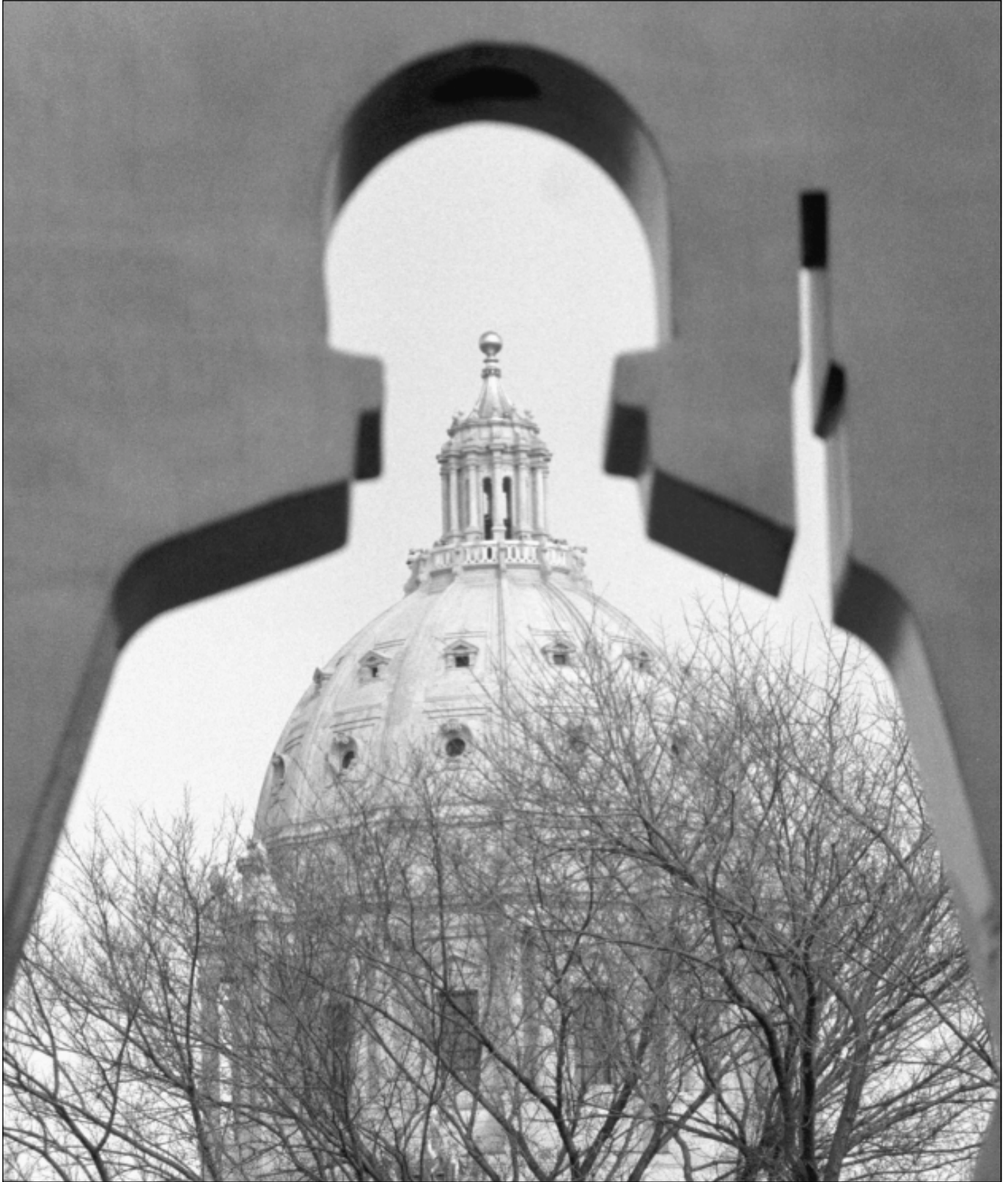


SESSION WEEKLY

A Nonpartisan Publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ February 26, 1999 ♦ Volume 16, Number 8



Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. During the 1999-2000 Legislative Session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and upcoming committee meeting schedules, and provides other information. The publication is a service of the Minnesota House. No fee.

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

Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled, 20% post-consumer content.



SESSION WEEKLY

Minnesota House of Representatives • February 26, 1999 • Volume 16, Number 8

Reflections

There is something to be said for the adage "history repeats itself."

So far, 1148 House bills have been filed since opening day of the 81st Legislature. This time 10 years ago, close to the same number were in the hopper.

Of this year's just-introduced bills, many bear similarities to others filed within the past decade. Some would require major changes in existing laws or repeal them altogether, while others seek a refinement in state statute.

Some examples are proposals dealing with ethanol development and promotion, elk breeding, firearm usage, school breakfasts, and even the anointing of a reptile — the Blanding's turtle — to join ranks as a state symbol.

And some bills that don't pass in one session may get reintroduced during the next biennium. Three proposals that crop up repeatedly seek to enact initiative and referendum, place term limits on public offices, or make the Legislature unicameral (one body).

But the Capitol isn't the only place where history repeats itself. In downtown St. Paul on Feb. 20, for example, the whistle of the ill-fated Titanic was blown for the first time since the ship sank during its maiden voyage in 1912. The whistle appears in an exhibit with other artifacts rescued from the ocean depths.

This past week, the Legislature introduced some innovative concepts and also tweaked a few old bills to make them new again. Later, outside and high above the Capitol dome, two celestial planets also repeated history. Not since 1900 have the planets Venus and Jupiter aligned themselves so closely. This conjunction of planets was even closer together some 2,000 years ago, and is said to be the Christmas star seen then over Bethlehem.

On the national political scene, history will repeat itself, as expected, a person named George Bush campaigns for U.S. president, and another president's relative becomes a New York resident to run for the U.S. Senate from that state.

Government aside, within the past year, movies about World War II returned and were nominated for Academy Awards. Broadway featured revivals including "Twelfth Night" and the musicals "Oklahoma" and "Cabaret." A new and sleeker Volkswagen Beetle cruises the highways, and the old Rolling Stones are once again on tour!

Although musical trends often repeat themselves, noteworthy this year is the comeback of dancing to swing music now played by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy or listening to the singer from Squirrel Nut Zippers who sounds so hauntingly like the late great Billie Holiday.

And even though lawmakers this year are seeing proposals for funding items like windmills that generate electricity instead of pumping water, some things never change. Taxes, rebates, and education issues are still the hot topics in the Legislature. As history continues to repeat itself, everything old seems new again.

—LeClair Grier Lambert

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On the cover: The Korean War Veterans Memorial, located on the southern Capitol grounds, frames the Capitol's dome.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank

First Reading

Initiative and Referendum . . .

Plan would let voters have lawmaking powers

By Jon Fure

Some see it as giving power to the people, others see it as a distortion of representative democracy, and nobody disputes that it is a politically charged and controversial issue.

The power of initiative and referendum would give citizens direct authority to place on the ballot proposed changes in state law or in the Minnesota Constitution.

Under current law, only the Legislature can change laws or put a constitutional amendment question on the ballot, but a bill under consideration this year could give that right and others to Minnesota voters through a petition process.

Of course, such a change would require that an amendment to the constitution be approved by voters.

In three previous elections — 1913, 1915, and 1980 — Minnesota voters have failed to amend the constitution to allow for initiative and referendum. Each time, “yes” votes outnumbered “no” votes among the people who voted on the ballot question, but each measure failed because those who did not vote on the question counted as “no” votes.

This year’s proposal (**HF484**) would place a constitutional amendment on the ballot for the 2000 general election that would allow people to enact an initiative law, repeal an existing law, or put constitutional amendment questions on future ballots by filing a petition.

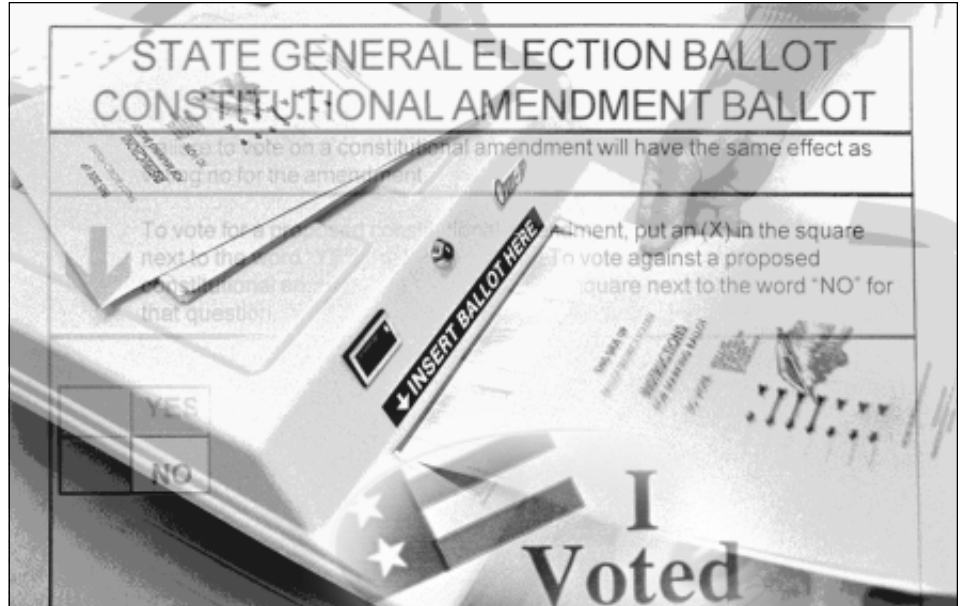
Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie), the bill’s sponsor, said other states have similar initiative and referendum laws, and he said those laws promote higher voter turnout and increased accountability of lawmakers.

The bill was approved Feb. 24 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Under Paulsen’s plan, an initiative would go on the ballot if a petition is signed by 5 percent of the number of voters who voted for governor in the previous election in three-quarters of the state’s congressional districts. And a constitutional amendment question would go on the ballot if a petition is signed by 8 percent of those voters.

The requirement regarding congressional districts is designed to make it difficult for an initiative to be placed on the ballot without support from different areas in the state.

Voter turnout is 5 percent to 7 percent



A bill advancing in the House calls for voters to decide on a constitutional amendment that would allow initiative and referendum in Minnesota.

Photo illustration by Tom Olmscheid

higher in states that have initiative and referendum, Paulsen said. And lawmakers are held more accountable because the laws allow voters to approve measures that have popular support but are unpopular with lawmakers, such as term-limit restrictions.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said he once lived in California and that initiative and referendum proposals in that state are heavily influenced by organizations that have the most money.

“The concept sounds wonderful, but I view this as a special interest bill,” he said.

But Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said many good laws have been passed through initiatives and referendums, including women’s suffrage and minimum wage laws.

“I look at it as empowering people,” he said.

