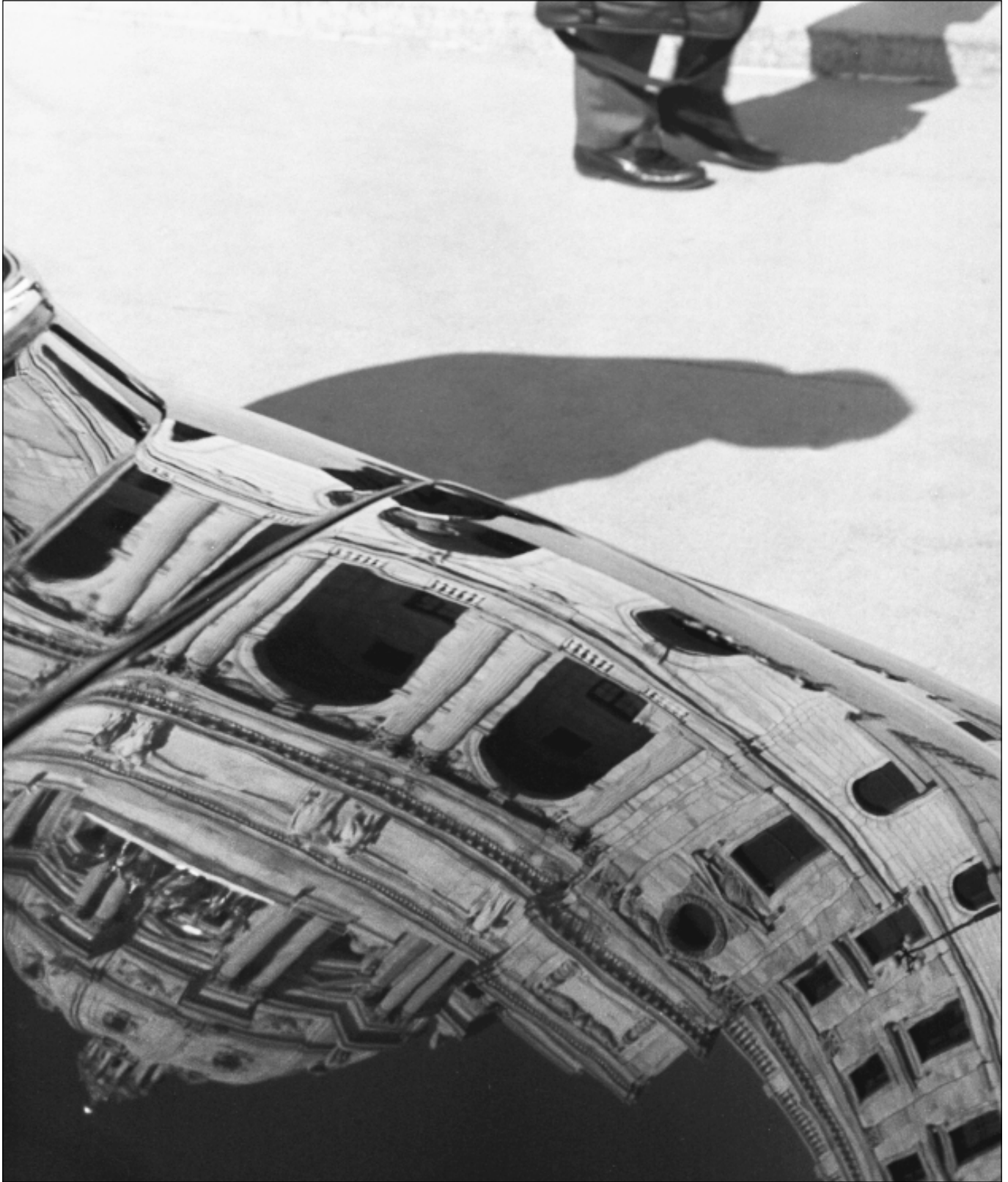


# SESSION WEEKLY

A Nonpartisan Publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ February 27, 1998 ♦ Volume 15, Number 6



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

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# SESSION WEEKLY

Minnesota House of Representatives • February 27, 1998 • Volume 15, Number 6

## Reflections

The general public does not usually see where much of the work gets done at the Capitol. Most of the effort is a "behind the scenes operation." By the time legislators are debating their bills or seeking information about why they should or should not vote aye or nay, the preliminary work has already been put into place.

While the partisan staff of the DFL caucus and the Republican caucus work diligently to get their specific session agendas into law, nonpartisan staff members are working equally as hard to provide non-political support for staff and members. Legislative Reference Library staff also give much needed support and research for locating information or bill tracking.

The average legislative employee's work may extend without overtime to some 50 to 60 hours per week or more. Legislative assistants, for example, work for two or three lawmakers, fielding their many phone calls, taking care of correspondence, keeping their calendars up-to-date, and other clerical duties.

Full-time pages serve as support for members and other staff from early morning to late evening when committees end or when session adjourns. They stay after session to clean up the chamber and restore it back to its more formal setting.

The sergeants in the department have supervisory and mail duties, and other sergeants are responsible for coordinating and supervising activities for some 50 interns or 12 different high school juniors per week for 9 weeks.

The Chief Clerk's Office staff continue to work for over two hours after session, even if adjournment is 8 p.m. or 2 a.m. When the House is not in session, visitors to the chamber will notice that at least one clerk is always on duty at the main desk.

Some Revisor's Office, House Research Department, and Fiscal Analysis Department staff members actually remain at work for over 24 hours at a time when committee bill deadlines are pending or there is "number crunching" to be completed for some finance bill.

Caucus research, constituent services, media staff, and committee administrators all put in more than a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. work day. Other staff departments like bill duplicating, supply, administrative services, and television services also put in very long hours.

House staff members are very dedicated and committed employees. They match the effort of lawmakers in making good government work. Staff members adhere strongly to the last line noted on each of their job descriptions:

"Performs other duties and assumes other responsibilities as the need is apparent or delegated."

—LeClair Grier Lambert

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On the cover: The image of the Capitol reflects off the rear of Jerry and Sandy Felde's 1950 Mercury. Chrome glared in the sun on the 54-degree day as classic hot rods were on display. The array was sponsored by the Minnesota Street Rod Association Feb. 24 to promote the hobby of street rodding.

— Photo by Tom Olmscheid.

# First Reading

K-12 education finance bill . . .

## Graduation rule implementation becomes top priority

By Sandy Donovan

Helping schools successfully implement the state's new graduation standards is the main thrust of a \$70 million education spending proposal advancing in the House.

"We're in year seven of our effort to develop statewide tests and standards," said Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), chair of the K-12 Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee. "I believe this year is a critical year. If we want this major effort to go ahead, we have to put some money out there."

**HF2874**, sponsored by Kelso, would give schools about \$55 million in new funds next year to help implement the new standards. The House Education Committee approved the bill Feb. 24, and the legislation likely will be debated on the House floor next week.

Of the \$63 per pupil targeted in the bill for

districts for improving gifted and talented programs that are integrated with the new standards.

The remaining dollars could be used by districts either for increasing technology related to the new rule or for class-size reductions.

"We realize this \$27 per pupil will not be enough for big reductions, but we're recognizing that districts have differing needs," Kelso said. "Some districts need staff development and need it immediately, and some do not. Some need new technology right away."

The plan also calls for targeting \$36 per student in future years for graduation standards development. That money would go directly to schools and could be used for staff training or class-size reduction.

Graduation standards funding was not included in Gov. Arne Carlson's recommended

school districts who win in court against parents suing for special-education services.

That provision comes in response to a 1997 report of the legislative auditor showing that special education costs are spiraling and that a large portion of those costs are court and attorney fees resulting from increased litigation.

"We're not looking at cutting services that schools already have, but it's undeniable that the cost of special education is increasing at a rate that's unacceptable," Kelso said. "I personally think it's irresponsible not to deal with those costs."

But some lawmakers were concerned that having the state foot part of the districts' legal bills would send two negative messages: that court is the appropriate venue for settling problems, and that the state does not support parents who seek adequate services for their children.

In front of an audience spotted with "Mediation, not Litigation" buttons, more than 25 amendments were offered to the original proposal that called for the state to pay 70 percent of districts' court fees.

The prevailing plan, from an amendment offered by Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), emphasizes mediation and says the state will contribute to legal fees only for districts that have made a good-faith offer to parents and then won in court.

Another sticking point in that portion of the bill is a provision that prohibits state special education requirements from exceeding federal standards as of 1999. Exceptions would be considered by the State Board of Education.

That plan remained in the approved bill after a call to remove it by Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) failed.

The bill also contains plans for maximizing Medical Assistance reimbursements for special education purposes, as well as \$375,000 for American Indian scholarships and other education-incentive programs.

A comprehensive special education bill (**HF2875**), sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), was the source for the bulk of almost 40 pages of special education provisions in Kelso's bill. Greiling's bill grew out of

*Continued on page 4*



Some legislators believe this is a critical year in the effort to implement graduation standards for Minnesota's students. A \$70 million K-12 education bill currently advancing in the House would mark funds for teacher training and other expenses related to implementation of the new standards.

graduation rule implementation, more than half — \$36 per student — would go directly to schools for teacher training.

Teachers must begin teaching the new standards — which incorporate more workaday skills and hands-on projects into traditional academic subjects — next fall, and many have testified before lawmakers this session that they haven't had time or resources to prepare.

Another \$5 per student would go to dis-

\$2 million K-12 education spending plan.

### Special education

Although Kelso's bill targets only about \$2.7 million for funding special education programs, a pair of controversial policy provisions makes this area a big component of the omnibus proposal.

The most hotly debated item would require the state to pay 50 percent of the legal costs of



*Continued from page 3*

a joint House and Senate task force which met over the past year.

The governor's recommended education spending plan included no special education funding for 1999.

### All-day kindergarten

Kelso's bill also proposes spending an additional \$500,000 for certain schools to begin or continue all-day kindergarten programs.

The new funds would bring next year's allowance for the first-grade preparedness program up to \$5.5 million.

Lawmakers on the K-12 Education Finance Division heard testimony citing several national reports showing that attending all-day kindergarten dramatically increases students' academic and social skills.

The provision comes from a bill (**HF2763**) sponsored by Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) that originally aimed to implement all-day kindergarten statewide by 2004. Under that plan, schools with the greatest number of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch would have been eligible for funding first.

Under the latest plan in **HF2874**, any district that previously offered a full-day program can apply for funding.

### In-school suspension

Lawmakers also included a plan in the omnibus education bill to fund in-school suspension programs.

The provision would give schools \$4 per day for each suspended student placed in an in-school or alternative program.

The idea was originally proposed in a separate bill (**HF3664**) sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul). Dawkins said he was concerned that at-risk students become further disenfranchised when they are temporarily barred from school, but that funding problems deter schools from setting up in-school alternatives.

The extra money could be used to upgrade existing programs by adding licensed teachers and incorporating academic instruction.

### Boarding schools

Although Kelso's bill doesn't financially support the governor's proposal for boarding schools for at-risk teens, an 11th-hour amendment by Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington) was approved, asserting support for the plan.

Carlson's plan was reflected in a separate bill (**HF2321**) sponsored by Seagren. The plan calls for \$12 million to build three year-round residential academies. That money is currently being considered for inclusion in an omnibus

*Continued on page 19*



## Hugoson compares lawmaking with being MDA commissioner

By Matt Wetzel

He's been a soldier, a teacher, a farmer, a legislator, and now, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) — a job with responsibilities as diverse and varied as the career that's taken Gene Hugoson to where he is now.

"A lot comes under the job criteria, [including] speaking out to the different agriculture groups, going to Washington to testify on different agriculture issues," he said. "Being in the Legislature is like driving a car by committee. You get there at the end of the session. The system works, but it's a committee process. In this job, it's much easier for one person to have an influence."

Besides overseeing more than 500 employees, Hugoson promotes Minnesota-grown products and Minnesota farmers as actively as he can — on both the national and international levels. He also has the regulatory responsibility of any state administrative job.

