if certain property is removed for green acres treatment.

HF3098 (Schumacher) Foley tax increment finance district revenue expenditure authorized for a wastewater treatment facility outside the district.

THURSDAY, Feb. 26

8 a.m.

JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Committee priorities, recommendation, allocations and riders. Omnibus crime prevention bill.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: HF2518 (Nornes) Fergus Falls authorized to impose an additional sales tax and motor vehicle excise tax.

HF2610 (Bishop) Rochester authorized to impose permanent sales, use, and excise taxes, proceed expenditures specified, and referendum required.

HF2675 (Pelowski) Winona bond issuance and sales and use tax authorized to finance dredging of Lake Winona.

HF3101 (Skare) Bemidji authorized to impose additional sales and excise taxes for the purpose of funding convention center construction.

HF3193 (Ness) Hutchinson authorized to impose additional taxes to fund a civic and community center, and recreational facilities.

HF3496 (Reuter) Owatonna authorized to impose additional excise and use taxes to fund the Owatonna economic development 2000 operating facilities.

HF3546 (Opatz) St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, Waite Park, and St. Joseph authorized to impose additional sales tax to fund the central Minnesota events center, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3708 (Murphy) Hermantown construction purchases sales tax exemption provided.

HF3722 (Daggett) Detroit Lakes authorized to impose additional sales and use taxes.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT,
NATURAL RESOURCES
& AGRICULTURE FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Supplemental bill markup.

10 a.m.

**Housing & Housing Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: Continuation of agenda from Feb. 24.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: HFXXXX (Trimble) Economic development bonding recommendations. (This meeting will continue after session in 5 State Office Building.)

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, Feb. 27

No committee meetings had been scheduled at press time.

1998 House finance committee/division accounts

Departments, agencies, and programs are listed under the finance committee or division that will consider their funding this session.

Capital Investment

Capital Projects
Debt Service

Economic Development

& International Trade

Economic Development Finance Division

Arts Board

Asian Pacific Americans Council

Black Minnesotans Council

Chicano Latino Affairs Council

Commerce Department

Economic Security Department

Historical Society

Humanities Commission

Indian Affairs Council

IRRRB

Labor & Industry Department

Labor Interpretive Center

Mediation Services Bureau

Minnesota Municipal Board

Minnesota Technology, Inc.

Non-Health Boards (Accountancy; Archetecture, etc.; Barber; Boxing; Electricity)

Public Service Department

Public Utilities Commission

Trade & Economic Development Department

Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

World Trade Center

Housing & Housing Finance Division

Housing Finance Agency

Environment

& Natural Resources Finance

Academy of Science

Agriculture Utilization Research Institute

Agriculture Department

Animal Health Board

Ethanol Development

Environmental Assistance Office

Horticultural Society

LCMR

Minn.-Wis. Boundary Waters Commission

Minnesota Zoo

Natural Resources Department

Pollution Control Agency

Science Museum

Voyageurs National Park Council

Water Resources Board

Education

Higher Education Finance Division

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

University of Minnesota

Mayo Medical School

Higher Education Services Office

Higher Education Facilities Authority

K-12 Education Finance Division

Children, Families and Learning (CFL)

Department (except for programs listed under Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division)

CFL Administration

Education Finance

Faribault Academies

Minnesota Center for Arts Education
Permanent School Fund
Public Libraries

Family & Early Childhood Education

Finance Division

Community Education & Adult Education
including:

- Adult Basic Education Programs
- Adults with Disabilities Programs
- Adult Graduation Aid
- Community Education Programs
- Youth Development Programs (part of community education)
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
- Extended Day Programs
- GED Test Reimbursement
- Hearing Impaired Adult Programs
- Learning Readiness
- Health Screening

Male Responsibility

Alcohol Impaired Driver Account Grants

Family Service Collaboratives

Part H

Violence Prevention Grants, Councils
& Education

Way to Grow

Youth Enrichment Grants

Child Abuse Victims' Services

Child Care - Basic Sliding Fee

Child Care - Family Assistance

Children's Trust Fund

Community Services Block Grant

Drug Policy & Violence Prevention

Energy Assistance-Oil Program

Energy Assistance-Liquified Petroleum
Program

Energy Assistance-State Energy Assistance

Energy Assistance-Energy Assistance Program
(EAP)