One common argument against initiative and referendum laws is that many measures are too complex to be simply stated on an election ballot and voted on without the extensive information, deliberation, and debate that help legislators make decisions.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) said the cost of communicating ideas through mass media creates a distinct advantage to well-funded causes.

Similar concerns were expressed by Jane McWilliams, who testified against the bill on behalf of the League of Women Voters. The

organization studied the initiative and referendum issue about 15 years ago, she said, and nothing has happened since then to change the league’s position.

“(The League of Women Voters) believes that consideration and enactment of complex public policy is most appropriately done in the legislative arena,” she said.

McWilliams also said the league has concerns about the possibility of undue influence by groups that have a lot of money.

But well-funded causes already influence the Legislature, said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City). Contributions to the party caucuses may influence decisions made by lawmakers, Osskopp said.

Osskopp also said it seems ironic that the League of Women Voters doesn’t support initiative and referendum laws, considering that Susan B. Anthony traveled the country and gathered signatures that led to women being given the right to vote.

McWilliams said she had not considered that argument, but that she considers that giving women the right to vote is more basic law than those the Legislature deals with today.

Dane Waters, president and founder of the Initiative & Referendum Institute, said some form of initiative or referendum is available in 27 states. The main variations in those laws are

in the percentage of voters required to sign a petition, the requirements concerning what parts of the state those people must live in, and the amount of time allowed for gathering signatures.

The amount of money spent on campaigns for initiative or referendum also varies. Waters said one important question to ask is why it is necessary to spend so much money on the campaigns.

"The more difficult the process (to get something on the ballot), the more you limit it to those interests that have a lot of money," Waters said.

The process as proposed in Paulsen's bill seemed reasonable to several people who testified in support of the bill. Cedric Scofield, chair of the Reform Party's government affairs committee, said his party doesn't support the issue blindly, but it does support people's right to petition their government.

"This is a tool for good public policy," he said. "It's just a matter of getting it right."

Marc Asch, of the government watchdog group Common Cause, said his organization does not have a formal position, but that he believes campaign finance laws that apply to political candidates should also apply to ballot initiatives or referendums.

He said he has considerable experience gathering signatures as a volunteer, and the same challenges apply whether the cause is well-funded or not.

"You have to be able to deal with a lot of rejection," he said.

Steven Anderson, spokesman for another watchdog group called Citizens Lobby, said he has tried to encourage support for this type of legislation for about four years, but until now he has not seen a proposal receive a committee hearing.

He said he has consistently heard the same arguments against initiative and referendum laws, and he feels this bill addresses those arguments.

The bill now moves to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

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Failed hopes for a capital across the river



legislator from St. Paul.

Even harder to believe, the plan failed because Minneapolis representatives voted against it.

The brief debate surfaced in 1857 while Minnesota was still a territory on its way to statehood. St. Paul served as the territorial capital, and the city of Minneapolis consisted of two small towns, St. Anthony and Minneapolis, on opposite sides of St. Anthony Falls.

In 1849, the Territorial Legislature was charged by the U. S. Congress to designate a capital for the new state. Eight years later, when the Legislature finally got around to the task, St. Peter emerged as the most popular site.

In February 1857, a bill to move the capital from St. Paul to St. Peter passed the Council, the territorial version of the state Senate. The bill was then sent to the House for consideration.

Territorial Gov. Willis Gorman, who had actively campaigned for the St. Peter site, vowed to sign the bill after it was approved by the House.

But Rep. William Pitt Murray and others in the St. Paul House delegation didn't want to see their city lose the capital. On Feb. 17, 1857, sensing his cause was lost, Murray offered an amendment to the bill that would have deleted "St. Peter" and added "Nicollet Island, between Minneapolis and St. Anthony."

Murray probably made the effort in good faith, figuring that if St. Paul couldn't have the capital, it should at least remain in the neighborhood.

Maybe he thought it would be nice to have a grand Minnesota capitol building overlooking roaring St. Anthony Falls.

Whatever the reason, the amendment was rejected on a 19-18 vote. All five St. Paul representatives supported the amendment. The Minneapolis delegation, however, couldn't maintain a united front, and four

members voted against the amendment.

If those Minneapolis lawmakers had supported it, the bill would have gone back to the Council with the Nicollet Island amendment.

The original St. Peter bill passed the Council by only one vote, with two Minneapolis members voting for the bill. If the amended bill had gone back to the Council, it probably would have passed. And

Minneapolis would have been Minnesota's capital city.

These votes soon caught the eye of Minneapolitans, who at

a local meeting passed a resolution censuring their elected officials for voting against the amendment and for the St. Peter bill.

While the combined efforts of the Minneapolis and St. Paul delegations could not kill the plan to move the capital, the actions of Council member Joe Rolette did.

As chair of the Council's enrollment committee, Rolette was given the approved bill on Feb. 27 and decided to play a prank on the supporters of the St. Peter plan.

Rolette dropped the bill off at a bank, changed rooms at his hotel, and told the manager to tell everyone he had left town. When word got back to him of all the excitement he was causing, he decided to do some real damage. He remained in hiding — with the bill — until after the Council had adjourned, effectively killing the plan.

Gorman signed a copy of the bill that was forwarded to him, but a judge later ruled that bill to be invalid. Rolette, the hero of St. Paul, was given a torchlight parade through the city.

There were no parades in Minneapolis.

A second attempt to move the capital to Minneapolis occurred in 1881, the year the St. Paul statehouse burned to the ground. Following the disaster several Minneapolis lawmakers proposed building the new capitol building in the city's Loring Park.

But the plan fizzled out. Some historians speculate that the proposal failed because it didn't have the support of then-Gov. John Pillsbury. Pillsbury was from Minneapolis.



Territorial lawmakers briefly considered Nicollet Island in Minneapolis, pictured here in 1857, as a site for Minnesota's capital.

Photo from *Twin Cities/A Pictorial History*; Lucile M. Kane and Alan Ominsky; 1983.

Highlights



AGRICULTURE

Urban ag school proposed

Ask a Twin Cities teen-ager where milk comes from and you're likely to hear the reply, "from a carton."

And because many of the state's young people live in urban areas, that lack of apparent interest in farming has some educators concerned for the future of Minnesota's agriculture industry.

Their concern has initiated an interest in an urban agricultural high school near the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus and the state fairgrounds in Falcon Heights.

Supporters laid out an informal request Feb. 23 for \$350,000 before the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee to study all facets of the idea.

A bill that would provide funding for the planning phase of the school has been drafted but has yet to be introduced.

Dr. Roland L. Peterson, director of the Division of Agricultural Education at the U of M, said a visit to a similar school in Chicago convinced him there should be one in Minnesota.

"What I saw blew me away," he told lawmakers.

Peterson said he sees firsthand that there's a shortage of workers to fill spots in agricultural areas of business, education, and production.

"Rural Minnesota can't continue to provide all the workers for agriculture," he said.

Pat Plonski, executive director of the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council, said there are already 18 urban areas in the country that have similar schools. He said there is virtually no opportunity for the roughly 38,000 students in grades seven through twelve in Minneapolis and St. Paul to participate in agricultural education.

"This needs to change if Minnesota is to continue in its role as one of the greatest and most diversified agricultural states in this nation," Plonski said.

Supporters are eyeing the long-time headquarters of Harvest States Cooperative at the corner of Snelling and Larpentour avenues in Falcon Heights as the potential site for the school. The location is immediately adjacent to the fairgrounds and is just east of the



Dr. Roland L. Peterson, director of the Division of Agricultural Education at the University of Minnesota, speaks in favor of a proposal to fund an urban agriculture high school on the state fairgrounds in Falcon Heights.

U of M's St. Paul campus, which is home to the university's agriculture-related programs.

Plonski said organizers are looking at proposals to establish either a charter school or a magnet school with its own autonomous board. The institution would also have an advisory board, consisting of farmers and others interested in agriculture.

Part of the grant money would be used to conduct a market study to determine exactly how many students would be interested in attending the school.

However, Plonski said that if Chicago is a good indicator, the challenge will be finding slots in the school for all the students who wish to attend.

The school would also contain a museum dedicated to documenting the history of Harvest States, the history of the cooperative movement in Minnesota, and the history of agriculture in general.

The committee may consider a bill on the matter later this session.



BONDING

New scrutiny for local requests

A proposal to send local bonding requests to the Minnesota Department of Finance before they come before the Legislature won initial approval Feb. 23 in the House Capital Investment Committee.

Under the bill (HF726), the department would review each request and submit its recommendations to the Legislature for consideration in the bonding bill.

Rep. Jim Knobloch (R-St. Cloud), sponsor of the bill, said that his proposal would give the Legislature a tool to better evaluate the local bonding requests.

"It is a concern of mine that we are passing appropriations for these local governments without adequately weighing all the facts," he said.

The bill outlines a set of nine criteria that the finance department should use in evaluating each proposal. Those include consider whether each project:

- has additional local, private, and user financing;
- helps fulfill an important state mission;
- is of regional or statewide importance;
- will not require additional state funding for operation;
- does not expand the state's role into a new policy area;
- does not create serious inequities among local jurisdictions;
- has a credible plan for ongoing maintenance and funding throughout the life of the project;
- does not compete with other local facilities; and
- has resolutions of support from all governing bodies immediately affected by the project.

While the bill would encourage local governments to submit their requests to the department, it also states that neither the Legislature nor the governor would be bound by the recommendations of the department and that legislators and the governor could introduce projects for consideration that have not been reviewed by the department.

Knobloch's bill, which would apply to requests for the 2000 bonding bill, would require local governments to submit their proposals to the finance department by June 1, 1999.

David Strom, from the Taxpayers League of Minnesota, testified in support of the bill. He said that last year's \$1 billion bonding law shows that funding for local projects is out of control.

"This is a process that is badly in need of reform," he said.

Andy Kirn, from the Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility, also testified in support of the bill. He said that the people of Minnesota voted against "politics as usual" in the 1998 elections.

"Nothing represents politics as usual in this state more than the process for determining bonding proposals," he said.

But some legislators expressed concern that Knoblach's bill would take power away from the Legislature.

Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) said this bill would move power from the legislative branch to the executive branch. He said the proposal would put so-called "politics as usual" in the hands of bureaucrats who are not accountable to voters.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) said she is also concerned about the bill. She said it amounts to the committee giving up its power.

"I just don't think we're ready for this yet," she said. "I think we should keep the power in the elected officials on this committee."

The bill now goes to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

Pawlenty said it is only fair that prosecutors who have the heavy burden of proving the case be allowed to go last. He said that Minnesota is the only criminal system in the nation that allows the defense to go last.

"We should not have a Minnesota-unique style of justice when it comes to criminal justice," he said.

Prosecutors said that current law allowing a response to the defense's argument is awkward for both prosecutors and judges.

Paul Scoggins, assistant county attorney for Hennepin County, said that when prosecutors can only address misstatements of fact or law, juries might assume that the prosecutor agrees with the rest of the defense attorney's arguments.