With the Department of Agriculture, that includes inspection and monitoring of fertilizer plants, chemical warehouses, grain elevators, dairies, and grocery stores to make sure the department is protecting public health and safety.

While serving the House in 1995, Hugoson was approached by members of Gov. Arne Carlson's staff, who asked if the fifth-term lawmaker would be interested in taking the job as commissioner.

"Having been at the Legislature, having worked in the Agriculture Committee for the whole time, it seemed like a unique opportunity to make a difference," he said.

Hugoson, 52, is a native of Martin County in southwestern Minnesota. He still operates the family farm, a 750-acre corn and soybean operation near East Chain.

He joins his wife, Patricia, and 18-year-old son, Jon, on weekends, but Hugoson lives in the Twin Cities during the week.

He is a 1967 graduate of Augsburg College in Minneapolis with a degree in social science education, and he served in the U.S. Army for a two-year hitch, including a tour in Vietnam.

Hugoson did graduate work at Mankato

State University, and he was a school teacher in Lakefield, Minn., and St. James, Minn. Running as a Republican, he won election to the House in 1986 and was re-elected four times.

Besides the Agriculture Committee, he worked on the House Taxes Committee and House Transportation and Transit Committee. He also served four years as assistant minority leader.

A major difference between being a commissioner and a legislator is the variety, he said.

"As a legislator, you're expected to know a little about everything. You may be speaking to a veterans' group, senior citizens, or local government," he said. "Here, it's virtually all agriculture, but there's a lot of diversity [in agriculture] in Minnesota. Suddenly, you learn about wheat and barley, dairy, sugar beets, wild rice, canola.

"When I was a legislator, my constitu-



Gene Hugoson, state commissioner of agriculture, has been a teacher, a farmer, and a legislator. He said his latest job presents a new set of challenges and opportunities.

ents consisted of 33,000 people. Now I work for the governor, and beyond that, everybody in the state of Minnesota."

Hugoson does miss being in the Legislature, if only a little.

"There's a camaraderie that develops in the Legislature," he said. "There's a lot of interaction that you expect when you're in session. The camaraderie is similar to what you've got in the military — being away from your family during the week, not being around them during the session."



# Highlights



## BANKING

### Women and credit history

A bill that would address the credit concerns of divorced women and widows who are denied loans or credit cards because they don't have an individual credit history was passed by the House Feb. 23. The vote was 128-0.

**HF2309**, sponsored by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), would attempt to rectify the credit problems experienced by many women by requiring that creditors report a credit history in the name of both spouses.

The requirement would include joint accounts and individual accounts under the name of the applicant's spouse or former spouse. The bill makes clear that lenders can deny credit cards to applicants who are deemed a bad risk.

The bill goes to the Senate.



## BUDGET

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Lester Collins, executive director of the Minnesota Council on Black Minnesotans, told a House committee events that happened during this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day show the need for education on racial tolerance.

He was referring to two racially motivated attacks that occurred in Minnesota Jan. 19, one in St. Paul and one in Brooklyn Center.

Nonetheless, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday should remind all of us of King's important message of racial equality, Collins said.

"We believe that the King celebration should be an everyday event, culminating on the Jan. 19 holiday," he said.

Collins testified before the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee Feb. 24 in support of a bill to fund the commission which plans statewide Martin Luther King Day events.

**HF3741**, sponsored by Rep. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley), would allocate \$195,000 over a two-year period to fund events and publicity.

The committee approved a one-year appropriation of \$75,000 for the King Day commission in its omnibus economic development

funding recommendations. Those recommendations have been approved by the full committee and are headed to the House Ways and Means Committee.



Lester Collins, executive director of the Council on Black Minnesotans, testifies before the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee Feb. 24. He supported a bill to fund the council, which plans statewide Martin Luther King Day events.



## BUSINESS

### Business on Sundays

Sunday snowmobile sales are a logistical nightmare for Minnesota dealers.

It's perfectly legal to sell boats, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles on Sunday. But boat, snowmobile, and all-terrain vehicle *trailers* are considered "motor vehicles," and the sale of motor vehicles on Sunday is prohibited by state law.

The House passed a bill Feb. 23 that aims to fix this glitch in the law. The vote was 132-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls), the bill would exempt boat, snowmobile, and all-terrain vehicle trailers from the Sunday sales ban.

"This is something we should have done a long time ago," Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said during a Feb. 17 House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee hearing on the matter.

A separate provision in the bill also aims to make life easier for trailer dealers.

Under current law, an individual must have a franchise license to sell a motor vehicle. The bill would exempt trailers from the franchise requirement.

Anderson was first alerted to the problems with trailer sales by a small marine dealer in his district. Originally, Anderson said, he considered doing away with the Sunday motor vehicle sales ban entirely.

That idea opened a "hornet's nest," he said. Some dealers support Sunday sales; many do not.

At the Feb. 17 hearing, Scott Lambert of the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association, said that his organization has no problem with exempting trailers from the Sunday sales ban, however, the automobile dealers Lambert represents are not interested in doing regular business on Sundays.

The bill (**HF2425/SF2170\***) now goes to the governor.



## CRIME

### Omnibus crime prevention bill

Discussion on the 1998 omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill has revolved around one issue: the cost of getting tough on crime.

The bill (**SF3345**), sponsored by Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) and Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), represents a good deal of the work done this session by the House Judiciary Committee and its finance division. The bill was approved by both panels Feb. 25 and now goes to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The final debate in the full Judiciary Committee centered on reports received from the Department of Corrections and the Sentencing Guidelines Commission on the potential effects on prison bed counts.

The Department of Corrections predicts that with the policy decisions contained in the omnibus crime bill the state could have to pay as much as \$19.4 million over the next three years for additional prison beds.

The department's figures are based on the fact that toughening penalties for certain crimes means that prisoners will stay in prison for longer periods of time, costing the state more money.



A bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee Feb. 25 would provide increased penalties for a number of crimes, including prostitution, repeat violent offenses, and drive-by shootings. The bill now goes to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Much of the debate focused on one of the more controversial provisions in the bill, the so-called "three strikes" provision.

The provision, backed by Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka), would require life imprisonment for criminals convicted of three violent felony-level crimes. The provision also includes language for judicial discretion in applying the new sentence requirements.

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission predicts that this provision alone could mean an additional 664 prison beds would be needed over the next 34 years.

The members of the committee debated the need for tougher penalties versus the need for fiscal considerations. After the debate, the committee approved the omnibus bill without any substantial changes.

Here are some of the highlights of the omnibus crime prevention bill.

### Getting tough

The omnibus crime prevention bill includes several provisions aimed at lengthening penalties for certain crimes.

In addition to the "three strikes" provision, the bill also has a provision that also would address repeat violent offenders.

The provision, which comes from a separate bill sponsored by Skoglund, 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.

Another provision in the bill increases the penalties for engaging in prostitution in a school zone or in a residential area. The provisions apply to all involved in the illegal transaction.

Penalties also would be increased for the crime of witness tampering, for failure to appear in court if charged with a felony-level crime, and for felons who are found illegally in possession of a firearm.

### Fighting drugs

The omnibus bill would increase the penalties for manufacturing, possessing, or selling methamphetamine. Law enforcement officials said that this drug is seeing a dramatic increase in use in Minnesota.

The bill would raise the drug to the same status as cocaine and heroin and would make the manufacture of any amount methamphetamine a first-degree controlled substance offense.

The bill also makes the drug ephedrine a controlled substance, to be dispensed only by prescription in most instances. The targeted over-the-counter products containing ephedrine are reportedly taken by teenagers and others looking to achieve a legal high.

### Drive-by shootings

A provision in the omnibus bill makes murder committed during a drive-by shooting a first-degree murder crime, increasing the prison sentence for the offense.

The crime bill would also raise the maximum penalty from a five-year prison term to a 20-year term for firing into an occupied vehicle.

### Conditional release

The omnibus bill would make several changes to the state's probation and conditional release law. Most notably, the bill would require that each convicted felon released on

probation carry a card that would have the terms of the individual's release.

The person on conditional release would be required to produce the card when requested by a police or probation officer, which would allow the officer to know if the parolee is violating the terms of his or her parole.

### Juvenile criminals

The omnibus crime bill would also open some juvenile court records and proceedings to the public.

For juveniles under 14 years old, the bill would make court records available to the public if the juvenile is found guilty of a third felony or gross misdemeanor level offense.

For juveniles who are 14 years old or older, the bill would open all court hearings to the public, regardless of the offense. The records would be closed to the public when the juvenile turns 21.

The bill also would make it easier to get juveniles who are participating in prostitution into the state's child protection system.

### Financing justice

The bill contains \$7.3 million in supplemental appropriations, a majority of which go to the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, and the state courts.

The Department of Corrections would receive \$2.8 million, much of which would go to reducing the caseload for probation officers. Grant programs which fund community corrections would also be funded through these dollars.

The Department of Public Safety would be appropriated \$1.8 million. Of these funds, the office of the Crime Victim Ombudsman would receive \$125,000 to fund its services; the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension would receive \$133,000 to add forensic scientists to its crime lab; and the department would get \$300,000 for law enforcement and community crime prevention grants.

The bill would appropriate \$1.3 million to the state courts for law clerk salaries. The state public defender would receive \$451,000 for defense attorney salaries. Another \$500,000 would be given to Legal Aid to provide legal service to low-income individuals.

### 'Burglary' definition expanded

Minneapolis resident Loretta Chosa's house has been broken into three times. And although she can identify the people involved, police have told her that they cannot prosecute.

"The house was just trashed," she said. "Everything I own was stolen, including my kids' clothes and toys."

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) said that such



cases occur frequently in her district and that police are telling the victims they cannot do anything about it. The victims are often told that it is difficult to prove whether or not a person found in the home actually broke into the home.

"They are told, 'Well, too bad. Maybe we could charge on a misdemeanor trespass, maybe not,'" Clark said. "In each case, there were thousands of dollars in damage. People were thrown out of their homes. These places were trashed."

Clark backed a provision in the bill that would make it easier to prosecute people who illegally enter a property by expanding the definition of burglary to include accomplices.

She told the committee that prosecutors believe the new language would make the law more explicit and allow them to bring charges against anyone who illegally enters a dwelling, even if they don't actually break in or steal something.



## DEVELOPMENT

### Economic development funding

The omnibus economic development finance bill cleared its first two hurdles Feb. 25, gaining approval from two House panels.

**HF3806** was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, which should be the bill's last stop before going to the House floor.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), the bill combines many of the economic development initiatives heard in the Economic Development Finance Division of the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee. The division and the full committee approved the bill.

The \$15 million appropriations package, containing supplemental budget additions for several state agencies, would fund new projects and existing programs statewide. The bill also contains some policy provisions.

The largest appropriation contained in the bill would go to the Minnesota Film Board to provide support for the state's \$250 million film and video industry. The \$5 million appropriation, which was part of the governor's supplemental budget recommendations, would create a revolving loan film fund to be administered by the film board and the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The fund would provide loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 to film and television producers for Minnesota projects. The state loan funds could account for up to 50 percent of the production budget. The loan agreement

would require the producer to spend 120 percent of the loan amount in the state.

The film board expects that 20 projects will be initiated in the state during the first few years of the program. Currently, eight national cable television series are produced in the state, and 55 feature films have been made in Minnesota since 1990, according to the board.

Here are some other highlights of the omnibus bill.

#### Economic development

Including the aforementioned film board appropriation, funding for the Department of Trade and Economic Development — a total of \$7.7 million — makes up half of the spending called for in the entire bill.

The department would receive \$1 million in additional funding for the Office of Tourism. Part of the governor's request, the money would be used to supplement advertising to attract tourists to Minnesota. Of this amount, the bill would earmark \$50,000 for marketing the Heritage Halls Museum and Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame in Owatonna, Minn., and \$50,000 for a feasibility study of a proposed "great rivers of the world aquarium" in St. Paul.

The bill would provide \$300,000 to fund a taconite mining grant program through the department. The grants are awarded to taconite mining companies to research and develop ways to improve mining and processing techniques.