Food Assistance-Food Banks/Shelf

Food Assistance-Emergency Food Assistance

Food Assistance-Community Food
& Nutrition

Head Start

Housing Assistance-Transitional Housing

Housing Assistance-Emergency Shelter Grant

Housing Assistance-Rural Housing
Assistance

Housing Assistance-Supplemental
Housing-Homeless

Minnesota Economic Opportunity Grant

Weatherization-State Weatherization

Weatherization-Department of Energy
Weatherization

Governmental Operations

State Government Finance Division

Administrative Hearings Office

Administration Department

Amateur Sports Commission

Attorney General

Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board

Capitol Area Architectural

& Planning (CAAP) Board

Contingent Accounts

Disabled American Veterans

Employee Relations Department

Finance Department
Government Innovation
& Cooperation Board
Governor & Lt. Governor
Intergovernmental Information Systems
Advisory Council (IISAC)
Investment Board
Legislature, Legislative Commissions,
Legislative Retirement
Lawful Gambling Control Board
Lottery Board
Military Affairs Department
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Pension Issues including PERA
Public Broadcasting
Racing Commission
Revenue Department
Salary Supplement
Secretary of State
State Auditor
State Treasurer
Strategic & Long Range Planning Office
Veterans Affairs Department
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Health & Human Services

Health & Human Services

Finance Division

Alternative Care Programs

Community Social Services Act

Council on Disabilities

Emergency Medical Services Board

Families Ombudsman

Group Residential Grants

Health Department

Health Boards (13)

Human Services Department

Mental Health

& Mental Retardation Ombudsman

MinnesotaCare

State Residential Facilities

Veterans Homes Board

Judiciary

Judiciary Finance Division

Board of Judicial Standards

Corrections Department

Corrections Ombudsman

Court of Appeals

District Courts

Human Rights Department

Judges' Retirement

Peace Officer Standards & Training Board (POST)

Private Detective Board

Public Defense Board

Public Safety Department (except for
programs listed under Transportation
& Transit Finance Division)

- Crime Victims Ombudsman

- Crime Victims' Services

- Criminal Apprehension

- Emergency Management

- Fire Marshal

- Gambling Enforcement

- Liquor Control

Sentencing Guidelines Commission

Supreme Court

Tax Court

Uniform Laws Commission

Taxes

Income Taxes

Sales Taxes

Other Taxes

Property Taxes

Property Tax Aids & Credits

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Transportation & Transit

Transportation

& Transit Finance Division

Metropolitan Council Transit Operations

Minnesota Safety Council

Public Safety Department (except for programs
listed under Judiciary Finance Division)

- Administrative Services

- Driver & Vehicle Services

- Pipeline Services

- State Patrol

- Traffic Safety

Transportation Department

Transportation Regulation Board

Trunk Highway Contingent Accounts

Ways & Means

Fiscal Issues

Source: House Fiscal Analysis Department



Something was rotten in a Feb. 16 meeting of the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth) proposed that a bill (HF3356) to classify white bears as protected animals in Minnesota should also protect "any other white-striped, four-legged animal."

Munger's idea confused some lawmakers.

"Is this a black animal with white stripes or a white animal with black stripes?" Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) inquired.

But Munger continued to sing the praises of the animal he sought to protect.

"They're helpful to farmers because they eat grubs," Munger said of the unidentified animal.

Again, some lawmakers were confused.

"Zebras eat grubs?" Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) asked.

The discussion stirred Rep. Mike Delmont (DFL-Lexington) to recall a troubling personal encounter with the creature in question.

"I've had one shot on my front porch in the rain," he said. "After the excavation, we were fine."

After all that, Munger withdrew his amendment. Skunks are "misunderstood" animals, he said.