He also said that it sends a signal to the jury that something is not routine, and that reflects badly on the prosecutor.

"All of a sudden the prosecutor is popping back up like a bad piece of cork," he said.

John Stanoch, former Hennepin County judge and current lawyer with the attorney general's office, said judges fear that giving prosecutors a response to the defense's arguments opens up a greater possibility that the case can be appealed.

"You are very hesitant in the ninth inning to say, 'I'm going to give you a chance to respond to the rebuttal,'" he said.

Laurie Beyer-Kropuenske, acting director of the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services, also testified in support of the bill. She said that sometimes the last thing that victims' families hear in the courtroom are disparaging remarks from the defense about the victim.

She said that while the entire trial is about searching for the truth, final arguments are sometimes very different.

"Sometimes, it is just slinging the mud to see how much of it sticks," she said.

State Public Defender John Stuart testified against the bill. He said that defense attorneys don't attack victims because that reflects badly on their clients, and that Minnesota juries are smart enough not to reward that behavior.

"They're not going to give the advantage to a client of a lawyer who does that," he said.

Stuart said Minnesota established its criminal justice process 124 years ago, and that it has worked well since then.

"Nothing that I've seen or heard has convinced me that this was a mistake," he said.

William McGee, chief public defender for Hennepin County, also spoke against the bill. He said that the defense attorney should go last because his or her client risks "the ultimate loss of his liberty." He said the existing system is working well.

"As my father always said, and as we've all heard before, if it ain't broke, don't fix it," he said.

Pawlenty's bill now goes to the House floor.

Concealed handgun debate

Do more permissive concealed handgun laws reduce crime?

Two nationally recognized researchers presented their views on that issue to lawmakers before a joint meeting of the House and Senate Crime Prevention committees Feb. 21.

Professor John Lott of the University of Chicago and Professor Jens Ludwig of Georgetown University have both done extensive research on the issue. And they have come to very different conclusions.

Lott studied county crime data from all 50 states between 1977 and 1992. He found that more permissive concealed handgun laws deter violent crime such as assault, murder, and rape.

Specifically, Lott found that on average states that passed the permissive laws saw an 8.5 percent reduction in murders, a 5 percent reduction in rapes, and a 7 percent reduction in aggravated assaults.

"The passage of concealed handgun laws saves many more lives than it loses," he told lawmakers.

Lott, however, found increases in crimes where the offender does not confront the victim, such as auto theft. And he found that violent crime rates increased in border areas of states that enacted permissive laws.

He said that these results show that the laws force criminals to alter their behavior away from violent acts in areas that have passed these laws.

Lott said that in every state that considered these laws opponents argued that people carrying concealed handguns would misuse the weapons. He said that that almost never happens.

"The people who are willing to go through the permitting process are almost always law-abiding citizens," he said.

Lott said that his study is the most comprehensive study that has been done on this issue so far. He said follow-up studies have confirmed his results.

"Nobody has found significant evidence of a cost associated with these laws, and most have found a benefit," he said.

Ludwig studied murder rates in one state between 1982 and 1991. He found that no relationship exists between the concealed handgun laws and the murder rate.

He disagreed with Lott's findings about these laws.



CRIME

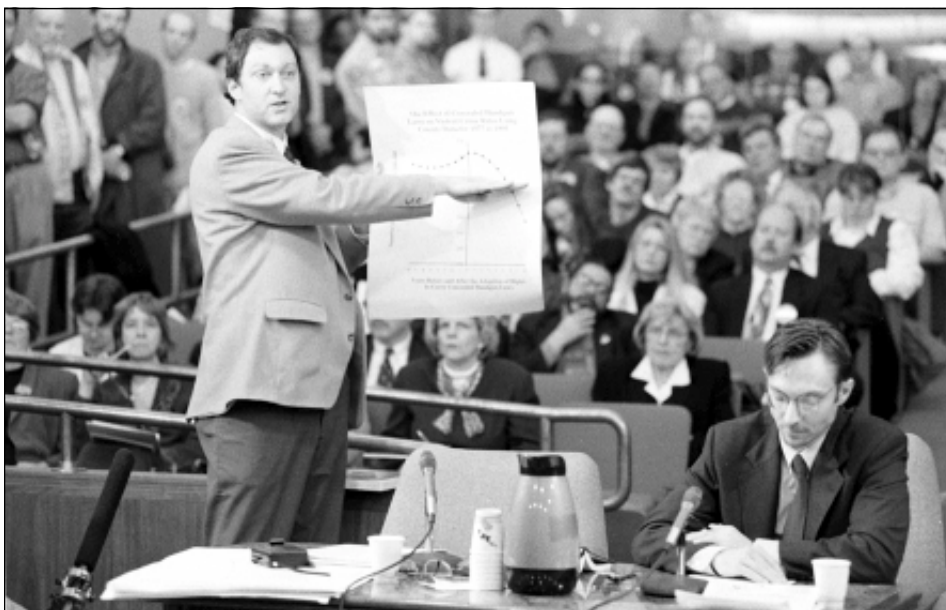
Last word for prosecutors

Following two days of arguments by prosecutors and public defenders, a bill that would give prosecutors the last word in criminal courts appears to be headed to trial on the House floor.

Under current law, the prosecutor goes first in final arguments and is followed by the defense attorney. The law allows the judge to give the prosecutor a response to the defense's final arguments only to address misstatements of fact or law, or if the defense's argument is prejudicial or inflammatory.

The bill (HF197), sponsored by Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), would guarantee the prosecutors a right to respond following the defense's final arguments. The response could only address issues brought up by the defense's argument.

The bill was approved Feb. 20 by the House Crime Prevention Committee, following testimony that day and on Feb. 16.



John Lott, professor of economics at the University of Chicago, uses a graph to illustrate the merits of permissive concealed handgun laws. Jens Ludwig, seated, assistant professor of public policy at Georgetown University, took the other side of the debate during a Feb. 20 hearing on the matter.

"We can't be sure that they cause crime rates to go down," he said. "And they're at least as likely to go up."

Ludwig said that these laws may have negative consequences.

"It is important to realize that there are other possibilities, that the passage of these laws may create an undesirable change in the behavior of criminals," he said.

For example, criminals may be more likely to use deadly force when committing crimes to make sure that they don't have to deal with an armed victim, he said.

certain elementary schools where more than 33 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The program began in 1994 as a pilot project in six elementary schools and was expanded in 1997 to include 41 schools throughout the state.

Oak Grove Elementary School in Bloomington has participated in the program



Al Bushman, a third-grade teacher at Lincoln Center Elementary School in South St. Paul, vouches for the importance of breakfast for schoolchildren during testimony on a bill that would increase funding for school food programs.



EDUCATION

Schools need lunch money

A bill that would increase the state's share of school lunch funding and extend school breakfast programs was considered Feb. 24 by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), would increase state funding for lunches from 6.5 cents to 10 cents per lunch.

The state has paid school districts at the rate of 6.5 cents per lunch since 1991, but school officials say that amount doesn't go nearly as far today as it did eight years ago. Kielkucki said districts are having to dip into their general fund money to keep up with rising food and labor costs.

Kielkucki's bill (HF720) would also provide funding to extend the state's current targeted breakfast program. That program provides free breakfasts for all students at

since 1994, and Principal Sherre Walsted told lawmakers she has seen results including increased attendance, higher test scores, and fewer discipline problems.

"Having a full stomach makes all the difference in kids and how they learn," she said.

She noted that although schools need to qualify for the program by having one-third of their students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunches, family economics aren't the only reason children miss breakfast.

"Tight morning schedules can mean kids are either skipping breakfast or making their own," she said. "And on their own, they'll probably reach for the sugar, which only lasts an hour. At school they're getting protein, fats, everything they need."

A third provision in Kielkucki's bill aims to ensure that all students have access to a healthy breakfast by extending current state funding for school breakfast programs. Although the targeted breakfast program is only available to certain elementary schools, Kielkucki said all public schools would benefit from breakfast funding, which enables schools to offer inexpensive, nutritious meals to all students.

Lawmakers agreed that breakfast is an essential meal for children. Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) said she considers breakfast funding a "no-brainer."

"It's the cheapest way to increase learning and raise test scores," she said.

But Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) questioned the need for state funding.

"I don't think anybody questions the value of a good breakfast for children," he said. "The question comes in what the role the government should play in feeding everyone's children."

The bill would provide \$11.6 million for school lunches in fiscal year 2000, and nearly \$12 million for lunches in 2001. It would also provide \$3.7 million for targeted breakfast grants and \$456,000 in school breakfast funding for each year of the 2000-01 biennium.

The committee took no action on the bill but may include it in this year's omnibus K-12 finance bill.

Districts facing tuition bills

Beginning this May, school districts whose students end up having to take remedial courses in reading, writing, or math during their freshman year of college can be charged tuition by the post-secondary institution.

But a bill sponsored by Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) would change that.

The House Education Policy committee approved the bill (HF473) Feb. 23.

Harder's proposal bill would repeal a 1997

law that established the policy. The law was intended as diploma warranty coverage for high school graduates.

But Harder said some of her constituents made her aware of certain examples in which the law could conceivably penalize a school district that acted in good faith.

For instance, students can refuse to repeat a grade even if a school district recommends they do so. Under the law, the district would have to pay tuition for any remedial instruction such a student might need in college.

In addition, a district would be charged for remedial college courses for students who moved into the district near the end of their high school careers.

Bob Meeks, a lobbyist for the Minnesota School Board Association, told committee members the law sends the wrong message to students and school districts.

"This whole thing just deserves a lot more consideration than it received (in 1997)," he said.

HF473 moves to the House K-12 Education Finance Committee.

School standards bill stalls

A plan to set statewide expectation levels for school districts met a setback Feb. 25 in the House Education Policy Committee.

Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud) withdrew his bill (**HF320**) after two days of debate revealed that lawmakers want more time to consider the issue.

Setting statewide standards for school districts has been a subject of contentious deliberations at the Capitol for many years. Last year, Opatz sponsored a similar bill that proposed state monitoring of schools and laid out a plan for the state to take over failing schools. That measure failed after encountering opposition from teachers, school districts, and lawmakers.

This year, however, Opatz's bill contains no plans for state takeovers. His bill simply proposes a measuring system based on standardized test scores.

It would also recognize factors that could cause schools to tend to have low overall scores. Those factors include having high percentages of students on free or reduced-price lunch programs, special education students, or students who participate in English-as-a-second-language programs. Those schools would be allowed extra time to bring up low scores.

Officials from Education Minnesota — the state's major teachers union — told the committee they do not support the plan because the dust has not yet settled on the state's Graduation Standards.

But others testified in support of the bill, saying a system of accountability needs to be in place so that schools having trouble can have the opportunity to improve and help students who fall behind.

"Your kids and mine are hanging in the balance," said Yusef Mgeni, president of the Urban Coalition. "We don't have the luxury of failure."