The city of St. Paul would receive a \$350,000 grant to make improvements on the University of Minnesota Centennial Showboat docked at Harriet Island. The grant also would be used to study options for relocation and expansion of the St. Paul Farmers' Market.

The bill also would allocate \$285,000 for the development of a trolley service which would connect the Minneapolis Convention Center and downtown Minneapolis with cultural tourist attractions in south Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Other statewide development initiatives include \$200,000 to provide improvements to the Fairmont Opera House and \$200,000 to the Duluth Technology Center.

#### Boosting employment

Under the omnibus bill, the Department of Economic Security would receive \$5 million to fund job training and re-employment programs.

The department would acquire \$250,000 to develop programs that encourage women to hold nontraditional occupations. The agency would develop programs to educate and train

women for technical careers that, historically, have not been open to them.

The Department of Economic Security would receive \$1.4 million targeted at job training for youth. Of these funds, \$600,000 would go to summer youth employment programs, and \$250,000 would be used to develop a pilot project aimed at linking workforce training centers with four secondary schools.

The department also would receive \$1 million for their rehabilitative services, which provide job training to people with disabilities.

The bill also would appropriate \$1.4 million to the State Services for the Blind to develop a digital communication center for its Radio Talking Book program. The program broadcasts literature over special radio frequencies that can be accessed by special receivers.

The Centers for Independent Living would receive \$523,000 to assist a current grant program that provides support facilities designed and operated by persons with disabilities.

The bill also would provide \$126,000 to the organization Advocating Change Together Inc. for employment training for people with developmental and other mental health disabilities.

#### History and tourism

The omnibus bill would appropriate \$1 million to the Minnesota Historical Society and \$735,000 to the Department of Administration to fund a wide range of projects statewide.

Of these funds, \$300,000 would go to finance the development of a conference center in Little Falls, \$185,000 would fund improvements to Montevideo's historic railroad depot, and \$100,000 would finance rehabilitation on the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad outside of Duluth.

#### Healthy homes

The most controversial policy provision of the bill was removed by the full Economic Development and International Trade Committee before the panel approved the legislation.

Part of what was originally termed the "healthy homes bill," the provision called for all new homes built after March 1, 1999, to have a mechanical ventilation system.

Opponents of the provision argued that it put undue burden on the building industry, which is already responding to consumer concerns regarding home safety.

Other provisions of the original "healthy homes bill" remain in the omnibus bill, including a proposal to increase new home war-

ranty periods that give homeowners time to find out about defective conditions and to seek legal action.

### Employment contracts

The omnibus bill also includes compromise language from a bill that initially called for all employers to disclose the terms of employment in writing in each employee's first language.

The current bill would require only that the Department of Labor and Industry develop a brochure stating employee rights and listing employee resource phone numbers.

The provision also would require employers to provide the brochure when an employee is first offered a job, and the bill would provide penalties for employers who fail to do so.



## FAMILY

### Family and early education

Minnesota's families would receive \$2.2 million in state dollars under the family and early childhood education spending bill passed by the House Feb. 26.

The \$2.2 million bill (**HF2803/SF2532\***) was produced by the Family and Early Childhood Education Division of the House Education Committee. Rep. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids) is sponsoring the funding package.

"The purpose of this bill is to expand the supply of child care in our state and improve its quality," Kinkel said.

The bill passed on a 91-42 vote. It now goes to the governor.

Here's a look at major provisions of the legislation.

### Investing in families

A proposal that would allow low-income families to contribute money to a "family asset account" and receive matching dollars from the state or a private organization would receive \$875,000.

The aim of the program would be to help low-income families move out of poverty by attaining certain important economic goals.

State or private matching funds would be kept in a separate account, and the family would not get the money until they have finished an economic literacy course and achieved their goals for one of three approved purposes — buying a home, paying for an education, or starting a business.

Other states are considering such programs, and similar legislation is pending in Congress.

The program would be administered by the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

### Helping the homeless

The Department of Children, Families, and Learning estimates that there are 21,000 homeless children in Minnesota. A recent University of Minnesota study found that 25 percent of homeless children are at least three years behind in school. In Minneapolis, 10 percent of the elementary-aged students are homeless each year.

Sue Watlov-Phillips, of Elim Transitional

Housing, brought these figures on homelessness to the Family and Early Childhood Education Division of the House Education Committee Feb. 9.

"The greatest predictor of homelessness as an adult is unstable housing as a child," Watlov-Phillips said. "If we invest now, we can make a significant difference."

The spending bill would appropriate \$626,000 for emergency services and shelters and transitional housing for the homeless.

Under federal Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines, housing is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30 percent of a household's income.

In Minnesota, 350,000 households are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing, Watlov-Phillips said. "That means they're one paycheck away from homelessness."

### Gang prevention

The bill would appropriate \$225,000 for gang prevention and intervention.

The funding would be available for local organizations to reach children and young adults who are either at risk for criminal gang involvement or who have expressed interest in terminating their gang affiliation.

After-school activities, job skill training, and counseling are among the services that would be offered to the young people.

### Child guides

Students in Willmar, Minn., who have exhibited low self-esteem or anti-social behavior have a network of people watching out for them.

## One fine day



House pages Kelly Jo Tungland, *left*, Nancy Tracy, *center*, and Dianne Lee take a break to enjoy the unseasonably warm Capitol Hill weather, compliments of El Niño Feb. 24. The mercury rose to a near-record 54 degrees, making the snowless landscape look like spring.



The Child Guide Program serves as a link between at-risk students in kindergarten through eighth grade and adult volunteer mentors.

The bill would appropriate \$225,000 to expand the successful program to other sites around the state.

The Willmar program receives students referred by watchful teachers, parents, or community volunteers and matches the youths with mentors who take on the task of redirecting the child's focus toward positive activities such as music lessons, sports, or scouts.

Nearly 200 volunteers and close to 80 local businesses, organizations, and agencies in the Willmar area are currently active in the Child Guide Program.

#### Lead contamination

Lead poisoning is the top environmental health problem for children, Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) told the Family and Early Childhood Education Division Feb. 16.

The bill would appropriate \$150,000 for nonprofit organizations to clean up lead-contaminated residential sites around the state.

#### Calling for help

People in need of emergency shelter, legal aid, or medical care often have no idea how to get in touch with service providers.

"If you can't find a service, it's as if it never existed," Krista Boston, of First Call for Help, told the Family and Early Childhood Education Division during a Feb. 16 hearing.

First Call For Help is a social services information and referral telephone hotline that was developed 50 years ago by the United Way of Minneapolis.

In 1997, the program received 350,000 calls — a 20 percent increase over 1996.

The bill would appropriate \$100,000 to expand First Call for Help into "First Call Minnesota," a statewide computer system database of health services, social services, educational programs, housing information, and employment services.

#### Child care

The bill also would transfer \$5 million in federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to the Department of Children, Families, and Learning for several child care projects.

Among the provisions is a plan to make available more nonstandard hour child care. The number of parents seeking child care during evening and overnight shifts is projected to increase dramatically with new welfare reforms.

Under the bill, \$1 million would be appro-

priated to establish a nonstandard-hours child care pilot project.

The department would set up a grant program for child care operations that provide care during these nonstandard working hours for start-up assistance, training, and business support.

New providers of nonstandard-hour child care would be eligible to receive a guaranteed subsidy for up to one year.

Funds also would be targeted to improve the quality of child care. Many child care centers struggle with high employee turnover rates. The child care industry considers low wages to be the biggest reason for high turnover in the field.

The bill would include \$1.1 million for child care quality improvement grants to providers for training and staff retention incentives.

#### Loan Forgiveness

The TANF money also would be used for a loan forgiveness program for child care workers.

Child care aides in Minnesota earn an average wage of \$5 to \$5.99 an hour, Nancy Johnson, of Child Care Works, told the Family and Early Childhood Education Division during a Feb. 4 hearing.

It is nearly impossible for child care workers to afford continuing education or pay back student loans.

The bill would direct \$300,000 to the education loan forgiveness grant program.



## GOVERNMENT

### State government finance bill

The Office of the Attorney General would receive the bulk of funds in a \$30 million state government finance bill approved Feb. 26 by the House Governmental Operations Committee.

The state's top legal and law enforcement agency would receive \$24 million for 1999 operating expenses under **HF3137**, sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia).

That's \$400,000 less than the attorney general would have received had Gov. Arne Carlson not used his line-item veto authority in 1997 to strike the office's proposed funding for this year.

And although Carlson reinstated \$22.5 million in his proposed supplemental budget this year, the office requested the original \$24.4 million from lawmakers, citing increased workloads and expenses.

The office is responsible for asserting and defending the state's legal interests, settling

claims involving the public and private sectors, and aiding other law enforcement agencies in prosecuting and solving cases.

At the time of his veto, Carlson cited "unnecessary, imprudent, and unacceptable growth" in the department.

But Lee Sheehy, chief deputy attorney general, told lawmakers this year that not only does the office pay its own way through legal damages and other recovered funds returned to the state, but lawyers in the office earn substantially less than their private-sector counterparts.

Also, Deputy Attorney General Margaret Chutich said, the office increasingly has to turn down requests for help from county attorneys because of staff shortages.

The department's 1999 proposed budget was divided into three categories: \$13.6 for law enforcement, \$2.2 for agency representation, and \$8.7 million for defense and prosecution of civil claims.

The bill includes a call for a task force to evaluate, by 1999, the availability, effectiveness, and cost of legal services provided by the office.

#### State administration

After the allowance to the Office of the Attorney General, most of the remaining funds in the omnibus bill would go to finance various Department of Administration programs.

The largest chunk, \$3.85 million, would be used to help update state computer systems to address problems associated with the advent of the year 2000.

Several technology grants also would originate from this department, under the bill.

Public television stations would be eligible to share \$500,000 in grants to help them convert to a digital broadcasting signal, as mandated by the federal government.

Also, \$315,000 would be earmarked for a grant to Pioneer Public Television to build a tower in Otter Tail County. That area is currently the only part of the state that cannot receive a public television signal.

Another provision would allow Minneapolis and St. Paul to share a grant of \$100,000 to develop computer facilities in public parks.

That provision grew out of a proposal by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), who said that because of unique busing situations in her city, parks have replaced schools as community centerpieces and would be the appropriate place to provide low-income residents with Internet access.

An amendment by Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) secured his city's right to share the grant.

## Community-based planning

A controversial plan to expand a state advisory council on community-based planning has, so far, withstood several attempts to remove it from the omnibus bill.

The plan was originally proposed in a separate bill (**HF3609**) sponsored by Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls). It would expand membership on an existing advisory council as well as extend the life of the council for a year and a half, until December 1999. It would not provide additional funding for the council.

The council's purpose is to set up voluntary land-use planning projects between state and local government units.

But many Greater Minnesota lawmakers say that idea scares them for one reason: They don't believe land-use planning will remain voluntary for long.

"Sure, now it's voluntary, but we've heard that with every other project that soon became mandatory," said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City). "[Voting against this bill] is the opportunity to kill this monster while it's young, before it grows horns."

And although opponents numbered too few to strike the proposal, Long told them she would support language, if brought up when the bill is heard before the full House, to sunset the council if the projects ever cease to be voluntary.

## Governor's portrait

Last year the governor used his line-item veto authority to strike a project that would have included installing his portrait in the Capitol, but lawmakers reinserted the portrait plan in this year's finance bill.

The bill calls for \$20,000 to be included in the Department of Administration's 1999 budget for the project.

When Carlson vetoed the project last year, it was included in an appropriation to the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board. At the time, Carlson rejected the entire appropriation, saying some other proposed projects did not meet guidelines adopted by the board in 1991.

## Canadian diplomacy

Rukavina's bill also would provide money for Minnesota lawmakers to meet with Canadian officials and attempt to resolve some ongoing border disputes.

The disputes center mostly on border waters and involve such fishing issues as how many walleyes Minnesotans are allowed to catch in and bring home from Canadian waters.