Minnesota House of Representatives 1998 Members

List as of January 28, 1998

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-
45A Abrams, Ron (R)	209	9934	37B Macklin, Bill (R)	349	6926
19B Anderson, Bruce (R)	281	5063	40A Mahon, Mark P. (DFL)	401	7158
3A Anderson, Irv (DFL)	563	4936	55A Mares, Harry (R)	239	5363
6A Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)	575	2190	65B Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	403	9714
10B Bettermann, Hilda (R)	243	4317	57B Marko, Sharon (DFL)	439	3135
59A Biernat, Len (DFL)	429	4219	55B McCollum, Betty (DFL)	501	1188
30B Bishop, Dave (R)	343	0573	36B McElroy, Dan (R)	259	4212
25B Boudreau, Lynda (R)	327	8237	54A McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)	379	4342
30A Bradley, Fran (R)	233	9249	39B Milbert, Bob (DFL)	579	4192
53B Broecker, Sherry (R)	321	7153	35A Molnau, Carol L. (R)	287	8872
46B Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)	365	4255	21B Mulder, Richard (R)	283	4336
47B Carruthers, Phil (DFL)	463	3709	58A Mullery, Joe (DFL)	359	4262
52A Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	507	4331	7A Munger, Willard (DFL)	479	4282
23A Clark, James (R)	211	9303	8A Murphy, Mary (DFL)	557	2676
61A Clark, Karen (DFL)	503	0294	20A Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)	289	4344
38A Commers, Tim (R)	217	3533	10A Nornes, Bud (R)	357	4946
11A Daggett, Roxann (R)	253	4293	2B Olson, Edgar (DFL)	565	4265
31B Davids, Gregory M. (R)	371	9278	19A Olson, Mark (R)	323	4237
65A Dawkins, Andy (DFL)	409	5158	16A Opatz, Joe (DFL)	473	6612
14A Dehler, Steve (R)	203	7808	60B Orfield, Myron (DFL)	521	9281
51A Delmont, Mike (DFL)	433	4226	29B Osskopp, Mike (R)	329	9236
29A Dempsey, Jerry (R)	251	8635	66A Osthoff, Tom (DFL)	585	4224
24A Dorn, John (DFL)	571	3248	11B Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)	545	3201
64A Entenza, Matt (DFL)	421	8799	37A Ozment, Dennis (R)	317	4306
42A Erhardt, Ron (R)	237	4363	42B Paulsen, Erik (R)	221	7449
17A Erickson, Sondra (R)	247	6746	38B Pawlenty, Tim (R)	231	4128
52B Evans, Geri (DFL)	413	0141	64B Paymar, Michael (DFL)	529	4199
67A Farrell, Jim (DFL)	491	4277	32A Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)	549	8637
1B Finseth, Tim (R)	377	9918	13B Peterson, Doug (DFL)	569	4228
44A Follard, Betty (DFL)	523	3964	39A Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)	583	6828
63B Garcia, Edwin (DFL)	417	5375	46A Rest, Ann H. (DFL)	485	4176
9A Goodno, Kevin (R)	369	5515	28A Reuter, Doug (R)	241	5368
62A Greenfield, Lee (DFL)	381	0173	44B Rhodes, Jim (R)	309	9889
54B Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	553	5387	32B Rifenberg, Michelle (R)	215	1069