Although the bill is not currently under consideration, the issue may be revived before lawmakers put together this year's omnibus K-12 education bill.



ELECTIONS

Allowing 18-year-olds to run

Minnesotans would be able to decide if 18-year-olds could run for public office, under a bill approved Feb. 23 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Elections and Rules.

The bill (**HF122**), sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), would put the question on the ballot in the 2000 general election.

Current state law requires Minnesotans to be 21 or older to seek any state or local office except governor. Gubernatorial candidates must be age 25 or older.

The bill would not change the age requirement for governor, but it would reduce the minimum age for candidates for other constitutional offices and for legislative, municipal, and school board openings.

Some lawmakers questioned whether an 18-year-old should be allowed to run for school board. Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said he believes an 18-year-old high school student serving on a school board could be a "huge conflict of interest." A student would conceivably be participating in decisions such as discipline policies for fellow students, hiring and firing of teachers, and salary negotiations.

But Rukavina said voters would be able to decide if a situation presents such a conflict. He added that the first elected office he held was as a school board member in Virginia when he was 21.

Minimum age requirements for holding public office vary in other states. In 17 states, 18-year-olds can run for legislative seats. Twenty-five states have no minimum age requirement for attorney general or secretary of state races.

"I see this as an excellent way of engaging this great group of voters," said Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope).

The bill now moves to the full Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.



ENVIRONMENT

Boundary Waters controversy

A resolution that would ask President Clinton and Congress to intervene in the ongoing battle between Minnesota and the federal government over land rights in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

Education rally



High school students from Red Wing, along with parents and community members, rally in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 24 to press for increased K-12 education funding.

(BWCAW) is one step closer to landing on desks in Washington, D.C.

The BWCAW consists of just more than 1 million acres of federally protected land within the Superior National Forest in north-eastern Minnesota. Most of the land is owned by the federal government and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, but the state still owns roughly 100,000 acres of land within the wilderness preserve.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee approved a resolution Feb. 23 that would request a federal law authorizing an exchange of state-owned land within the BWCAW for federal land outside the preserve but within the Superior National Forest.

The proposal (HF426), sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), notes that Minnesota is unable to earn any money from leases, sales, or natural resource management of the state-owned land within the BWCAW because access is restricted.

"We are locked out of 100,000 acres," said Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook). "The federal government has essentially stolen this land from us."

Recently, the state of Utah successfully negotiated a similar land-for-land and cash exchange with the federal government, Rukavina told the committee.

Patty Burke, legislative director for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, said her agency supports the intent of the resolution. The problem, Burke said, is getting the U.S. Forest Service and the federal government to the negotiating table.

"We are looking for a congressional solution because the forest service has no reason to negotiate," Rukavina said.

The resolution is headed for a vote on the House floor.



GAME & FISH

Shooting deer in a barrel?

A bill permitting the taking of farmed deer and elk on licensed shooting preserves was approved Feb. 24 by the House Agriculture Policy Committee.

Farmed cervidae — a family of animals including deer, elk, and others — were granted status as agricultural products in 1993. The bill (HF710) would expand permitted uses of the farmed animals to include stocking them on licensed shooting preserves.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), the bill's sponsor, said he was not a supporter of the idea when it was first broached because it seemed to be a hunting issue. However, he

Student voters



Katie Cowhey, a sophomore at Prior Lake Senior High School, votes in a mock election on a bill that would limit the rights of 16- and 17-year-olds to refuse chemical dependency treatment. Cowhey participated in the Minnesota Youth Legislative Summit on Feb. 25.

said he now sees it as a value-added practice for farmers who raise elk and deer.

"How an animal ends up in your freezer shouldn't matter," Holsten told the committee.

The bill would allow the establishment of 10 preserves ranging from 240 to 960 acres. All wild deer would have to be removed from an area before a preserve would be created.

The measure would also establish a season for harvesting animals, from Aug. 15 to March 31. No hunting license would be required in the preserves, but weapons used would have to comply with those authorized to take wild deer and elk in the same region.

Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), who is sponsoring an identical bill (HF715), said he supports the idea because he has constituents who raise elk who have had to refuse people the opportunity to hunt because the law does not allow it.

He said the preserves would be ideal for the elderly, people who have never shot an elk, or disabled hunters.

Several speakers fired rounds at Holsten's bill.

"It's like shooting fish in a barrel," said Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), who also had questions about whether the license fees proposed for the preserves would be enough to cover the Department of Agriculture's costs.

Other concerns were raised over the perception the preserves would create.

To clarify that what is being proposed is not technically hunting, Rep. Leslie Schumacher (DFL-Princeton) offered, and the committee accepted, an amendment to strike any mention of "hunt" or "hunting" from the bill.

That wasn't enough to stop opposition from Tom Meyers, representing Minnesota Conservation Federation.

"It will still be perceived as hunting by the nonhunting public," Meyers said. "It shouldn't matter, but it does. The animal rights people are going to attack this, and the hunters will take the flak."

Holsten's bill moves to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.



HEALTH

Encouraging organ donation

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and Norma Bradow of Fergus Falls have formed a close bond in recent months. Because of the gift of a liver from Bradow's late husband, Luther is alive today.

The two appeared together Feb. 19 before the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee. On the agenda was a bill (HF127), which is sponsored by Luther, to appropriate \$2 million over the next biennium to begin the proposed "Minnesota donor decision campaign."

The campaign would include research and public opinion surveys to assess attitudes toward organ, tissue, and eye donations and to evaluate public awareness efforts. It would also include advertising and public education programs aimed at raising awareness about organ donation and encouraging people to become donors.

The largest portion of the proposed funding



Rep. Darlene Luther, *right*, consoles Norma Bradow, Fergus Falls, who tells lawmakers how her husband, Gary, felt it important to be able to donate his organs. Luther said it was Gary's liver that saved her life when she had a liver transplant in 1998. Bradow testified before a House committee Feb. 19 in favor of a bill that would fund a campaign to boost organ donation.

— about \$800,000 — would be spent on media activities, including television and radio commercials.

Luther told the committee there is a critical shortage of donors and that across the country 10 people die each day waiting for transplants.

More than 1,300 Minnesotans currently await a lifesaving organ transplant. The waiting list grows 12 to 15 percent annually, but the number of donors remains essentially unchanged.

Susan Gunderson, executive director of LifeSource, a regional organ donation coordination organization, said most Minnesotans support organ donation, but they simply don't know how to assure that they become donors.

Under the bill, LifeSource is the lone entity that would qualify for the one-time state funding.

Gunderson said she's most excited about creating a mobile classroom that would tour the state and provide accurate information on organ donation in an interactive format.

"There's a lot of misinformation out there," Gunderson said, noting that even the medical profession isn't well-versed on the topic.

She said one of the keys to assuring that your organs are donated is to tell your family when you're healthy so your wishes are well-known.

In emotional testimony, Bradow told the committee how she and her husband had discussed the matter in the 1970s, never thinking the opportunity to be an organ donor would arise as soon as it did.

Gary Bradow was a victim of a stroke in 1998 at age 56. His wife said he had been extremely healthy until then, making him an ideal candidate for organ donation.

The committee took no action on the matter but will consider the bill for inclusion in this year's omnibus health and human services funding bill.

Bed rail bill passed

The House passed a bill Feb. 23 that would give nursing home patients and their families greater input on whether side rails can legally be used on beds in nursing facilities. The vote was 132-0.

"This is a bill about grandpas and grandmas, moms and dads and loved ones," said the bill's sponsor, Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester). "It's about real seniors suffering real fear."

In 1998, the Minnesota Department of Health began fining nursing homes that they believed were improperly using restraints. A federal law severely restricts the legal use of bed rails and other restraints.

Proponents of limiting rail use said patients could injure or even kill themselves if they became entangled in the restraints, and the state health department began requiring a physician's prescription to use rails.

Soon many nursing homes stopped using bed rails, but family members complained that they were more concerned for the safety of patients without rails.

Bradley's bill (HF40) would include a patient's physical safety as a medical condition sufficient to warrant a prescription for bed rails.

The bill moves to the Senate.

Alternative medicine plan

If your physician offers you herbal medicine, he or she can be accused of practicing outside "acceptable and prevailing" conventional standards of care.

And if an unlicensed herbalist offers you herbal medicine, he or she can be prosecuted for "practicing medicine without a license."

So just how do you get herbal medicine, if that's your preferred method of treatment? It's not easy in Minnesota.

A bill (HF537) debated by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 25 would change that.

The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault), would allow complementary and alternative health care to be practiced if a patient is informed about the benefits and potential harm from the treatment. The bill also contains examples of forms which patients would be required to read and sign.

The bill covers such practices as homeopathy, naturopathy, massage therapy and body work, holistic and integrative therapies, and culturally traditional healing practices, among others.

Another section of the bill would address consumer complaints against licensed and unlicensed practitioners, but would not change criminal laws for fraud or for personal injury civil actions.

In some cases, Boudreau said, legal actions have been taken against unlicensed providers of alternative medical services, even though there was no consumer harmed and the recipient of the care was pleased.

Boudreau told the committee her proposal was not a licensing initiative, but more of a deregulatory approach.

"It updates the law so it is in sync with present health care reality," she added.

Studies show 70 percent of all Americans and 47 percent of all physicians are using at least one form of complementary or alternative methods for their personal health care.

The bill is slated to come before a Health Care Directive Subcommittee of the full health and human services policy committee.

Changes for ambulance services

Two bills designed to address the changing face of ambulance services in Minnesota were approved Feb. 23 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

The first bill (HF302) would allow ambulance services to participate in shared service purchasing arrangements for supplies, materials, and equipment.

The second (HF463) would place ambu-

lance providers under peer review protection.

Both bills are sponsored by Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston).

Davids told the committee that ambulance services need more flexibility in approaching purchases, particularly of expensive items such as vehicles. He said pending changes in the way federal programs reimburse ambulance services may leave services with less money.

Existing law requires government-owned ambulance services to take bids on equipment purchases over \$25,000. **HF302** would allow co-ops to purchase ambulances, the most costly expenditure an ambulance provider faces.

Davids said one small ambulance service buying one new vehicle every five years doesn't have as much bargaining power as a group of services purchasing a fleet.

Davids said **HF463** aims to shield ambulance providers in certain legal situations.

Without peer review protection, he said, any in-house discussion of how cases were handled is public record and subject to discovery, should a legal challenge arise.

O.J. Doyle, an emergency medical services consultant from Apple Valley, said the lack of protection has made ambulance service medical directors — required to be physicians — skittish about the liability issue.

He said many of them are volunteers and the ambulance services cannot exist without them.

Both bills move to the House floor.

Caring for spouses

The House passed a bill (**HF60**) Feb. 23 that would allow certain qualified medical professionals to be paid to care for their spouses. The vote was 129-3.