The bill calls for a \$25,000 grant to the Council of State Governments to set up meet-

ings between Minnesota legislators and members of the Manitoba and Ontario parliaments.

The plan was originally proposed in another bill (**HF3450**), sponsored by Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls).

## No more baseball

Saying they were sick and tired of baseball-related issues, lawmakers struck a six-line section from the omnibus bill that would have prohibited the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission from signing any future lease with a professional baseball team for less than seven years.

Kahn supported the proposal, saying it would send a message to Major League Baseball.

"When the Twins canceled their lease early, they threw a hardball into the process," she said. "We're picking up that hardball and sending it back to them."

But a successful amendment by Osthoff removed any mention of baseball from the omnibus bill.



## HIGHER EDUCATION

### Omnibus higher education bill

A seemingly small provision in the House's omnibus higher education funding bill might be noticed the most by Minnesota parents with postsecondary education plans for their children.

This year's \$82 million bill omnibus bill (**SF3297**) includes a measure that would allow parents of 1998 high school graduates to claim an income tax credit of up to \$500 toward the cost of the student's first year of college tuition.

The House approved the bill Feb. 26 on a 104-26 vote. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr. (DFL-Winona), now goes to the Senate.

Coupled with a new \$1,500 federal income tax credit, the House proposal — originally proposed by Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal) and dubbed the "grade 13" proposal — would make postsecondary education more affordable for most Minnesotans.

It is estimated that the tax credit would result in a revenue loss of about \$7 million to the state.

The omnibus bill also calls for \$39 million in spending for the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system and \$38.5 for the University of Minnesota.

Another \$3 million would be appropriated to increase by \$500 the private college tuition cap. Every other year the Legislature sets the money allocated to calculate state grants. The

allocation in the bill would raise the cap for each grant to \$8,550.

## Grade 13

Families of 1998 high school graduates headed immediately to college and with an annual income with certain limits would be able to deduct \$500 when they file their state income 1998 tax return, under the bill.

The federal government recently established the Hope Scholarship Credit, which calls for a \$1,500 credit for those who come under the same income guidelines.

The total of \$2,000 in state and federal tax credits would cover the first-year tuition for many state universities and colleges, which bill supporters say would make an additional year of school — or grade 13 — available to most Minnesotans.

Single parents could earn up to \$40,000 for the full state credit, with total phase out at \$50,000 for single filers. Married couples could earn up to \$80,000 per year for the full amount, with the credit phased out at \$100,000 in annual income.

The bill was amended to include independent students who file income tax returns, but there is a catch. Student taxpayers would need to earn about \$7,000 annually before they would begin to realize a tax liability.

To be eligible for the tax credit, students would have to attend a Minnesota two- or four-year college, a technical college, or another in-state trade training program.

Under the legislation, the one-time credit could be claimed for the tuition and related education expenses of each student in a taxpayer's family.

## MnSCU money

Earlier this session, Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud) told the Higher Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee that Minnesota spends more per student at some two-year higher education facilities than it does at four-year universities.

Opatz also indicated significant disparities exist in the amount of money the state's institutions receive per full-time equivalent student.

He noted, for example, the state, in effect, provides Southwest State University with about \$2,000 more per student than Mankato State University.

He said the variance between the highest and lowest funded state universities for fiscal year 1998 is 54 percent, and disparity among two-year schools is 90 percent.

The omnibus legislation would provide \$21.5 million for fiscal year 1999 in funding equalization, which is \$9.5 million more than

MnSCU or the governor requested. This funding would be to reduce the variations in per-student funding among the MnSCU institutions.

MnSCU was created in the 1995 merger of Minnesota's technical and community colleges and state universities. MnSCU has 36 campuses in the state.

As part of that appropriation, the Legislature would ask MnSCU to develop an allocation model beginning in fiscal year 2000.

Pelowski, the finance division chair, told the House Ways and Means Committee on Feb. 25 the bill is framed to keep the Legislature from writing the system's model.

It was 1997 legislation that resulted in funding at two-year campuses exceeding that of state universities.

"We have tried to create a balance, but we also created some problems," Pelowski said. "This is to give direction, but not to write their formula for them. They will come back to us with a formula."

The governor and MnSCU requested no money for the acquisition of library materials and equipment, but the House bill includes \$3 million for such items.

Pelowski said legislators thought MnSCU "grossly underestimated and underfunded" this area. Pelowski also said these libraries have become resource centers for the regions they serve, and not just the students, and the funds would help the libraries meet these needs.

### University of Minnesota

U of M President Mark Yudof has focused on investing in the school's molecular and cellular biology initiatives. The school intends to create an institute for molecular and cellular biology with the aim of pushing the school into the top five public universities in biological sciences.

About 70 percent of all research expenditures at the U of M are for biology, including medicine and agriculture. The biggest part of Yudof's capital budget request a month ago was \$70 million for a molecular and cellular biology institute.

In his supplemental budget request, Yudof asked for funding to recruit 11 blue-chip faculty members during the next three years, and to provide them with the expensive equipment needed for their research. The bill provides some funds for that equipment fund and to hire research assistants.

Yudof also intends to hire another 15 junior faculty by redirecting current university funds.

Both the university and the governor requested \$22 million to fund the ongoing initiatives. The House bill would set funding for

such items at \$24.5 million for fiscal year 1999.

The university and the governor also asked for \$19.5 million in one-time projects. The bill includes \$13.75 million for this area.

### Regent elections

The bill stipulates a change in the University of Minnesota regent election process by setting a residency requirement. The change is the result of a joint House and Senate committee to have the board reflect various parts of the state.

At least five regents would have to live in the seven-county metropolitan area and at least five would live outside that metropolitan area, under the bill. Candidates currently are selected from each of Minnesota's eight congressional districts.

The bill would also change the Regent Candidate Advisory Council from 24 to 15 members. The council recruits, interviews, and recommends to the Legislature candidates for the U of M Board of Regents.

Under the current law, the speaker of the House selects 12 members and a Senate subcommittee selects the other 12. The legislation would have the speaker and Senate subcommittee pick four each. The House and Senate minority leaders would each pick two, and the governor would pick three.

Currently, the advisory council can recommend between two and four candidates for each vacancy. That would change to two candidates under the legislation.

### Legal helpers

Second- and third-year law students at the University of Minnesota represent roughly 700 low-income Minnesotans annually in campus law clinics. There are 16 divisions in the clinic concentrating in areas such as civil cases, bankruptcy, and domestic issues.

The U of M would receive an additional \$250,000 to supplement its current funding for the legal program, which is now funded from tuition, private contributions, and federal and state grants.

The legislation would allow the clinic to increase the number of students and faculty who participate and allow them to service another 200 clients.



## HOUSING

### Omnibus housing bill

A provision that would provide \$10 million to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) to assist in maintaining existing low-income housing is the centerpiece of the omnibus housing bill approved Feb. 25 by two House panels.

**HF2342**, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), was approved by Housing and Housing Finance Division and the full House Economic Development and International Trade Committee on the same day. The bill now goes to the House Ways and Means Committee.

### Schoolhouse Rock



Left to right: Elliot Dash, Tonilyn Hornung, Amy Silverman, Scott Duff, and Mark Hefti as Mr. Bill play the cartoon characters of the television series, *Schoolhouse Rock*. Legislators were invited to the Feb. 20 Capitol performance, which combined history, grammar, math, and science.



The omnibus bill contains many of the housing bills that were heard by the Housing and Housing Finance Division this session and \$15 million in total appropriations for programs administered by the MHFA.

The proposed \$10 million appropriation to protect existing affordable housing was worked on by legislators during the interim and was incorporated into the governor's budget recommendations. The provision comes in response to a situation occurring statewide.

In the 1970s, the federal government set up a program through which developers received reduced-rate mortgages and financing incentives to build low- and moderate-income housing. Rent rates were subsidized by the federal government and rent increases were regulated.

Owners of many such complexes are now taking advantage of a provision that allows them to prepay the remaining portion of their mortgage and to begin charging market-rate rent.

Housing advocates say that this scenario could happen at the more than 300 apartment complexes throughout the state that were financed through the federal program.

The owners of 215 Oak Grove in Minneapolis, Hopkins Village in Hopkins, Knox Landing in Bloomington, and Grand Pre By the Park and Selby-Dayton in St. Paul have all announced that they plan to take advantage of the prepayment option.

The \$10 million in Clark's bill would fund the equity takeout loan program administered by the MHFA. The fund is used to provide financial incentives to maintain existing subsidized housing. The incentives can be made available to local units of government and nonprofit organizations.

Here are some other highlights of the omnibus housing bill.

- The bill would allocate \$1.6 million to the MHFA to be used for current programs that finance the construction of new multifamily rental housing. The funds would be used in collaboration with federal dollars to build affordable rental housing.
- The omnibus bill would appropriate \$1.1 million to homelessness prevention programs administered by the MHFA. Of this, \$365,000 would go to the Bridges Program, which provides rental assistance to people with disabilities.
- Programs that assist home ownership would receive \$2.2 million, under the omnibus bill. That sum would include \$1.6 million to the Community Rehabilitation fund for the production of affordable single-family housing and \$500,000 for home ownership zones to encourage ownership in distressed areas.
- The bill would provide \$200,000 to fund

programs seeking to make Minnesota homes healthier. Of that amount, \$125,000 would go to fund a healthy home pilot project to train builders and inspectors. Another \$75,000 would fund a program that would provide grants to people who suffer from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. The grants would be used to finance improvements to make the homes chemical free.



## HUMAN SERVICES

### Treatment program facilities

The expansion of two private facilities for the treatment of addictions would occur under separate bills approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 23.

**HF2793**, sponsored by Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson), calls for the Minnesota Indian Primary Residential Treatment Center to receive \$400,000 from the state to build a youth alcohol treatment wing at the Mash-Ka-Wisen Treatment Center located on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation near Cloquet, Minn.

The second piece of legislation (**HF2883**), which is sponsored by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), calls for \$750,000 for construction of a building in Granite Falls, Minn., where treatment would be provided for people addicted to gambling.

Under Hilty's bill, the \$400,000 in state money would be available only if matched by a \$1.5 million federal grant and \$100,000 from the state American Indian bands.

According to Hilty, the Minnesota Department of Human Services indicated that 319 American Indians took treatment at the Mash-Ka-Wisen Treatment Center in 1996. But, Hilty said, the existing facility was designed to handle only half that number.

And he said that even though the center is on American Indian reservation land, "most referrals to the clinic come from Hennepin County."

He said the national success rate in alcohol treatment programs is 20 percent for American Indians, but the success rate is 40 percent in the Mash-Ka-Wisen Center.

"One reason is because it's culturally specific," he said.

He said the center currently is not able to treat as many youths as it prefers, and treatment is more successful if the youths are kept separate from adults.

Kubly's proposal to mark general fund dollars for a gambling addiction program called Project Turnabout also would require a local match of the same amount.

The original proposal requested \$900,000, but the provision was amended by the com-

mittee to \$200,000. Kubly subsequently received a promise from the Minnesota State Lottery to transfer \$750,000 in lottery prize money into the general fund to be used for the project.

The funds would go for construction of a facility to house recovering gamblers during a two- to four-week treatment program. The program typically treats 20 people at a time and operates under a state grant.

Kubly said most insurance companies don't cover gambling recovery, "so there is a bit of a gap there."

Both pieces of legislation are part of the division's omnibus funding bill.

### MFIP-S emphasis questioned

Several Minnesota welfare recipients told legislators they are being forced to take low-paying jobs rather than continue pursuit of a degree that is within their grasp.

The situation has concerned some legislators, who believe the intent of the state's new welfare law is not to just shift citizens from welfare to work of any kind, but to provide them with tools that lead to a quality job.

"The goal should be a livable wage, rather than a minimum-wage job," Rep. Luanne Koskinen (DFL-Coon Rapids) said.

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) is sponsoring legislation that would require the Department of Human Services to provide those moving into the workforce with a clear outline of the education and training opportunities available under the state's new welfare law.

"This legislation basically tells people to do what's in the law," Huntley said.