26A Gunther, Bob (R)	337	3240	18A Rostberg, Jim (R)	311	5364
48A Haas, Bill (R)	201	5513	5A Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	471	0170
22B Harder, Elaine (R)	277	5373	17B Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)	517	5377
12A Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)	453	4333	41A Seagren, Alice (R)	315	7803
66B Hausman, Alice (DFL)	449	3824	21A Seifert, Marty (R)	213	5374
8B Hilty, Bill (DFL)	525	4308	50A Sekhon, Kathleen (DFL)	451	2439
56A Holsten, Mark (R)	345	3018	4A Skare, Gail (DFL)	431	5516
6B Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	533	2228	62B Skoglund, Wes (DFL)	477	4330
7B Jaros, Mike (DFL)	559	4246	57A Slawik, Nora (DFL)	551	7807
58B Jefferson, Richard (DFL)	577	8659	34A Smith, Steve (R)	353	9188
18B Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)	591	0518	3B Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)	445	2365
48B Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)	539	5510	33B Stanek, Rich (R)	351	5502
24B Johnson, Ruth (DFL)	567	7065	14B Stang, Doug (R)	223	4373
15A Juhnke, Al (DFL)	531	6206	28B Sviggum, Steve (R)	267	2273
59B Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	367	4257	23B Swenson, Howard (R)	331	8634
26B Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)	543	4240	43B Sykora, Barb (R)	389	4315
35B Kelso, Becky (DFL)	415	1072	50B Tingelstad, Kathy (R)	295	5369
20B Kielkucki, Tony (R)	313	1534	5B Tomassoni, David J. (DFL)	593	0172
4B Kinkel, Anthony G. (Tony) (DFL)	537	2451	36A Tompkins, Eileen (R)	245	5506
40B Knight, Kevin (R)	229	4218	67B Trimble, Steve (DFL)	597	4201
16B Knobloch, Jim (R)	207	6316	25A Tuma, John (R)	301	4229
49B Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)	411	4231	1A Tunheim, Jim (DFL)	509	9635
27A Kraus, Ron (R)	279	8216	34B Van Dellen, Todd (R)	291	5511
53A Krinkie, Philip (R)	303	2907	51B Vandever, Ray (R)	255	4124
15B Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)	423	4346	63A Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	437	4200
31A Kuisle, William (R)	375	4378	49A Weaver, Charlie (R)	261	1729
56B Larsen, Peg (R)	307	4244	61B Wejcman, Linda (DFL)	407	7152
27B Leighton, Rob (DFL)	527	4193	12B Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)	487	4247
45B Leppik, Peggy (R)	393	7026	9B Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)	225	6829
2A Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)	515	5091	13A Westrom, Torrey (R)	273	4929
33A Lindner, Arlon (R)	227	7806	22A Winter, Ted (DFL)	459	5505
60A Long, Dee (DFL)	443	0171	41B Wolf, Ken (R)	387	5185
47A Luther, Darlene (DFL)	581	3751	43A Workman, Tom (R)	335	5066