The measure would apply only to licensed nurses employed by Medicare-certified home health agencies. Those eligible could be paid to care for a disabled spouse who receives government-financed home health care.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), sponsor of the bill, said that under existing law payment is not possible in certain instances, and that has caused a hardship for a family in his district.

The bill moves to the Senate.

Where to find information

Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (651) 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.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Taylor-funded plan approved

The House Higher Education Finance Committee approved a bill Feb. 22 that would authorize construction of the Taylor Center, a privately-funded building on the campus of Minnesota State University, Mankato.

The bill (**HF492**) is sponsored by Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato).

Because the campus is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and therefore a state entity, the Legislature is required to approve the new building's construction.

Formerly known as Mankato State University, the school raised \$16.5 million in private donations to pay for the center. It is named in honor of alumnus Glen Taylor, chief executive officer and chair of the Taylor Corporation and owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves basketball team.

Taylor donated \$9.2 million toward the project, which consists of a 5,000-seat arena, athletic programs and facilities, and a student welcome center.

Minnesota State University President Richard Rush estimated that the center's construction will take about 18 months and should be completed by the end of 2000 or early 2001.

Rush said the Taylor Center will serve as a new entrance to campus because it will link a major road with the campus.

"We think it will be a showcase not only for MSU, but also for the entire region," Rush said.

HF492 moves to the House Capital Investment Committee.

Lawmakers seek hard numbers

Officials from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MnSCU) got off to a somewhat rocky start with legislators during a budget presentation before the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

A team of MnSCU officials, led by Chancellor Morrie Anderson, appeared before the committee Feb. 24 to detail a request for a \$230.6 million increase over the system's biennial budget.

Anderson said the proposal targets several key areas for improvement, including student success, technology training, faculty salaries, and partnerships linking students and workforce development in high-demand industries.

The 53-campus system consists of 36 state universities, community colleges, and technical colleges. MnSCU graduates comprise about

20 percent of Minnesota's workforce, and the schools offer more than 3,500 educational programs.

Much of the presentation focused on the institution's goals and past accomplishments, which some lawmakers said are difficult to link directly with the budget issues.

Many legislators said they wanted a more in-depth presentation listing dollar amounts along with campus and administrative costs.

Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona) grilled Anderson on which specific programs would benefit from state money, but said he was not receiving satisfactory answers.

"Behind that screen, there's nothing," he said. "Today from MnSCU, we have had no substantive answer to any question we've asked."

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), the committee chair, also showed her frustration.

"We are trying to look at numbers," she said. "And you have given us the reasons for and the overall picture of what you're trying to do. Now, please attach it to some numbers."

In his biennial budget, Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended funding \$121.3 million of MnSCU's request, or about 53 percent.

MnSCU officials will return to the committee Feb. 26 to continue their budget presentation.



HUMAN SERVICES

Waiting lists for services

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) knows first-hand the challenges faced by those with developmental disabilities and their caregivers.

He told the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 23 that he has a brother who is developmentally disabled. For years, the brother lived with his parents, but as his parents grew older, the arrangement needed to be changed.

Bradley said when it came time to find a new place for his brother to live, he encountered a roadblock that thousands are facing across the state — a waiting list caused by a critical shortage of funds to provide support services.

Bradley is sponsoring a bill (**HF345**), which was approved by the committee, that would infuse state money into programs to provide services such as in-home support services, respite care, housing modifications, residential services, employment services, and cash grants.

Those services are often called "waivered" services because they are provided outside of traditional programs funded by the federal government. About 4,700 Minnesotans are believed to be waiting for help.



Dorothy Ecklund of Moorhead speaks in support of a bill that would provide more state money to help people with developmental disabilities. Ecklund testified Feb. 23 before the House Health & Human Services Policy Committee.

The list developed over the past several decades as the state concentrated on downsizing regional treatment centers, according to Robert Brick, executive director of Arc Minnesota, an advocacy group for people with developmental disabilities.

Brick told the committee that it is now time to concentrate on those families who have sacrificed and cared for loved ones at home.

He said that when funding is not available for developmentally disabled individuals to receive services, counties are often forced to use family foster care, funded by local property taxes.

The committee also heard testimony from parents who said they waited as long as 14 years to find homes for their disabled children. Parents also expressed concerns about what would happen as they age and become less able to provide care themselves.

Cindy Johnson of St. Paul said her daughter, Jenna, has been on a waiting list for 11 years.

"I was told unless our family had a crisis, such that we throw Jenna out so she becomes homeless, or I died, there was little hope of getting a waiver to meet her needs," Johnson testified. "I refuse to do either of these options."

Johnson has not been able to work for many years, thereby sacrificing her shot at a retirement income, Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) pointed out.

While no one on the committee disputed the need to fund the programs addressed in the bill, concerns over how much money would

be needed and how it could be used to leverage federal dollars were expressed.

Bradley's bill would phase in funding over two biennia, and he suggested \$30 million would be needed.

However, officials from the Minnesota Department of Human Services have said the cost would be closer to \$140 million and pointed out that only a small portion is covered in Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposed budget.

Further discussion of financial details of the bill are expected when it reaches its next stop, the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Certifying interpreters

If you're deaf or can't speak or understand English, having confidence in the person interpreting for you is essential.

Assuring the competence of those interpreters is the aim of two bills considered Feb. 25 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

The first bill (**HF206**) would require certification and registration for those who provide American Sign Language interpretation. Sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), the proposal would establish standards and encourage the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System to establish programs to help train interpreters.

The bill would also provide \$75,000 to establish mentorship programs to assist new graduates of interpreter training programs in obtaining certification.

Entenza said incapable interpreters cause hardships for the hearing impaired, and in some instances, problems with interpreters can put the deaf or hearing impaired at risk.

The second bill (**HF568**) would provide for voluntary licensing of spoken language interpreters.

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), who is sponsoring the proposal, said many new immigrants coming to Minnesota require social services and access to other programs to help them succeed. Interpretation services are often taken where and when they can be found with little regard to quality.

Clark pointed out that the courts require certification for spoken language interpreters and said it would be a good idea to begin with a voluntary program for other endeavors. Making it voluntary would help begin the assessment process to determine the languages, level of skill, and level of education that should be required for interpreters.

The bill would also establish a pilot training program for interpreters to be operated by the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota

State Colleges and Universities. Special emphasis in the area of medical interpreting would be offered.

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) said that in one recent week Hennepin County Medical Center reported needing translations for 50 different languages.

Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) said even in rural Minnesota the quest for interpreters had reached feverish pitch. She said her community has established a task force to help find interpreters.

Another report referenced by Clark reveals that as many as 200,000 Minnesotans do not speak English well enough to communicate in a medical emergency.

Both bills are slated to receive a second hearing before a Health Care Directive Subcommittee of the full policy committee.



INSURANCE

Regulating payment deals

People who receive structured settlement payments from an insurance company would be guaranteed legal and financial advice before selling the rights to those payments under a bill approved Feb. 23 by the House Commerce Committee.

The bill (**HF478**) would require companies that buy a person's rights to payments due as a result of a personal injury or workers' compensation claim to disclose detailed financial information about the transaction. Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), sponsor of the bill, said those transactions, known as "factoring transactions," are not currently regulated.

Under the bill, the company buying the rights to the payments would have to disclose how the present value of the cash compares to the money the claimant is scheduled to receive over time.

The transaction could be done only if the court determines it to be necessary for the claimant to avoid an "imminent financial hardship" and it would not cause undue financial hardship in the future.

The bill would require a factoring transaction to be approved by a court, and all of the interested parties would have to approve.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said if the insurance company is considered an "interested party," then the bill seems to allow the insurance company to veto any factoring transaction.

Haas said the court would have the final authority, not the insurance company. But the insurance company's role would be to make sure all of the interested parties are notified. Beneficiaries of the structured settlement are

not limited to the claimant, Haas said. Children, a former spouse, or an estate could all be involved, he said.

The bill now moves to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.



LAW

House passes malpractice bill

A bill that seeks to give victims of medical malpractice their day in court was approved Feb. 23 by the full House. The vote was 130-2.

Current law requires that lawsuits dealing with medical malpractice must be initiated within two years of the occurrence of the malpractice. The bill (HF56) would extend the time allowed to file a medical malpractice case, allowing up to four years for a victim to take legal action.

"This bill is about real people," said Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins). "It's about people who needed the law to change so they could see some justice. It's about truth and fairness."

Bill sponsor Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) said his plan would not make it easier for a plaintiff to win a medical malpractice suit. It would simply give people a reasonable amount of time to discover that malpractice has occurred and to file a case, he said.

Initially, Van Dellen's bill would have set the deadline to file a case at two years from the discovery of the malpractice, not from the occurrence of the malpractice as with the current law. The bill would have placed a six-year limit from the occurrence of the malpractice.

But when the bill was first discussed by the House Civil Law Committee in early February, Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) offered, and the committee accepted, a compromise amendment that would simply extend the current two-year limit to four years.

Several medical organizations that initially opposed the bill said that they could live with the compromise.

Bishop said Van Dellen's bill would be "a major advance in law for medical malpractice."

Last year, two bills to extend the malpractice deadline were approved by the House Judiciary Committee, but both stalled before reaching the House floor. Van Dellen and Folliard were at the forefront of last year's efforts.

Van Dellen's bill now waits for action by the Senate.

Y2K bill advances

A bill that aims to stomp on problems stemming from the so-called Y2K bug was approved Feb. 24 by the House Civil Law Committee.

The bill (HF73) provides several measures to address potential problems that may arise when computers make the switch from 1999 to 2000.

Before approving the bill, the committee added an amendment that seeks to address the possible effects the Y2K bug may have on the state's courts.

The amendment, offered by Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), would create a special panel of district court judges to hear all Y2K court cases, and it would place limits on how those cases could proceed.

Bishop said that the courts should be given an opportunity to respond to the large number of cases that may result from the Y2K problem.

Initially, Bishop's amendment would have allowed courts to award only damages stemming from economic loss. Plaintiffs would not have been allowed to collect punitive damages.

But Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) said that those provisions made Bishop's amendment a "whopper," and that the amendment would have greatly expanded the original bill.

Responding to Carruthers concerns, Bishop removed those sections from his amendment.

"I don't want to have any whopper problems in this amendment," he said.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), would protect some types of Y2K information from civil liability and would authorize the governor to declare a state of emergency based on problems associated with the glitch.

The measure would also allow cities to incur debt for spending to address year 2000 problems without voter approval, and it would appropriate money for a local government Y2K loan fund.

The Y2K bug is a problem that may occur in many computers that were not programmed to handle the switch to the year 2000. Many older programs use only the last two digits to track the year, and at the end of 1999, those programs will roll to 00. That means some computers will think it's 1900, which could cause major technical malfunctions and create troubles in industries such as airline travel, banking, and utilities.

The bill, initially rejected Feb. 8 by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, was later resurrected by that committee and approved Feb. 18.