The Minnesota Family Investment Program-Statewide (MFIP-S) emphasizes a quick shift into the workforce, but testimony before the finance division of the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 23 depicted similar stories of welfare recipients who were within a year of a postsecondary degree but were told they had to find a job.

For those so close to completing a training program or college, immediate employment would delay or prevent completion of the educational courses, legislators were told.

Huntley said **HF2990** seeks to assist mainly women moving off welfare, many of whom are single mothers. He emphasized that MFIP-S calls for job counselors to approve an education or training program and to allow individuals to postpone a job search if the education program can be completed within 12 months and is likely to lead to employment without additional training.

But anecdotal evidence indicates the ap-

proach to outlining the education alternatives varies among the state's 87 counties. Testimony heard by the House panel indicated some counties are not providing information on the training options and are pushing people into the job market.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) said, "Maybe the message isn't getting out to the counties that they have to do a better job screening." He said that if the program were five years old, there might be a big cause for concern. But MFIP-S, which sets a five-year lifetime limit on receiving welfare checks, became effective July 1, 1997.

Huntley's bill was approved and is to be included in the omnibus health and human services bill.



## SPORTS

### Baseball bill fails

A House panel Feb. 26 voted down the only baseball-related bill to be taken up by a House committee this session.

**HF3348**, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), would have provided the framework for community-based ownership of the Minnesota Twins.

The plan originally called for state money from a potential November 1998 budget surplus to be loaned to a charitable foundation to buy the team. That group could have then sold stock to private investors interested in keeping the team in Minnesota.

"This bill would send a message that the Legislature of Minnesota is interested in working this out, in keeping the Twins here," Kahn said. "It gives a market test of fan and community support for the team."

But opponents objected to using what they said was money garnered from overtaxation to make a loan to professional baseball.

And even after the bill was stripped of provisions allowing for any public money to be used, lawmakers on the House Government Operations Committee voted against approving what remained, which was essentially a blueprint for setting up a community-owned team without state involvement.

"To vote for this would be to open up the House floor to another whole debate about baseball and money and stadiums," said Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul).

A few days earlier, the State Government Finance Division of the Governmental Operations Committee had heard testimony from members of the public opposed to any state involvement in professional sports.

"You guys will not take no for an answer,"

## Session song



The Unity Baptist Adult Choir of St. Paul sings "God is a Good God" as part of the invocation before the Feb. 25 House floor session.

said Charles Test, chair of Minnesota's Libertarian Party. "The people have spoken and they've said they do not want the state involved."



## TAXES

### Property tax breaks for seniors

Senior citizens would get a break on property taxes under three separate bills advancing in the House.

**HF3169**, sponsored by Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), would provide a property tax refund for people 65 and older who have lived in a home they own for at least 10 years.

**HF2838**, sponsored by Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), would prohibit market value increases for seniors' homes, unless the homeowners have made improvements to the property.

**HF3585**, sponsored by Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), would loosen the participation requirements in a program passed last year aimed at preventing senior citizens who live on fixed incomes from being driven out of their homes by rising property values and taxes.

All three bills were debated Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

In Larsen's bill, the rebate would be above and beyond any other refund eligible seniors may receive. The refund would be the amount of property taxes, not of existing refunds, that exceed 6 percent of the taxpayer's household

income or 1.25 percent of their home's estimated market value, whichever is higher. According to an analysis from the Department of Revenue, refunds would be paid to approximately 60,000 homeowners, and the cost to the state would be \$28.7 million in fiscal 1999, \$29.2 million in fiscal 2000, and \$29.6 million in fiscal 2001.

Under Tuma's bill, market value increases on homes owned by those 65 and older would be forbidden as long as the owner has lived in the home for at least five years. There would be no income limitations. Married couples would both have to be at least 65 to qualify. Homeowners would have to apply for the valuation freeze.

Tuma termed it "an idea that has been floating around the Capitol for a long time."

Hasskamp's bill would alter a portion of the 1997 omnibus tax law, which created a senior citizens' property tax deferral program scheduled to begin for taxes payable in 1999.

The 1997 law calls for the program to allow homeowners over age 65 who have lived in their homes for at least 15 years and have a household income less than \$30,000 to defer property taxes that exceed 5 percent of their income.

Interest not to exceed 5 percent would accrue on the deferred amount. The deferral and interest would be payable within 90 days of the date when the property is sold, ceases to be a homestead, the homeowner dies, or the homeowner chooses to no longer participate.

Hasskamp's bill would modify the senior citizens' property tax deferral program by increasing the maximum household income for

program participation to \$40,000. It also would set the annual deferral amount at property taxes in excess of 5 percent of the homeowner's income in the year of application. The maximum interest rate would be lowered to the lesser of 5 percent or the change in the consumer price index.

And the bill would allow one year for payment of the deferral and interest when termination occurs because the property ceases to be a homestead or because the homeowner chooses to no longer participate.

All three bills were referred without recommendation to the full Taxes Committee.

## Property tax reform

Homeowners and renters would have a choice in the way they calculate their property tax refunds that could bring them larger returns, under a bill advancing in the House.

**HF3462**, sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), was discussed Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee. The goal of her bill is to remove the unlimited nature of the present property tax system.

"There ought to be a limit to people's property taxes. Tie it to what their income is," Greiling said.

The present property tax refund system has a cap of \$480 for homeowners and \$1,120 for renters.

Greiling's bill would eliminate those caps and place a limit on the percentage of one's income that can be collected in property taxes.

Under Greiling's bill, taxpayers could use either a new method of computation or the current formula, whichever would give them the higher refund.

Greiling's alternative formula would refund the full amount of tax over a percentage of income ranging from 2 percent to 6 percent. The formula would be the same for homeowners and renters. And there would be an adjustment for inflation in the year 2000.

A representative of the Minnesota Senior Federation's Tax Committee said that more than 264,000 Minnesota homeowners would benefit from the bill.

According to an estimate from the Department of Revenue, Greiling's bill could cost the state approximately \$123 million in fiscal year 2000 and approximately \$134 million in fiscal year 2001.

The bill moves to the full committee without recommendation.

## Tax message



Bev Decker, *left*, Shoreview, and Jon Weber, Minneapolis, have a message for state legislators. They brought their signs and feelings to a Feb. 23 rally on the steps of the Capitol in support of permanent tax cuts.

## Tax breaks, rebates, reform

The governor's tax initiative for this session includes property tax rebates and reform, and a break for commercial and industrial property and apartment buildings.

**HF2604** would "continue to decrease the state's dependence on property taxes," said bill sponsor Rep. Bill Macklin (R-Lakeville) during a Feb. 25 hearing of the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The bill would give a rebate to homeowners and renters equal to 20 percent of their property taxes paid in 1998. The rebate would be allowed as a refundable income tax credit to be claimed on the 1998 income tax return, filed in 1999. There would be no maximum rebate.

The bill would transfer \$500 million to the property tax reform account for payment of the rebates.

Macklin's bill also would decrease the property tax rate on houses valued at more than \$75,000 from 1.85 percent to 1.75 percent in payable 1999, then to 1.7 percent thereafter.

The tax rate for commercial/industrial and utility property worth up to \$150,000 would be reduced to from 2.7 percent to 2.6 percent in 1999, then to 2.5 percent thereafter.

The tax rate for apartment buildings with

four units or more would decrease from 2.9 percent to 2.65 percent in 1999, then 2.5 percent thereafter.

The tax rate on a single-unit rental property worth less than \$75,000 would go from 1.9 to 1.5 percent in 1999, then to 1.25 percent thereafter. The tax rate on properties worth more than \$75,000 would go from 2.1 percent to 1.75 percent for 1999, then to 1.7 percent thereafter.

The bill was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

## Property tax reduction

A reduction in property taxes for homes valued at more than \$75,000 has been proposed in the House Taxes Committee.

**HF3491**, sponsored by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), would reduce the tax on a property worth \$75,000 or more to 1.75 percent from 1.85 percent. Property valued up to \$75,000 will still be taxed at 1 percent.

The bill, which was discussed Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the Taxes Committee, was referred to the full committee without recommendation.

## Soaring market values

When inflation or other factors push up the value of a home faster than the homeowner's salary rises, it can be very difficult for the homeowner to pay the higher property taxes.

Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsors a bill (**HF3720**) that would try to address that problem.

"This is real property tax reform," he said, during a Feb. 23 meeting of the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

Under the bill, the market value for property tax purposes for taxes payable in 1999 could not be greater than the home's taxable market value, plus the amount determined by multiplying the taxable market value by the rate of inflation for the 12-month period ending Oct. 31, 1996.

After the year 2000, market value increase in determining property taxes would be limited to the lesser of 5 percent of the market value in the previous year or the rate of inflation.

"As market values continue to soar, the burden this places on all property owners is tough," Milbert said. "What can you do to make this a fair tax again? It is something that you can do this year."

Changes or improvements to the property made by the owner would be exempted.



Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls), who chairs the Taxes Committee, said she has concerns that Milbert's bill might freeze property taxes inequities in place.

The bill was referred to the full committee without recommendation.

## Duplex, triplex owners' taxes

With a projected \$1.3 billion surplus in state coffers and proposals to give new property tax rebates to homeowners and renters, there has been little talk about the specific concerns of duplex or triplex owners — until now.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) is sponsoring **HF2989**, which would have the effect of reducing the property taxes paid by owners of duplexes and triplexes that are rented to others.

The bill was discussed Feb. 24 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The proposal would move two- and three-unit non-homestead residential properties (duplexes and triplexes that are not owner-occupied) to a different class in tax codes.

Under the bill, the properties would be taxed at 1.9 percent of the first \$75,000 in market value and 2.1 percent on the excess over \$75,000. Currently, owners of those properties pay 2.1 percent regardless of the market value.

Cities would still have the option of denying the lower class designation if the property was not in compliance with the existing housing codes.

According to an analysis from the Department of Revenue, the bill would cost the state \$200,000 in the first year.

The bill was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

## Reducing property tax rates

Two bills considered by a House panel would reduce property tax rates for apartment properties and some businesses, as well as reducing the general education levy.

**HF3671**, sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), and **HF3672**, sponsored by Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), were heard Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The major provisions of the two bills are identical.

During the tax division hearing, McElroy said that at a time of a budget surplus, the state should take a proactive stance on business- and education-related tax issues.

The bills would decrease the tax rate for apartment properties with four or more units from 2.9 to 2.5 percent and reduce the tax rate on single-unit residential properties valued at more than \$75,000 from 1.9 percent to 1.25 percent. Duplexes and triplexes would receive similar reductions.

The tax rates for commercial and industrial property valued at more than \$150,000 would go from 4 percent to 3.5 percent, McElroy said.

The bills call for a total of \$100 million to be appropriated to reduce the general educational tax rate and to increase the maximum education homestead credit from \$225 to \$400.

According to an analysis from the Department of Revenue, the bills would cost the state approximately \$400 million over the next two years.

The bills were referred to the full committee without recommendation.

## Incentive to rehabilitate

Central city areas often contain dilapidated residential properties, and there is little incentive for someone to buy the properties and fix them up.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) is trying to provide that incentive with **HF3778**, a bill that would provide a 10-year property tax exemption for "marginal homes in marginal neighborhoods" that are refurbished by the owner.

The bill was heard Feb. 25 in the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

"What you're appealing to is the urban pioneer," Wagenius said.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) supported the bill. He said there are a lot of homes in his district priced at below \$20,000, and that \$40,000 would fix them up.

To qualify, a home would have to be in need repairs of at least \$20,000 and be an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling in a neighborhood where the median value of the home is less than the median value of the entire city. Only homes in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth would be eligible.

The bill was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

## Raising renter's credit

Some have called the Minnesota property tax system regressive and burdensome for homeowners. If that's true, the system must also be a burden on renters, who pay property taxes indirectly through their rent and generally earn less than homeowners.

That's the philosophy of Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul). Dawkins is sponsoring **HF3657**, which would raise the renter's property tax refund, or "renter's credit," from 18 to 20 percent of gross rent paid.