Note: Room numbers are subject to change.

*All rooms are in the State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

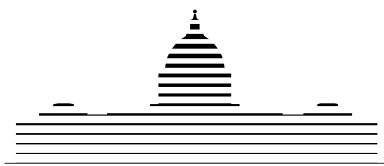
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District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-
66 Anderson, Ellen R. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	5537	8 Lourey, Becky (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	0293
26 Beckman, Tracy L. (DFL)	124G Cap.	5713	54 Marty, John (DFL)	325 Cap.	5645
41 Belanger Jr., William V. (R)	113 SOB	5975	39 Metzen, James P. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4370
13 Berg, Charles A. (Ind.)	G-51 SOB	5094	2 Moe, Roger D. (DFL)	208 Cap.	2577
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	309 Cap.	4261	32 Morse, Steven (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	5649
48 Betzold, Don (DFL)	306 Cap.	2556	29 Murphy, Steve (DFL)	301 Cap.	4264
64 Cohen, Richard J. (DFL)	317 Cap.	5931	25 Neuville, Thomas M. (R)	123 SOB	1279
28 Day, Dick (R)	147 SOB	9457	52 Novak, Steven G. (DFL)	322 Cap.	4334
20 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	43 Oliver, Edward C. (R)	121 SOB	4837
14 Fischbach, Michelle L. (R)	149 SOB	2084	34 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
62 Flynn, Carol (DFL)	120 Cap.	4274	19 Ourada, Mark (R)	145 SOB	5981
49 Foley, Leo T. (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	4154	65 Pappas, Sandra L. (DFL)	120 Cap.	1802
23 Frederickson, Dennis R. (R)	139 SOB	8138	37 Pariseau, Pat (R)	109 SOB	5252
50 Hanson, Paula E. (DFL)	328 Cap.	3219	27 Piper, Pat (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	9248
58 Higgins, Linda I. (DFL)	227 Cap.	9246	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence J. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
24 Hottinger, John C. (DFL)	120 Cap.	6153	57 Price, Leonard R. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7-8060
5 Janezich, Jerry R. (DFL)	328 Cap.	8017	63 Ranum, Jane B. (DFL)	306 Cap.	7-8061
40 Johnson, Dave (DFL)	111 Cap.	9261	45 Robertson, Martha R. (R)	125 SOB	4314
15 Johnson, Dean E. (R)	117 SOB	3826	35 Robling, Claire A. (R)	151 SOB	4123
6 Johnson, Douglas J. (DFL)	205 Cap.	8881	53 Runbeck, Linda (R)	107 SOB	1253
18 Johnson, Janet B. (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	5419	11 Sams, Dallas C. (DFL)	328 Cap.	7-8063
46 Junge, Ember Reichgott (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889	12 Samuelson, Don (DFL)	124 Cap.	4875
44 Kelley, Steve (DFL)	321 Cap.	7-8065	31 Scheevel, Kenric J. (R)	129 SOB	3903
67 Kelly, Randy C. (DFL)	323 Cap.	5285	47 Scheid, Linda (DFL)	317 Cap.	8869
30 Kiscaden, Sheila M. (R)	135 SOB	4848	7 Solon, Sam G. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
16 Kleis, Dave (R)	143 SOB	6455	60 Spear, Allan H. (DFL)	120 Cap.	4191
36 Knutson, David L. (R)	133 SOB	4120	17 Stevens, Dan (R)	105 SOB	8075
51 Krentz, Jane (DFL)	235 Cap.	7061	1 Stumpf, LeRoy A. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
56 Laidig, Gary W. (R)	141 SOB	4351	4 Ten Eyck, David J. (DFL)	G-24F Cap.	4913
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	122 Cap.	3205	42 Tervilliger, Roy (R)	115 SOB	6238
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
21 Lesewski, Arlene J. (R)	131 SOB	4125	38 Wiener, Deanna L. (DFL)	303 Cap.	7-8073
3 Lessard, Bob (DFL)	111 Cap.	4136	55 Wiger, Charles W. (DFL)	325 Cap.	6820
33 Limmer, Warren (R)	127 SOB	2159			

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MINNESOTA HOUSE INDEX

Drunken drivers and the law

Drunken driving arrests in Minnesota, 1996	38,925
Percent male	81
Drivers killed in Minnesota, 1996	359
Percent tested for blood-alcohol concentration	87
Percent with 0.01 to 0.09 percent blood-alcohol concentration	7
Percent with 0.10 percent or higher level	26
Total traffic fatalities in Minnesota, 1996	576
Percent alcohol-related	36
U.S. fatalities from alcohol-related crashes, 1996	17,126
Percent of crashes that involved alcohol	7
Percent of fatal crashes that involved alcohol	40.8
U.S. fatalities from alcohol-related crashes, 1986	24,045
Percent of U.S. automobile drivers killed between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. who had a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.10 percent or higher, 1995	58
Percent during all other hours	20
Legal limit for blood-alcohol concentration in Minnesota, as percent	0.10
States with 0.08 percent blood-alcohol concentration as the legal limit for drivers	15
Legal blood-alcohol limit in Britain, as percent	0.08
in Norway	0.05
in Sweden	0.02
Estimated minimum of fatal crashes that would be prevented each year in U.S. if all states adopted a 0.08 percent limit	500
Percent decline in proportion of fatal crashes caused by drivers at 0.08 percent or higher in states that have adopted 0.08 percent	16
Traffic fatalities in North Carolina, 1995	1,448
Percent alcohol-related	33.7
Traffic fatalities in New Mexico, 1995	485
Percent alcohol-related	50.2
Legal blood-alcohol limit in North Carolina and New Mexico, percent	0.08
Traffic fatalities in Texas, 1995	3,181
Percent alcohol-related	56
Traffic fatalities in Kentucky, 1995	849
Percent alcohol-related	33.8
Legal blood-alcohol limit in Texas and Kentucky, percent	0.10

Sources: 1996 Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts, Minnesota Department of Public Safety; Setting Limits, Saving Lives, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and National Safety Council; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>).

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