It now goes to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Funds for storm recovery

When a natural disaster strikes a community, help often pours in from everywhere. Other cities send crews, other agencies help out where they can, and volunteers assist with cleanup.

But eventually someone has to pay the bill. If a federal disaster has been declared, most of the costs are reimbursed from the federal government. But if there's no federal disaster declaration, a storm or similar event can be devastating to city or county coffers.

Easing that burden is the aim of a bill (HF294) approved Feb. 22 by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

The proposal calls for the establishment of a state aid fund to which cities could apply for help once unreimbursed costs exceed 5 percent of their gross tax levy.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Vadnais Heights), who is sponsoring the bill, said many Minnesota cities experienced damage from storms during the summer of 1998. And while much of the damage was paid for through federal reimbursement, the point was made clear that the state doesn't have a streamlined method for lending assistance.

"It's a safety net for cities," said Broecker, former city councilor in Vadnais Heights.

Shoreview Mayor Sandy Martin said a tornado that swept through her community brought with it a \$600,000 cleanup bill. Had the city been forced to bear the entire cost, it would have had to raise its tax levy an additional 7 percent, a figure she said would have been devastating to the community.

In Shoreview, expenditures for straight-time personnel costs and a reforestation program were not covered by the federal government. The city lost nearly 5,000 trees.

"This would be a way for the state to be more proactive in assisting with disasters," Martin told the committee.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) questioned the need for such a program, noting that when catastrophes have occurred in the past, the legislature has been more than willing to help.

Bill proponents told Rukavina that not all disasters happen when the Legislature is meeting. If a disaster occurs in September, for instance, a political subdivision is often forced

to wait until the following spring for reimbursement.

Broecker's bill would provide \$10 million to establish the aid program.

The bill moves to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.



SPORTS

Reprieve for stud users

The House gave final passage to a bill Feb. 25 that would repeal the upcoming statewide ban on metal traction devices, or studs, for snowmobiles. The vote was 105-23.

The House had passed an earlier version of the bill (HF6) Jan. 21, but the measure had since been amended by the Senate to include graduated fines for snowmobilers caught using studs on state-owned paved trails.

Stud use would remain illegal on paved trails. It was damage by illegal studs to those trails that prompted the 1998 law banning studs on all public lands as of July 1, 1999.

HF6 would repeal that law, which also requires snowmobilers to buy a \$50 sticker to use studs until the ban takes effect.

Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), sponsor of the bill, said the special fee and pending ban have caused parts of the state to suffer from lost tourism revenue, and his plan would help bring some tourism dollars back to the state.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) urged colleagues on the House floor to vote against the bill because, she said, cost estimates for stud damage to paved trails continue to increase.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources had estimated the total damage to state, county, and local trails at \$3 million. But Hausman said Minnesota counties have estimated the damage is more than \$7 million.

"To pass the repeal today without dealing with this huge amount of damage would be a mistake," she said.

Hackbarth is also sponsoring a separate bill (HF928) that would address the issue of repairing the paved trails. A special task force met and provided recommendations that formed the basis of that measure. The House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee debated that bill Feb. 25, but did not vote on it. The panel is slated to further consider the measure.

HF6 now goes to the governor.

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

Capitol time



Ashley Davis, left, and Kiara Teris leave the Capitol rotunda arm-in-arm Feb. 22. The girls, part of a group from the Pratt Community Center in Minneapolis, participated in the Women Come to the Capitol Day, where they got a closer look at the operation of state government.

Bill would repeal PWC fee

The debate over personal watercraft is making waves for the third time in as many years.

A bill that would repeal the three-year, \$50 surcharge on personal watercraft that was authorized by the 1998 Legislature was approved Feb. 23 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Proceeds from the surcharge are to be divided between the state and counties for law enforcement and education efforts.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimated that with 27,000 registered personal watercraft in Minnesota, the surcharge would generate \$450,000 annually.

The bill (HF54) is sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus), who has been a vocal opponent of restrictions on personal watercraft and snowmobile use.

Finseth said he supports a repeal because personal watercraft accident rates have dropped, even though the programs the surcharge is meant to support are not yet in place.

"Things go in cycles, just like they did with snowmobiles back in the '70s," he said. "I think we're headed in the right direction."

Education and enforcement efforts would not suffer if the surcharge were repealed, DNR Boat and Water Safety Coordinator Kim Elverum told the committee.

Currently, personal watercraft owners must pay the \$50 surcharge in addition to a \$12 registration fee, Elverum explained.

"So they are being discriminated against

because they have to register twice," said Rep. Bob Westfall (R-Rothsay).

Gov. Jesse Ventura, who owns a handful of the machines, strongly supports the repeal. Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), who sponsored last year's personal watercraft legislation, expressed disappointment that a governor who advocates personal responsibility at every turn would want to see the cost of personal watercraft enforcement shifted to all other boaters and local property taxpayers.

"We need to have the enforcement for the people of Minnesota who enjoy simple peace and quiet on their lakes," said Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul). "There are far more of them than one governor."

Hasskamp also argued that with all of the media attention directed toward personal watercraft issues last year, the so-called "bad operators" knew law enforcement efforts would be beefed up and that in turn led to an improvement in behavior.

"I am fearing what is going to happen on our waters this summer," Hasskamp said. "A repeal sends the wrong public message to the worst operators."

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

If you will be visiting the Capitol in the near future, call the Capitol Historic Site Program at (651) 296-2881 to schedule a tour.



TAXES

Super-majority bill passes

How difficult should it be for the Legislature to raise taxes?

The House answered that question Feb. 25, voting 81 to 49 after three hours of debate to pass a bill (HF5) that would propose a constitutional amendment to require a three-fifths vote (rather than a simple majority) to pass tax hikes.

The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), would let voters decide if they want the super-majority requirement for the Legislature to pass an increase in existing tax or to impose a new tax.

The proposed amendment would also ask voters to accept a three-fifths requirement for raising certain state-imposed fees and surcharges.

Wilkin said the measure was designed to protect taxpayers. He noted that 11 states require an even stronger "super-majority." In Minnesota, it would likely mean that raising taxes would require bipartisan or tripartisan support.

"Government has an obligation to properly and adequately fund necessary programs, but there comes a point where government itself has to be reigned in," said Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan). "We need to draw the line and say, 'no more.'"

Although the final vote reflected strong support from Wilkins' fellow Republicans, not all of them were in favor.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) said he didn't like the bill and the "trap it puts us in."

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) invoked the founding fathers in arguing that majorities should control the power to tax.

"We shouldn't do the lazy, sloppy, gimmicky way of taxing," Orfield said. "We shouldn't have government by well-financed minorities."

The bill goes to the Senate.

Eliminating the marriage penalty

One plus one equals two. Correct?

Yes, but not if you're referring to Minnesota's income tax.

In the case of the tax code, one individual marrying another results in a higher tax liability than two individuals living together outside of marriage.

Bridging that gap — often referred to as the "marriage penalty" — is the intent of a bill sponsored by Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine).

Westerberg told the House Taxes Committee Feb. 25 that he believes families are the building blocks of society and deserve a fair shake when it comes to taxes.

His bill (HF267) would increase the width of the income tax brackets for married joint filers to twice the brackets for single filers.

Under current law, two single taxpayers who marry will pay higher Minnesota income taxes than they would have paid as two single filers.

That means a single woman and a single man earning \$20,000 each will pay combined income tax of \$2,510. A married couple earning \$40,000 would pay \$2,695.

Although the bill sounds like a simple fix, it's not, according to Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), who has sponsored legislation to undo the marriage penalty in previous sessions.

He said no matter what action is taken, someone is going to be treated unfairly. However, he noted that that is no reason for government to be relaying the message that marriage is a bad thing.

"We shouldn't be penalizing married people," Knoblach added.

Committee chair Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said while the bill would not eliminate the penalty entirely for all filers, it is a good first step. He suggested that only a flat-tax structure would remove the penalty in one stroke of the pen.

Abrams said one-earner families would actually get a bonus under the proposal, which he believes would properly recognize the contribution of stay-at-home spouses.

Some lawmakers questioned if the bill wouldn't lead to a "singles penalty."

Westerberg said his bill would not raise taxes on singles "a dime," but he admitted that in some instances, there could be disadvantages for singles.

Tom Prichard, president of the Minnesota Family Council, called the marriage penalty "totally inappropriate" and said that his group represents the 660,000 families that would pay less tax were this bill passed.

"Frankly, families are due some tax relief," he added.

Westerberg's bill carries a \$330 million price tag over the next biennium, a figure Abrams said would require considerable stretching to fit within targets that will eventually be established for the committee.

The bill may be considered later for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Resorts seek tax change

A bill that would allow Minnesota's resorts to stay open for more days and still qualify for a reduced property tax rate faced tough sledding before the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee Feb. 24.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), the proposal's sponsor, said her plan would give resorts one more "tool to succeed." She said raising the number of occupancy days from 250 to 275 would allow resort owners to benefit from their investment in improved facilities and better marketing.

She pointed out that resorters are doing a better job of selling off-peak and winter season packages; however, if they exceed the specified number of occupancy days, their tax rate jumps from resort to commercial, a three-fold hike for some property owners.

Several committee members expressed concerns that the bill would give an unfair advantage to some lodging businesses and questioned where the definition of "seasonal" would be obsolete, given the increased number of days of operation requested in the bill.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) said he supports a longer operating span for small operations, but not for larger ones. He questioned why the state should favor resorts over motels.

Hasskamp said that resorts are unique because they are located on lakefront property.

"If they can't survive, they'll sell and divide the property and it will be lost," Hasskamp said. "Once the resorts are gone, they're not coming back."

Dutch Cragun, owner of a well-known resort on Gull Lake, told the committee the steep increases in valuation for shoreline property is further evidence of the need to help the resorts stay in business.

He said resorts are similar to family farms and require a great deal of investment. The number of resorts has fallen from a high of 4,000 in the mid-60s to 1,200 today, the bulk of which are tiny "ma and pa" operations.

Cragun noted that if a year with ideal conditions should come for state resorts, many would be able to exceed the 250-day requirement but would be punished for their good fortune.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), a co-sponsor of the bill, said if the resorts are open longer, more benefits accrue to the state.

"Thousands of tourists buy gas, groceries, and entertainment, to the benefit of the people of the county," Howes said.

The committee took no action on the bill, but lawmakers may reconsider it for inclusion in this year's omnibus tax bill.

Taxed to smoke and to quit

The state is preparing to spend a great deal of money to convince people to quit smoking. Yet, if smokers decide to quit and purchase a nicotine patch or nicotine gum, they pay sales tax.

Some lawmakers find that incongruous.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) is sponsoring a bill (**HF168**) that would stub out the sales tax for items to be used exclusively to assist individuals to refrain from smoking tobacco.