His bill and another similar proposal were discussed Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

"The renter's credit is the only method we have to provide a credit to tenants," Dawkins said. "As we move down the road and reform property taxes, we can't leave renters behind. This is a credibility issue."

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) also supported the bill.

"I would say 18 percent is very much on the low side and should be raised," he said.

If passed, the bill would cost the state an estimated \$15.8 million in fiscal year 2000 and \$16.2 million in fiscal year 2001.

**HF3595**, sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), would similarly increase the tax refund to 20 percent of rent paid.

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

## Videos on property tax

Elected officials, administrators, journalists, and many taxpayers often struggle to understand the state's property tax system, sometimes without success.

So officials of the Association of Minnesota Counties think it might be a good idea to have some training programs for the public, and that's what they have suggested.

The organization is backing a bill (**HF3739**), sponsored by Rep. Gail Skare (DFL-Bemidji), that asks for \$50,000 from the state to produce videos to educate the public about the property tax system and how it works.

The Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee discussed the bill Feb. 23.

"We hear how difficult it is to understand property tax and how it is calculated. I think we legislators don't understand it the way we should," Skare said.

There were some suggestions from the committee that the counties association should pay for the production itself, but Jim Mulder, speaking for the organization, said property taxes are a statewide concern.

Under the bill, the educational materials would be made available to the Department of Revenue and to each county government at no cost for distribution to local media and elsewhere.

The bill moves to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

## Property tax reform account

A bill awaiting consideration by the House Taxes Committee would call for funds from the state's property tax reform account to be used to reduce the levy for the Twin Cities' public transit system.

Current law lists several allowed uses for funds from the property tax reform account, including reducing property tax class rates, increasing the property tax refund, and increasing the state's share of education funding to cut reliance on local property taxes.

**HF2954**, sponsored by Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls), would stipulate that the top priority for use of property tax reform account funds would be to reduce the reliance on property taxes of the metropolitan transit system.

The bill was discussed Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the House Taxes Committee.

The bill would require that the levy for the Twin Cities transit provide a percentage of the overall budget for the system equal to the average property tax reliance for other transit systems around the state.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), a co-sponsor of the bill, urged lawmakers to support the plan.

"If we don't figure out some other way to pay for this, we may end up with a small [property] tax increase in many parts of the metro area," he said.

The bill was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

## Income tax reduction

A bill that would decrease income taxes for those making up to \$98,000 per year is headed to the House Taxes Committee.

**HF2900**, sponsored by Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), would create new income tax brackets and cut the rates paid by people in those brackets.

The bill was considered Feb. 23 by the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division of the Taxes Committee. The panel voted to send the bill to the full committee without recommendation.

The bill would decrease the tax rate paid by low- to moderate-income earners, including those making up to \$24,800 per year who now pay a rate of 6 percent. Krinkie's bill would create a new bracket for people earning up to \$40,000 and set a 5.5 percent rate for such people.

Income taxes in a new middle bracket (\$40,001 to \$98,000 per year) would be 7 percent. Most people in that range currently pay 8 percent.

Those with an annual income of more than \$98,000 would continue to be taxed at 8.5 percent.

"That money does not belong to the government, it belongs to the citizens," said David Strom, legislative director for the Taxpayers League of Minnesota. "It's obvious Minnesota taxpayers are overtaxed. I think it [the bill] provides relief for citizens."

The bill also would put any surplus in state coffers beyond the \$522 million budget reserve into the general fund. Currently, 60 percent of the remaining surplus goes to a property tax reform account and 40 percent goes to the general fund.

Rep. Edgar Olson (DFL-Fosston), who chairs the tax division, urged caution when considering a permanent tax cut.

"If the economy goes in the dumpster, how long will it be before we are back at the doorstep?" Olson asked.

## New hockey arena

St. Paul will build a new downtown hockey arena with or without state help, but the city would not have to pay sales tax on the construction materials for the project, under a bill advancing in the House.

**HF3556**, sponsored by Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), asks for a waiver on sales tax in building the new arena at the city-owned RiverCentre complex that will house the Minnesota Wild, the new National Hockey League franchise in Minnesota.

The bill was discussed Feb. 24 by the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

With the waiver, the state would lose close to \$3 million in tax funds, according to an analysis from the Department of Revenue.

The arena will cost \$130 million, said Joe Reid, director of finance for the city of St. Paul. The city has asked for \$65 million in state bonds to help pay for the new arena, Reid said.

The proposal for state construction funds is now being considered by the House Capital Investment Committee. If no state help is forthcoming, the city has committed to building the arena itself with city-backed bonds. The Wild is to begin play in September 2000.

The waiver of sales tax proposal was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation.

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

## TV commercials and sales tax

The production of television commercials is the backbone of Minnesota's film industry, yet that industry is subject to a 6.5 percent sales tax, said Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul).

Milbert is sponsoring a bill (**HF3705**) that would exempt those associated with making television commercials, including the advertising agency, the film production company, the edit house, and other vendors, from paying sales tax on their cost of materials and on the sale of the product.

The bill was heard Feb. 24 by the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

Advertising agencies must pay sales or use tax on materials incorporated into the production of a piece of advertising. When the agency uses a film production company, an edit house, or other vendor, the product the vendor sells to the agency is taxable.

"The bill before you will help Minnesota compete," said Ruth Johnston, executive producer for James Productions. "We feel this legislation is vital."

"We're at the top end [on sales taxes]," Milbert said, so producers would be likely to go to another state to make their commercial. "Unless we do something, the problem is likely to get worse."

The bill, which was referred to the full Taxes Committee without recommendation, is supported by the Minnesota Film Board, he said.

## Help for employee housing

Employers who help provide financial help for their employees' housing could get a tax break, under a bill being considered in the House.

**HF2369**, sponsored by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), would give employers a 50 percent tax credit for their cash contributions to employee housing. The bill was heard Feb. 24 in the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

"There is a serious shortage of housing . . . where I live, and any affordable housing is rare and an obstacle to future economic development," Kubly said.

Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls) had a few reservations because those businesses that get the tax credit might have to pay more on their federal taxes.

"If we can generate \$10 million in tax credits, we are making a charitable contribution to the federal government of about three-and-a-half million dollars," she said.

The bill was referred to the full committee without recommendation.



## TRANSPORTATION

### Transportation funding

Legislators hope to have more state troopers on the road — and more dollars than the governor requested for state road construction — under the \$52.5 million transportation funding bill passed Feb. 26 by the House. The vote was 121-7.

The House Transportation and Transit Committee's bill would accelerate the governor's request of \$60 million over the next three fiscal years for state road construction.

**HF3057**, sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would appropriate \$40 million from the trunk highway fund for road construction in fiscal year 1999. Legislators project that money will be available to adequately fund at or above the governor's proposed level of \$20 million in both 2000 and 2001. Lawmakers are basing that assumption on the current trunk highway balance, plus anticipated surpluses in federal funds and state gas and registration tax dollars.

The bill also would appropriate \$6.8 million from the trunk highway fund in fiscal year 1999 for road design and construction engineering. That is twice the governor's request. The engineering appropriation is calculated by a formula; doubling the construction appropriation in the bill forced legislators to double the engineering request.

### More troopers

The governor has requested that 47 new state patrol officers and support staff be added at a cost of \$5.25 million. The House bill calls for 40 additional troopers and support staff at a cost of \$4.55 million.

Currently, there are 488 state troopers on the road in Minnesota, and another 39 in training. The current allowable full-funded complement is 535.

In 1996, the governor sought funds to hire 46 additional state troopers to be included in the Department of Public Safety budget. But the 1996 law that provided \$60.1 million in transportation spending had only enough money to hire four state patrol dispatchers.

An amendment removed a provision from this year's bill that called for funding for the state patrol to come from the general fund, rather than from the state trunk highway fund, which is used for most highway expansion, construction and repair. The shift of the highway patrol to the general fund would have left an additional \$41 million available in the trunk highway fund for fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

Some legislators had hoped shifting the state patrol to the general fund would help lay the groundwork for a new transportation fund that could be used for highways, bridges, and other public transit, such as commuter rail or light rail.

Lieder said the only effect this change would have had on the state patrol would be its source of funding. All appropriations for the state patrol, with the exception of motor vehicle inspection and enforcement activities, would have come from the general fund, under the original bill.

In line with the governor's request, the bill also would appropriate \$694,000 from the trunk highway fund to replace and maintain equipment in the statewide emergency communications system of the state patrol.

The bill also includes \$294,000 for additional Capitol complex security staff, but unlike the governor's plan, the language provides the state patrol with the option of using some of the funds for increased helicopter patrols.

### Retiring revisor



Revisor of Statutes Harry Walsh holds a House resolution in his honor as members acknowledge his long career during retirement ceremonies on the House floor Feb. 26. Walsh started his career 32 years ago as a special assistant to the revisor and then spent 19 years as deputy revisor before becoming revisor of statutes in 1992.

### Registration task force

Under the bill, \$50,000 would be appropriated from the highway user tax distribution fund to the commissioner of public safety, who would designate four members of the state highway patrol to investigate the incidence of vehicle registration evasion and dealer fraud.

It is believed countless Minnesota residents register their motor vehicles in neighboring states, which have lower licensing fees. Estimates indicate this costs the state millions annually, even though it is a gross misdemeanor for vehicles owned and operated in Minnesota to be registered in another state.

Vehicle registration revenue goes into the highway user tax distribution fund, from where it is distributed to the trunk highway fund, county state-aid highway fund, and municipal state-aid street fund.

The study, to be conducted by the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Department of Public Safety, would evaluate the cost-effectiveness and benefit of exchanging tax, vehicle registration, and driver's license information with other states. It would also study any advantages for the state to use a private vendor database to track vehicle registration.

It has been proposed that a database could be designed in cooperation with the automobile insurance industry or other vendors, which could also help enforce Minnesota's mandatory auto insurance laws.

The final report of the task force would be presented to the governor and the Legislature by Feb. 15, 1999.

### Blue lights

The commissioner of public safety would be required to study the desirability of allowing certain emergency vehicles to display flashing blue lights in both the front and back of the vehicles, under the bill.

The study would be done within the current Department of Public Safety budget.

Minnesota is one of two states that does not allow blue lights in the front of its emergency vehicles. Currently, all transportation department sanding and plowing vehicles use blue lights.

The state highway patrol has expressed a desire to study the use of blue lights in the front of only emergency vehicles, such as law enforcement, fire safety vehicles, and ambulances. The study would investigate the feasibility and cost of switching lights on road equipment vehicles to another color, such as amber or orange.

Results would be presented to the governor and the Legislature no later than Jan. 15, 1999.



## Spending goals

The bill would set spending goals for transportation and transit, areas that many lawmakers believe have traditionally been underfunded. The spending goals would not be binding, but they would set a direction for state policy.

The bill proposes that \$500 million ought to be spent annually from the trunk highway fund for construction and reconstruction of state highways.

Public transit is also heavily considered. The bill would set a goal of not less than \$15 million for capital improvements and \$17 million for operating assistance on public transit outside the seven-county metropolitan area.

The total state spending goal per year on public transit in the seven-county metropolitan area would be set at not less than \$32 million for capital improvements and \$60 million for operating assistance.

The bill also proposes that the commissioner of transportation submit in the department's biennial budget a plan of recommended expenditures from the general fund for trunk highway and public transit purposes. The plan would be developed through existing area transportation partnerships.

## A new way to pay for roads?

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Newport) believes the system in place for building, maintaining, and improving roads and for providing public transit in Minnesota is not working and needs to be replaced.

She has introduced a bill (**HF3265**) that would put a constitutional amendment on the ballot, asking voters if they want to provide a new way to pay for roads.

The bill was tabled Feb. 26 by the House Taxes Committee, but it is expected to come up for consideration later this session.

"Right now we have a transportation funding system that simply is not working for the metro area or the rest of the state. There are clearly needs around the state that are not being met," Marko said.