Mulder told the House Taxes Committee Feb. 23 that the bill would not extend protection to everything touted as a smoking cure, such as copper bracelets. But several committee members questioned whether the distinction was drawn carefully enough in the bill.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) said he envisions a lot of "voodoo products" coming to market as a result of the state's influx of tobacco settlement money.

Mulder said he is also concerned by that prospect, but noted that to be sold legitimately for smoking cessation, products would have to be approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA approval, he said, would qualify items for his proposed exemption.

Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 20 percent of Minnesota adults smoke tobacco. Other studies indicate that about a third of the smoking population attempts to quit each year.

The bill would carry a price tag of \$1.3 million for the coming biennium.

The committee took no action on the bill, but may consider it later for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Earth-friendly tax bill

What color should Minnesota's tax code be?

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) believes it should be green. That's why she is sponsoring a bill (**HF86**) that would exempt the purchase of pollution control equipment and solar energy systems from state sales tax.

Rest told the House Taxes Committee Feb. 23 that while the state encourages the use of solar energy with one hand, it taxes those who purchase solar energy equipment with the other.

And although the state and federal government mandate that industries purchase pollution control devices, the state punishes businesses for complying by charging sales tax.

Rest said her proposal represented a "greening" of Minnesota tax policy.

The bill would add pollution control equipment to the definition of capital equipment in state statute. Most purchasers of capital equipment may file for a tax refund.

Solar energy systems would be exempted categorically, independent of the capital equipment program, making the savings available at the time of purchase. Purchases by electric utilities would not be included.

To be exempt under the bill, a solar system would have to be used in a commercial or industrial application and generate a certain minimum amount of energy.

The committee took no action, but may reconsider the proposal for inclusion in its omnibus tax bill.



TRANSPORTATION

Bill allows minivan TVs

Minnesota consumers who want to purchase Oldsmobile Silhouette minivans would have the state's permission, under a bill approved Feb. 23 by the House Transportation Policy Committee.

The bill (**HF745**) would clarify the state's restrictions on the installation of television sets in motor vehicles.

The Silhouette comes equipped with a television. The van cannot be sold in Minnesota because the mounting of the screen is not completely behind the driver, although the driver of the van is still unable to see the screen.

Sherry Munyon, director of government affairs for the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association, said Minnesota is the only state in the country where the van cannot be sold.

Current law states that televisions can be mounted only from the back of the driver's seat and beyond. The bill would change the law to allow screens to be mounted in any place except where the driver can see the screen.

"I think the intent of the law still holds firm," said Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), the bill's sponsor.

Exceptions to current law include television or video equipment used in law enforcement vehicles.

The bill moves to the House floor.

Speeding release of titles

A bill that would close a legal loophole that can cause car dealerships to run afoul of the law was approved Feb. 25 by the House Transportation Policy Committee.

The bill (**HF790**), sponsored by Rep. Bill Kuisle (R-Rochester), would decrease the

amount of time banks are allowed to release a title after a car is paid off to seven days. Under current law, banks have 15 days to do so.

However, car dealers have only 10 days to transfer titles to buyers after a vehicle is sold. This can present a problem when dealers need to obtain titles from a bank. If the bank takes longer than 10 days, the dealer's deadline has not been met and they break the law.

Sherry Munyon, director of government affairs for the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association, said dealerships are starting to be warned by law enforcement officials for their violations.

"We do have a concern because they're out of compliance by no fault of their own," Munyon said.

The bill originally proposed a five-day limit for banks, but was changed after a request for more time from bankers.

Jenny Engh, director of government relations for the Minnesota Bankers Association, said banks need time to verify information on titles and to make sure checks clear.

HF790 moves to the House Commerce Committee.

Metric system unnecessary

Even though the United States stated its intent to convert to the metric system of measurement in 1969, the implementation has not been on a fast track.

In the last three decades, a few federal mandates were created to get the country inching in the direction of the metric system, but exceptions have been made for the highway industry.

A bill approved by the House Transportation Policy Committee Feb. 25 would grant the Minnesota Department of Transportation some of those exceptions for highway construction projects.

The department started converting to the metric system in 1992, and by 1999 most state projects will be under the metric system. However, Congress has made the conversion optional for highway construction.

The bill (**HF571**) would allow the department to instead use the English system of measurement strictly for highway construction projects, therefore making it easier for local governments and private contractors to do business with the state.

If the bill becomes law, all projects initiated on or after July 1 would be required to use the English system.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake), moves to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

Memorial honors Minnesotans who fought in Korea

By Sarah Hallonquist

Of the 94,000 Minnesota men and women who fought in the Korean War, 738 died and 154 are still considered missing.

Last September, those Minnesotans received a tribute with the dedication of the Minnesota Korean War Veterans Memorial on the Capitol lawn.

The names of the dead are inscribed on seven granite walls, and a sculpture depicts a lone soldier walking toward a silhouette of another soldier who represents those missing in action.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when communist North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to reunite the country. The armistice was signed July 27, 1953, and Congress officially ended U.S. involvement in Korea on Jan. 31, 1955.

The war is often referred to as the Korean Conflict because Congress never actually declared war against North Korea. And it is often called the "Forgotten War" because it seldom receives much media attention.

But more than 54,000 Americans died in the Korean War, compared with 58,000 who died in the Vietnam War, which lasted five years longer.

In 1995, a national Korean War memorial was completed in Washington, D.C. Part of that structure, which is a field of soldiers and memorial walls, is made of granite from the Cold Spring Granite Co. in Minnesota.

The national monument spurred the Minnesota effort, and the 1995 Legislature appropriated \$300,000 for the project.

Construction on the memorial began in April 1998, after a two-year fund-raising



At the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the Capitol grounds, a lone soldier stands looking through a silhouette of a fellow soldier. The silhouette represents the 154 Minnesotans who are still considered missing in action from the war.

effort by the Minnesota Korean Veterans Chapter 1 from Roseville. The group had the task of raising \$300,000 to match the state's contribution to the project.

Meanwhile, the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board held a design contest. Arthur Norby's "Body and Soul" won the board's approval from five other submissions in late 1996. Four thousand people attended the Sept. 13, 1998, dedication ceremony.

Although there isn't an official list, many legislators past and present served during the Korean War.

Sens. Bill Belanger (R-Bloomington), Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids), and Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) are Korean War veterans.

Former Rep. Joe Begich from Eveleth, who served in the House from 1974 to 1992, also fought in Korea, and was ordered there the same time as Belanger. Rep. Kathy Tingelstad's (R-Andover) father, who passed away in January, also was a Korean War veteran.

Belanger spent a year in Korea, and remembers a lengthy battle in November 1950 with the Chinese army in the Chosin Reservoir.

However, Belanger was sent home in July 1951 because he was in a reserve unit. Because war hadn't been declared, reserves technically shouldn't have been there, he said.

"I don't think we were there legally," Belanger said.

Belanger was not involved in the planning of the memorial, but he did correct the list of deceased veterans by adding a name of someone he knew. He visited the memorial a few days after the dedication ceremony.

"I thought it was good," Belanger said, adding that he believes Minnesota's memorial is more authentic than the one in Washington.



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Lawmakers urged to let biotechnology drive growth

By Sarah Hallonquist



Minnesota should find more ways to accommodate the biotechnology industry in the coming years, veteran journalist Jackson Bain told an audience of about 100 lawmakers and staff Feb. 24.

Bain's speech, "Biotechnology in Minnesota — The Promise and the Challenge," was the last in this year's Capitol Forum Series, a program of lectures held at the Minnesota History Center.

Bain spoke about the issues surrounding biotechnology, an industry in which biological processes are engineered to create products such as medicines, foods, and textiles.

Biologically engineered products can range from Dolly, the famous cloned sheep, to specially designed seeds for farmers or even the finish on the denim used to make blue jeans.

Bain said that biotechnology is a rapidly growing industry, and while its gains may not be easily predictable, current products suggest it has a promising future.

"My strong recommendation is that you look at how you can attract more of it," Bain said.

Creating development-friendly environments, strengthening technical education, and supporting the biotechnology efforts already in place throughout the state are some of the ways Bain suggested policy-makers could invite more industry to Minnesota.

"If you do all of these things we're talking about, you may be creating biotechnology's next generation of products and services," he said.

Bain said Minnesota has some of the toughest controls on agricultural biotechnology testing, but it also has one of the highest numbers of testing areas in the country.

The industry's firms are often small companies that need a lot of start-up capital, and it can take up to 10 years for some of those companies to make significant profits from their patents. Even so, Bain said, biotechnology is worth investing in because of its inevitable success.

Currently, there are 114 companies in Minnesota that deal with some form of biotechnology. Thirty-five of those businesses are related to medicine and health care, and the rest are agricultural companies.

"With your resources in Minnesota, this is an economic sector that has a huge impact for the state," Bain said.



Jackson Bain, a former NBC journalist, impresses on lawmakers the importance of supporting the growing industry of biotechnology. Bain spoke as part of this year's Capitol Forum Series.

He used the example of a business in San Mateo, Calif., that left the area because of high real estate prices, strict tax and regulatory policies, and poor educational training facilities. Business leaders also reported that the area's lawmakers did not understand the needs of the biotechnology industry, which made it difficult for firms to deal with government.

"There's a lot of forecasting that has to be done by you," Bain told legislators. "You have to understand what they're doing."

Economics aside, however, biotechnology evokes both hope and fear, Bain said.

To illustrate his point, he told a story of a 16-year-old boy, John, who was dying of diabetes and had rejected two types of insulin before a doctor suggested a newly engineered form of insulin that had recently been approved by the federal government.

The boy's father agreed to travel the uncharted territory and use the new insulin. Today, John — Bain's son — is 31 years old.

But just as biotechnology does a lot of good, Bain said it has negative consequences, too.

Ethical quandaries, such as the race to map the human gene structure, create new debates on patenting biological information about humans. And those ethical dilemmas will continue as long as science keeps up its pace.

After his speech, legislators asked Bain questions on topics ranging from industrial hemp to biologically engineered farming products.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) asked why it seemed that medical advancements in biotechnology had progressed faster than agricultural ones.

Bain said that could be because food is a more familiar commodity that might not present as much of a perceived need for some people as medical technology does. He reminded the audience that people would not even drink pasteurized milk when it was first produced.

Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) said biotechnology clearly has an impact for agriculture.


"The one message is that we are in a technology age and change will be at a faster pace," Ness said.

Ness is chair of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee. He said that as a legislator, he has an opportunity to make sure that necessary technological changes go smoothly.

Bain is a former reporter for NBC News and has won two Emmy Awards for producing television documentaries. He began covering biotechnology issues in 1977 at the First National Conference on Genetic Engineering. He now heads his own communications firm, Bain and Associates, of which the Biotechnology Industry Organization is a client.

While predicting technological advancements is not always a science, Bain's message to legislators about biotechnology was to pay attention and understand.

"All you can do is draw lessons from what you see and apply them to the future," Bain said.