That system takes money from gas taxes and license fees and puts it into a dedicated transportation fund. A total of 62 percent of that money goes to the state and 29 percent goes to counties. Of that money spent on transportation, approximately 35 percent goes to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the rest goes to Greater Minnesota projects.

"Consequently the system is unbalanced because rural highways are competing with metro-area highways," Marko said.

One prediction is that the metropolitan area will need \$6 billion in new roads in the

next 25 years. And there are also concerns about funding public transit projects.

Marko's bill would propose the constitutional amendment to go on the ballot this November. If approved, a new transportation fund would be established using money from motor vehicle license and 20 percent of the money from the motor vehicle sales tax.

Money from the new fund would be spent to match federal aid to state and local government for highways and transit.

That might allow the state to get more money under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which ties federal money to state funds. The goal of the federal program is to preserve current transportation systems and encourage innovative ones. That could include light rail transit.

## Sirens and flashing red lights

A bill headed for the governor's desk would require all medical emergency vehicles to sound an audible signal and activate red emergency lights while responding to emergencies.

Last session, legislation to exempt law enforcement officers from the requirement to sound audible signals while responding to emergency calls included language that also exempted emergency medical vehicles. Law enforcement officers wanted an exemption from sounding their sirens in response situations that would telegraph their arrival, such as when responding to silent burglar alarms, and jeopardize police investigations.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), sponsor of the current House bill, said that after the 1997 law was approved, insurance carriers began telling owners of emergency medical vehicles that rates for coverage would rise if both audible and visible signals were not used while responding to emergencies.

The bill (**HF2576/SF2028\***) passed in the House Feb. 23 on a vote of 132-0.

Juhnke said legislators want to reinstate language in statute that would require emergency medical vehicles to sound alarms while responding to emergencies because it is safer for ambulance drivers, other motorists, and pedestrians to have the audible warning in addition to flashing red lights.

Medical vehicles that are transporting patients in non-emergency situations would not be required to sound their alarms.

## 'Vanity' plates for pickups

Drivers of one-ton capacity pickup trucks would be able to get personalized license plates under a bill moving to the Senate.

**HF2654** passed the House Feb. 23 on a vote

of 130-0. The measure would allow pickup trucks with a manufacturer's rating of one-ton capacity or less to bear "vanity" plates.

Under present law, the maximum for pickup trucks to be eligible for these plates is 9,000 pounds gross weight. Pickup trucks of up to three-quarter ton capacity qualify.

Purchasers would have to pay a one-time fee of \$100 in addition to the registration tax on the vehicle, under the legislation sponsored by Rep. Mark Mahon (DFL-Bloomington).

The bill also would expand eligibility for special license plates for firefighters. The plates carry no special privileges, but they designate the driver as a firefighter. The bill would simply allow retired firefighters to have the special plates.

## Minnesota State Agencies

Agriculture .....	297-2200
Commerce .....	296-4026
Corrections .....	642-0200
Children, Families and Learning .....	296-6104
Economic Security .....	296-3644
Employee Relations .....	297-1184
Job Information .....	296-2616
Finance .....	296-5900
Gaming	
Gambling Control Division ...	639-4000
MN State Lottery Division .....	635-8100
Toll Free .....	1-800-475-4000
MN Racing Commission .....	341-7555
Health .....	623-5000
Human Rights .....	296-5663
Toll Free .....	1-800-657-3704
Human Services .....	296-6117
Labor and Industry .....	296-6107
Military Affairs .....	282-4662
Natural Resources .....	296-6157
Public Safety .....	296-6642
Driver and Vehicle Services ...	296-6911
Fire Marshal .....	643-3080
Liquor Control .....	296-6159
State Patrol .....	297-3935
Pollution Control Agency .....	296-6300
Public Service .....	296-5120
Revenue	
Taxpayer Assistance .....	296-3781
Toll Free .....	1-800-652-9094
Trade and	
Economic Development .....	297-1291
Office of Tourism .....	296-5029
Transportation .....	296-3000
Veterans Affairs .....	296-2562
State Information .....	296-6013
House Information .....	296-2146
Senate Information .....	296-0504

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bonding bill being assembled by the House Capital Investment Committee.

The proposed academies would be geared to high school students who are unsuccessfully bounced between foster families or those whose parents feel a residential environment could help get their child on the right track.

#### Policy changes

Kelso's bill also contains several education policy changes that have no costs or require only minimal funding. Most of those plans reflect lawmakers' stated desire to return more control to the districts.

One such provision would repeal the current cap on school superintendents' salaries by removing school districts from the list of groups that are prohibited from paying employees more than 95 percent of the governor's salary.

Several metropolitan-area districts have had difficulty recruiting and retaining top-notch superintendents because of the state's relatively low pay scale for those positions.

Another plan would allow districts to start school before Labor Day. The tourism industry has been opposed to that change because of potential lost revenue from a shortened summer travel season.

Also, the bill would allow districts to require certain students to attend summer school. Districts that elect to do so would set their own criteria.

The omnibus bill also would prohibit schools from charging home-schooled students more than public school students to participate in extra-curricular activities.

That provision was originally proposed in another bill (HF2836), sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), that was offered in response to complaints from home-schooling parents who said high price tags kept their children effectively out of many school district activities. 🐼

## Sanford statue finds place at U.S. Capitol

*It's a fact!*

You could say that 19th-century Minnesota educator Maria L. Sanford is one of the six most honored women in America.

A statue commemorating the education and human rights pioneer is one of 96 bronze and marble works that adorn Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. All 50 states were invited to donate two memorials of notable citizens for the collection, but only six states—including Minnesota—chose to honor women.

In fact, Sanford was not even a native of Minnesota, but when she died in 1920 after almost 30 years as a professor of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota, she was remembered as "the best loved woman of the North Star State." She had spent the years since 1880 in Minnesota crusading for the rights of women and racial minorities.

Although her peers had long recognized her contributions, it wasn't until 22 years after her death that the Maria L. Sanford statue was proposed to the Minnesota Legislature. It then took another 16 years before the statue was approved, funded, commissioned, completed, and unveiled in Washington, D.C.

It wasn't entirely due to lawmakers' procrastination that the process dragged out so long—state officials in the 1940s stipulated that the Washington dedication should take place in 1958, the

year Minnesota marked one hundred years of statehood.

The first bill dealing with Sanford's statue was passed during the 1943 legislative session.

Spearheaded by the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs, the legislation reserved the remaining Minnesota-designated spot at Washington's Statuary Hall for a statue of Sanford. Minnesota had previously donated a statue of Henry Rice, one of the state's first two U.S. senators.

But the 1943 law merely reserved the space for the Sanford statue; the measure didn't provide any funding for the project. So for the next four years, a Maria L. Sanford Memorial Council tried unsuccessfully to gather funds.

A decade later, Sen. Elmer L. Anderson (a future Minnesota governor) and Rep. Leo Mosier sponsored a bill to include \$25,000 for the statue in the budget for the state's centennial celebration. Once the money was secured, a Maria L. Sanford committee, working under the state's Centennial Commission, had just over a year to select a sculptor, commission the statue, and organize the unveiling ceremony.

In November 1958, the bronze statue, sculpted by Evelyn Raymond of Minneapolis, was dedicated in Statuary Hall in front of an audience of 350.



Minnesota educator  
Maria L. Sanford

Photo from: *Acceptance of the Statue of Maria L. Sanford Presented by the State of Minnesota.*

## Frequently called numbers

### Secretary of the Senate

231 Capitol ..... 296-0271

Voice mail/order bills ..... 296-2343

### Chief Clerk of the House

211 Capitol ..... 296-2314

### Index, Senate

110 Capitol ..... 296-2887

### Index, House

211 Capitol ..... 296-6646

### Information, Senate

231 Capitol ..... 296-0504

### Information, House

175 State Office Building ..... 296-2146

Committee Hotline, Senate ... 296-8088

Committee Hotline, House .... 296-9283

### Sergeant at Arms, Senate

Senate Chamber ..... 296-7159/6-1119

### Sergeant at Arms, House

45 State Office Building ..... 296-4860

### Counsel and Research, Senate

G-17 Capitol ..... 296-4791

### Research, House

600 State Office Building ..... 296-6753

### Legislative Reference Library

645 State Office Building ..... 296-3398

### Revisor of Statutes

700 State Office Building ..... 296-2868

### Governor's Office

130 Capitol ..... 296-3391

### Attorney General's Office

102 Capitol ..... 296-6196

### Secretary of State's Office

180 State Office Building ..... 296-9208

### Capitol Security

B-4 Capitol ..... 296-6741

Emergency ..... 296-2100

TTY\*, Senate ..... 296-0250

Toll free ..... 1-888-234-1112

TTY\*, House ..... 296-9896

Toll free ..... 1-800-657-3550



bus spending bill.

Here's a look at some of the major provisions of the bill.

An amended version of Rep. Doug Peterson's (DFL-Madison) so-called "living with livestock" bill (**HF3441**) has been rolled into the omnibus bill.

"Basically, during this whole debate, I've been trying to move toward the middle ground," Peterson said. "I think the position is one of common sense."

Most notably, the bill would impose a moratorium on new construction or expansion of feedlots at the level of 750 animal units. (An animal unit is an indication of waste produced by certain species. One animal unit is equal to one steer or heifer, 2.5 hogs over 55 pounds, or 100 chickens.)

The bill would prohibit the issuance of permits to construct or expand clay, earthen, or flexible membrane (plastic-lined) waste lagoons. Dairy operations under 750 units would be exempt from this provision.

After March 1, 2000, those who commercially manage and apply animal wastes would have to hold valid animal waste technician licenses issued by the Department of Agriculture. Most family farmers would be exempt from the provision.

The bill would clarify the power of a county to adopt feedlot ordinances that are more stringent than those of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA).

Under the bill, the PCA would be authorized to deny permits to feedlot operators who have had environmental records in other states.

The bill also would mandate a generic environmental impact statement to examine the long-term effects of the livestock industry on the economy and environment in Minnesota.

Portions of the proposed "personal watercraft courtesy and safety act" backed by Rep.



The dairy industry in Minnesota generates \$3.5 billion in annual gross revenues and employs about 39,000 people. Under the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance omnibus bill, Minnesota dairy farmers would receive \$100,000 to assist with the costs of litigation against the federal government to reform the “discriminatory” milk pricing system.

Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) also have been folded into the environment finance omnibus bill.

In order to track with the Senate, the policy part of Hasskamp's plan (**HF1351**) was separated from the financial considerations (**HF1690**).

Hasskamp's policy bill that includes a personal watercraft ban on lakes of 200 acres or less awaits a debate on the House floor, but the Senate companion policy bill is languishing in committee.

The personal watercraft language that has been included in Osthoff's finance bill would require that personal watercraft operators pass a mandatory safety course and pay a \$10 fee for a certificate. The bill also would establish a \$30 fee for three-year personal watercraft licenses. The fees would be earmarked for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for personal watercraft law enforcement costs.

The bill would mandate a DNR study on the impact of personal watercraft on loons and loon nesting areas.

Under another provision of the bill, no snowmobile with a track equipped with metal studs could be operated on public lands, roads, or trails.

Although many claim that studs make for safer riding, proponents of the measure say paved snowmobile trails are being destroyed

by studs.

During a Feb. 25 hearing, Ron Nargang, deputy commissioner of the DNR, said the department supports the ban.

There are 275,000 registered snowmobiles in Minnesota, Nargang said. Of those sleds, 25 percent to 30 percent have studs.

Rep. Thomas Bakk (DFL-Cook) objected to the proposed ban.

"It's punitive to those responsible riders who have spent \$500 [for the studs]," he said. "They use studs for safety."

Osthoff, who chairs the finance committee, disagreed.

"You know who this is punitive to — those jerks who are tearing up our trails," he said.

The city of Minneapolis was born on the banks of the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls. Early citizens of the city harnessed the falls' tremendous water power for industrial purposes.

A provision of the omnibus bill would explore the possibility of harnessing the falls' water power for recreational pursuits.

Under the bill, the DNR would receive \$100,000 to conduct engineering and hydraulic research into the possible development of a whitewater park for kayaking, rafting, and canoeing at St. Anthony Falls.

*Continued on page 21*



*Continued from page 20*

The research also would be required to address economic and environmental impacts and public safety concerns.

The Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee heard testimony on the plan Feb. 23.

The site would be on the east bank of the Mississippi River, just upstream from the Interstate 35W bridge near the Stone Arch Bridge.

The park would consist of a man-made channel with controllable water flow for amateur enthusiasts and international competitors alike.

It would be designed to connect with existing bike and walking paths along the Mississippi.

"The view from the Stone Arch Bridge would be excellent," Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said. "It's the one place we can get close to the river."

Similar water parks exist in Indiana and overseas in France, Spain, Germany, and Czechoslovakia, Bill Tilton, of the Mississippi Whitewater Park Development Corporation, told the panel.

"People are realizing the rivers aren't just for hydroelectric power," Tilton said. "Our rallying cry is 'Bring back St. Anthony Falls.'"

#### Tornado damage

Five funnel clouds tore through 5,300 acres of sparsely populated forests in Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, and Crow Wing counties on Sept. 18, 1997, leaving a path of destruction 25 miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide.

Rep. Stephen G. Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) described the ravaged forests to the committee Feb. 23.

One life and more than \$1 million in timber were lost, Wenzel said.

"I, in my lifetime, have never seen such calamity and damage," he said. "It's absolutely astounding that something this damaging could get so little attention."

The DNR would receive \$75,000 for grants to assist landowners with reforestation efforts, under the bill.

#### Gypsy moths

The bill calls for the Department of Agriculture's gypsy moth trapping and eradication program to be allocated \$265,000.

The leaf-eating insects have already infested Michigan and Wisconsin and are slowly marching westward.

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

The department's lab is developing biologi-



**Research into the cause of deformities found in frogs like these would receive an infusion of fresh cash under the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance omnibus bill.**

cal 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.

#### Helping hog farmers

Market Champ Inc., a nonprofit corporation that transfers high-quality genetic material from the University of Minnesota to family farmers around the state, would receive \$250,000.

Majority Leader Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) introduced the program to the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee Feb. 25.

"Some of the technology of genetics is not readily available to family farmers," Winter said.

As for the meat from genetically advanced hogs, "people say it tastes better," Winter said.

#### Helping dairy farmers

Minnesota dairy farmers are currently engaged in a lawsuit against the federal government (*Minnesota Milk Producers Association v. Glickman*) to bring about reform of the federal milk market pricing system.

The bill would give the farmers another \$100,000 in state money for the legal battle.

Low prices paid to farmers are driving them out of the dairy business. Minnesota loses an average of three dairy farms per day. "Our congressional delegation has not done its job and taken an interest in this issue," Wenzel said during a Feb. 23 hearing. "This is what I refer to as 'the quiet crisis.'"

Wenzel sponsored a House resolution last year that called for an end to a pricing system that is "profoundly unfair and discriminatory against Minnesota and Upper Midwest dairy producers."

Lee Johnston, of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association, said the lawsuit is an attempt to "level the playing field" so that Minnesota's dairy farmers can compete with other dairy regions in the country.

#### Deformed frogs

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency would receive \$375,000 for research into the cause of deformities found in frogs across the state.

Currently, researchers are speculating that groundwater contamination or possible ultraviolet radiation may be the cause of the deformities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also has begun to examine the issue.

"We had better find out what's causing this environmental degradation," Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth) said Jan. 26 during an Environment and Natural Resources Committee hearing. "Or else, we're next."

#### Minnesota Zoo shortfall

The Minnesota Zoological Gardens would receive \$500,000 for operating costs to make up for a serious shortfall in gate receipts last summer.


The Apple Valley zoo was forced to ask the Legislature for help after a string of bad luck, bad weather, and bad press, Kathryn Roberts, the zoo's director, said during a Jan. 28 hearing.

The bill would require the zoo to address its attendance forecasting methods to avoid similar budget problems in the future.

#### Living snow fences

The Board of Water and Soil Resources would receive \$100,000 to fund a voluntary program for landowners to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, and grass strips alongside roads in an effort to control drifting and blowing snow.

The money would be available through grants to soil and water conservation districts to enter into cost-sharing contracts with landowners.

The contracts could provide for annual payments to the landowners to cover land and maintenance costs. 

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# Bill Introductions

HF3779-HF3806

## Monday, Feb. 23

**HF3779—Jennings (DFL)**  
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections  
Public cemetery law clarified and reorganized.

**HF3780—Anderson, I. (DFL)**  
Environment, Natural Resources  
& Agriculture Finance  
Cross-country ski pass fees increased.

**HF3781—Orfield (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Mortgage and deed registration taxes apportioned for property tax relief and other county purposes.

**HF3782—Kubly (DFL)**  
Education  
Independent school districts Nos. 648, Danube; 654, Renville; 655, Sacred Heart; and 631, Belview, enhanced pairing cooperation and combination grants provided, and money appropriated.

**HF3783—Seifert (R)**  
Taxes  
Personal and dependent exemptions income tax subtraction provided.

**HF3784—Erhardt (R)**  
Taxes  
Estate taxes updated to conform with federal changes.

**HF3785—Kinkel (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Municipal-owned potato processing plant wastewater treatment facility property tax exemption provided.

**HF3786—Davids (R)**  
Taxes  
Postsecondary education tuition income tax deduction provided.

**HF3787—Stanek (R)**  
Transportation and Transit  
I-94 from Hemlock Lane to Highway No. 81 expanded.

**HF3788—Bettermann (R)**  
Health & Human Services  
Health-related licensing boards prohibited from investigating or disciplining regulated persons for professional opinions.

**HF3789—Winter (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Wind energy conversion systems sales tax exemption effective date extended.

**HF3790—Rukavina (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Carlton and St. Louis counties authorized to establish the Jensen-Nopeming special nursing home district, and levy provided.

**HF3791—Jennings (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Electric utility generation attached machinery tax exemption provided, temporary in-lieu tax and replacement surcharge established, local bonds guaranteed by the state, and money appropriated.

## Wednesday, Feb. 25

**HF3792—Trimble (DFL)**  
Capital Investment  
Trade and economic development bonding bill.

**HF3793—Mulder (R)**  
Transportation and Transit  
Minnesota River Basin Projects, Inc. area II road retention construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3794—Dawkins (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Low-income housing built by offenders construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

**HF3795—Erhardt (R)**  
Taxes  
Individual retirement account provisions updated to conform with federal net income tax changes.

**HF3796—Otremba, M. (DFL)**  
Environment & Natural Resources  
Todd County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

**HF3797—Carruthers (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Brooklyn Center, Richfield, and St. Louis Park apartment valuation exclusion qualifications and time extended.

## Thursday, Feb. 26

**HF3798—Carlson (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Earle Brown Heritage Center restoration materials sales tax exemption provided.

**HF3799—Osthoff (DFL)**  
Ways & Means  
Omnibus environment and natural resources, and agriculture supplemental appropriations bill.

**HF3800—Westfall (R)**  
Education  
Pelican Rapids Library upgrade funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3801—Long (DFL)**  
Taxes  
Minneapolis authorized to impose a tax on transit zone property.

**HF3802—Skare (DFL)**  
Taxes  
New farm machinery sales tax exemption provided.

**HF3803—Solberg (DFL)**  
Taxes  
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.

**HF3804—Peterson (DFL)**  
Taxes  
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.

**HF3805—Abrams (R)**  
Taxes  
Omnibus tax bill and money appropriated.

**HF3806—Trimble (DFL)**  
Ways & Means  
Omnibus economic development supplemental appropriations bill.

## Where to find information

**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.

# Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.

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## MONDAY, March 2

**8 a.m.**

### WAYS & MEANS

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

**Agenda:** K-12 education supplemental  
appropriation bills.

Additional bills may be added.

**10 a.m.**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** HF3701 (Kalis) Debt capacity  
forecasting, budget preparation, and reporting  
bond proceeds expenditures, bond sales, and  
capital improvements provisions modified.  
Discussion of "must do" bonding list.

**12 noon**

**The House meets in session.**

**After Session**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** To be announced.

## TUESDAY, March 3

**Precinct Caucuses. No House committee  
hearings or session.**

**9 a.m.**

### LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION

318 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Deanna Wiener

**Agenda:** Review of the program evaluation report  
on school trust lands.

## WEDNESDAY, March 4

**10 a.m.**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** To be announced.

### TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

**Agenda:** Staff presentation of draft of omnibus  
tax bill.  
(This meeting will continue after session in  
200 State Office Building if necessary.)

**12 noon**

**The House meets in session.**

**After Session**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** To be announced.

## THURSDAY, March 5

**8 a.m.**

### TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

**Agenda:** Public testimony on omnibus tax bill.  
(This meeting will continue after session in  
200 State Office Building if necessary.)

**10 a.m.**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** To be announced.

**12 noon**

**The House meets in session.**

**After Session**

### CAPITAL INVESTMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

**Agenda:** To be announced.

**2:30 p.m.**

**The House meets in session.**

## FRIDAY, March 6

**9 a.m.**

**The House meets in session.**

**After Session**

### TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

**Agenda:** Assemble committee bill.

## Constitutional Officers

### Governor

**Arne H. Carlson**

130 State Capitol

75 Constitution Ave.

St. Paul 55155 ..... 296-3391

### Lieutenant Governor

**Joanne E. Benson**

130 State Capitol

75 Constitution Ave.

St. Paul 55155 ..... 296-3391

### Attorney General

**Hubert H. Humphrey III**

102 State Capitol

75 Constitution Ave.

St. Paul 55155 ..... 296-6196

### Secretary of State

**Joan Anderson Growe**

180 State Office Building

100 Constitution Ave.

St. Paul 55155 ..... 296-2803

### State Auditor

**Judith H. Dutcher**

525 Park St., Suite 400

St. Paul 55103 ..... 296-2551

### State Treasurer

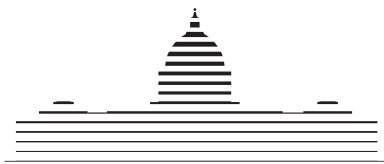
**Michael A. McGrath**

303 Administration Building

50 Sherburne Ave.

St. Paul 55155 ..... 296-7091





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PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1298

Speaker of the House: Phil Carruthers  
Majority Leader: Ted Winter  
Minority Leader: Steve Sviggum

## MINNESOTA INDEX

### The state of state buildings

Buildings owned by state agencies and higher education institutions .....	4,800
Total square feet of space, in millions .....	73
Buildings' replacement value, in billions .....	\$7
Maximum estimated cost of deferred maintenance to state-owned buildings, in millions .....	\$600
On a 100-point scale (0 = poor, 50 = fair, 100 = good), average rating	
of buildings 0 to 10 years old .....	95
41 to 50 years old .....	80
Over 90 years old .....	66
Square feet of space in University of Minnesota buildings, in millions .....	26.0
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) buildings .....	22.4
Department of Corrections buildings .....	4.8
U of M maintenance and renovation spending per square foot, 1997 .....	\$3.56
Department of Corrections .....	\$2.69
MnSCU .....	\$1.85
Average age of Department of Corrections buildings, in years .....	53
U of M buildings .....	38
MnSCU buildings .....	24
Department of Transportation buildings .....	22
Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board buildings .....	13
Percent of state-owned buildings rated in good overall condition .....	42
Percent of buildings rated poor for at least one of five primary building components (exteriors, roofs, mechanical systems, electrical systems, and interiors) .....	18
Percent of buildings with roofs rated poor .....	10
Percent of buildings with electrical systems rated poor .....	2
Estimated cost to bring state buildings to modern standards for accessibility, air conditioning, ventilation, and other factors, in billions .....	\$2
Square feet of space in buildings leased by the state, in millions .....	3.5
Number of commercial leases .....	629
Annual rent paid, in millions .....	\$48
Percent of leased space located within St. Paul .....	70

Source: *State Building Maintenance*, February 1998, Office of the Legislative Auditor.

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