Further investigation of the policy dilemmas of biotechnology will be the focus of next year's Capitol Forum Series. The series are sponsored by the McKnight Foundation and Minnesota Technology, Inc. 

Where to find information

House Index Department

211 State Capitol (651) 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.

Business owner aims to make Minnesota competitive

By Jon Fure

Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea) says he feels lucky because serving in the House has turned his avocation into his vocation.



Rep. Dan Dorman

"Having something you take an interest in — politics has always been kind of a hobby for me — and all of a sudden you're doing it as a job, is like a dream come true," he said.

Part of Dorman's interest in politics comes from his other job, as owner of Hanson Tire Service in Albert Lea, which is just north of the Iowa border. Minnesota's higher taxes make it difficult for many businesses in southern Minnesota to compete with those in Iowa, South Dakota, or Wisconsin, he said.

"Part of my business is selling farm tires, and I'm not competitive five miles south of my business," he said.

Some businesses have adapted by relocating or establishing additional offices in neighboring states, thereby taking jobs away from Minnesota, Dorman said.

Dorman has worked toward solutions to those problems as a member of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce board. He said he has met with his local legislators many times in recent years to present ideas on economic development issues such as workers' compensation reform and commercial/industrial property tax reform.

That experience is especially helpful now that he sits on the other side of the desk,

Dorman said. One of his goals as a new House member is to support legislation to improve Minnesota's business climate.

Most of Dorman's efforts so far have been focused on reducing taxes. He's sponsoring a bill (HF2) that would reduce income taxes, restructure property taxes, and phase out the health care provider tax. Dorman said he is optimistic that the bill will become law, and that it will be the largest state tax cut in Minnesota's history.

As sponsor of that bill, Dorman said he's worked closely with House staff to determine the projected financial impacts of proposed tax cuts.

"If you want to take an across-the-board half-percent increase in every classification, they develop a computer report that would tell you the financial impacts in the future," he said. "You have to ask whether the state can afford to do that."

Getting the bill into its final form has involved repeating that process under different scenarios and deciding how each tax classification would change. Dorman said he has had input from other House members, staff, and lobbyists, and he has been reading detailed budget information and fiscal notes from the Department of Revenue.

Dorman also said he is the only freshman with a coach — former House member Bob Haukoos, also of Albert Lea, who is now the official doorman for the House chamber.

Dorman represents District 27A, which covers Freeborn County. He describes the district as economically and culturally diverse. Instead of a dominant employer or industry, it

has many small businesses and family farms.

"There is no 5,000-pound gorilla, so we kind of have to fend for ourselves to create jobs," he said. "We haven't enjoyed the economic boom that other parts of the state have experienced."

That could change in the near future, Dorman said, as an ethanol plant is in the planning stages for that area. Not only would the plant create new jobs, it would enhance the state's agriculture industry, he said.

Dorman hopes to help secure funding for that project and for plans to clean up pollution in Albert Lea Lake, which he believes would bring more tourism into the district.

He serves on the House Agriculture Policy, Jobs and Economic Development Policy, and Taxes committees as well as on the Property Tax Division of the Taxes Committee.

He said the day-to-day challenges of his new job haven't diminished the thrill of serving in the House.

"I'm still very proud every time I drive down the highway and see a sign that says Freeborn County," he said. "It's a lot of responsibility."

District 27A

1995 population: 32,759

Largest city: Albert Lea

County: Freeborn

Location: southern Minnesota

Top concern: "Hard working families in Minnesota deserve lower taxation. The more money we put back in their hands, the better off we will be as a state."

— Rep. Dan Dorman

Frequently called numbers

(Area code 651)

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

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

Wilkin working to deliver on tax-cutting initiatives

By Sarah Hallonquist

One election night thrill for the Wilkin family didn't have anything to do with politics.

While Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), 33, was closing in on winning the District 38A House seat, his wife, Eileen, gave birth to Rebecca, the couple's second child. Their son, John, is 21 months old.



Rep. Tim Wilkin

"We didn't even get to go to our own election night party," Wilkin said.

Wilkin and his wife are used to mixing life's celebrations with politics, however. The couple started out by getting married during his unsuccessful 1996 bid for the state Senate against incumbent Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan). In fact, the Wilkins had begun their courtship during his extensive early preparation for that race, which he lost by only 1,247 votes.

"If that had worked out, all three legislators [from District 38] would have been named Tim," he said.

At that time, Reps. Tim Commers and Tim Pawlenty, also Republicans from Eagan, held the district's seats in the House.

Although he lost that race, Wilkin said his door-knocking for the Senate campaign paid off two years later.

"That really laid a lot of groundwork that helped out this campaign," he said.

The lifelong Republican is no stranger to political campaigns, having stumped for George Bush and Dan Quayle in 1992 as state-wide chair of the Minnesota Young Republicans. In a 1993 special election, he passed out campaign fliers for Rep. Jim Rhodes

(R-St. Louis Park), who began his fourth term this year.

He also chaired the House campaign for his predecessor, Commers, in 1994. Commers stepped down in 1998 after serving three terms.

In addition, Wilkin served four years on the Dakota County Planning Commission and was vice chair of that group in 1997. That experience gave him a good flavor for how suburban and rural communities work with each other on property and development issues. He said he favors local planning that is supported by the residents and not dictated by the Metropolitan Council.

"I don't think the Legislature should be ceding authority to the Metropolitan Council," he said.

Wilkin was a member of the Burnsville Eagan Cable Commission, but stepped down because he said he thinks cable now has a number of effective competitors, compared to its previous monopoly position.

"I don't believe in extending bureaucracies beyond their useful life," he said.

That philosophy has followed him into the House, where his goals include paring down what he sees as a state government that's too big. He said he would like to see the government's ability to regulate be limited.

To fulfill his campaign promises, Wilkin is sponsoring a bill (HF5) that seeks a constitutional amendment to require a three-fifths majority in the Legislature to raise taxes. If the bill passes, voters would have to approve the proposed amendment in order to put the measure into practice.

"It doesn't prevent taxes from going up," Wilkin said. "It supports consensus."

He is also a co-sponsor of a bill that would

eliminate the motor-vehicle emissions inspection program. Emissions tests, he said, cause cynicism and tend to undermine other environmental regulations.

Another cause for Wilkin is repealing the health care provider tax used to fund the MinnesotaCare subsidized health insurance program. Wilkin said the tax only adds to the high cost of health care.

"I don't think we should be taxing sick people," he said.

Wilkin came to Minnesota straight out of college in the summer of 1988 to be an auditor for Norwest Banks. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Iowa State University, where he majored in finance. He met Eileen, a former piano teacher, in 1995.

The Freeport, Ill., native now works as an insurance underwriter for Northland Insurance Company in Mendota Heights. Outside of work and politics, he spends the majority of his time with his family. He said he's not planning an extended career in the House. He'd like to serve no more than four or five terms, and then return to the private sector.

But for right now, the soft-spoken Wilkin said he's "lovin' it" in the Legislature.

District 38A

1995 population: 37,400

Largest city: Eagan

County: Dakota

Location: Southeast metro

Top concern: "Reducing taxes and spending, while improving educational performance, are the issues of greatest concern to my district."

— Rep. Tim Wilkin

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Agriculture 297-2200
Commerce 296-4026
Corrections 642-0200
Children, Families
and Learning 582-8200
Economic Security 296-3644
Employee Relations 297-1184
Job Information 296-2616
Finance 296-5900
Health 215-5803

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 215-0500
Alcohol and Gambling
Enforcement Division 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

Bill Introductions

HF876-HF1148

Tuesday, Feb. 23

HF876—Mariani (DFL) **Family & Early Childhood** **Education Finance**

African immigrant and refugee community child care development grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF877—Wolf (R) **Jobs & Economic** **Development Policy**

Unemployment; reemployment insurance procedure modifications and technical changes provided to conform with federal requirements.

HF878—Bishop (R) **Ways & Means**

State governmental operations supplemental funding provided and money appropriated.

HF879—Knoblach (R) **Local Government &** **Metropolitan Affairs**

Local units of government regulatory relief provided.

HF880—Mulder (R) **Family & Early Childhood** **Education Finance**

Child care and early childhood education programs consolidation plan developed.

HF881—Dawkins (DFL) **Education Policy**

Ramsey County; after-school enrichment program role clarified.

HF882—Tomassoni (DFL) **K-12 Education Finance**

School district retired employee health benefits levy extended.

HF883—Nornes (R) **Family & Early Childhood** **Education Finance**

Chemical abuse prevention matching grants provided to community collaborative projects and money appropriated.

HF884—Tuma (R) **K-12 Education Finance**

Learn and earn graduation achievement program funding continued, and money appropriated.

HF885—Mares (R) **Governmental Operations &** **Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS), Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), and Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) provisions modified; and service credit pilot program established.

HF886—Erhardt (R) **Taxes**

State agency libraries sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF887—Gunther (R) **Taxes**

Electric generation peaking facilities property tax exemption provided.

HF888—Erickson (R) **K-12 Education Finance**

Multicounty, multitype library systems and basic system support grants funded; and money appropriated.

HF889—Van Dellen (R) **Commerce**

Noncommercial telephone solicitation prohibited at certain times of the day.

HF890—Abrams (R) **Taxes**

Income tax rates and marriage penalty reduced; sales, cigarettes, and liquor accelerated tax liability repealed; motor vehicle registration tax modified; agricultural assistance provided; and money appropriated.

HF891—Biernat (DFL) **Transportation Policy**

Photographic evidence used for enforcement of traffic signal violations pilot project authorized and money appropriated.

HF892—Stanek (R) **Crime Prevention**

CODEFOR; Hennepin County or Minneapolis coordinated criminal justice strategies demonstration grant program established; and money appropriated.

HF893—Dorman (R) **Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural warehouse provisions modified and clarified.

HF894—Tingelstad (R) **K-12 Education Finance**

School district facilities management funding authorized, local matches required, and money appropriated.

HF895—Tingelstad (R) **K-12 Education Finance**

School district facilities maintenance management and housekeeping procedure created.

HF896—Larsen, P. (R) **Local Government &** **Metropolitan Affairs**

County, city, and town ordinances terminating lawful land uses by amortization prohibited.

HF897—Stanek (R) **Crime Prevention**

Firearm carry permit application procedure modified, permit issuance authority granted to county sheriffs, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF898—Leppik (R) **Taxes**

Outpatient surgical center sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF899—Dawkins (DFL) **State Government Finance**

Spanish-American War corrective historical information plaque commissioned and displayed in the state Capitol; and money appropriated.

HF900—Rest (DFL) **Taxes**

Working family income tax credit percentages modified.

HF901—Huntley (DFL) **Jobs & Economic** **Development Policy**

Western Lake Superior sanitary sewer district funding for water and sewer service extension to the Fond du Lac area provided, and money appropriated.

HF902—Winter (DFL) **K-12 Education Finance**

General education formula allowance inflationary increase provided; special education, interactive television program, bus purchase levy, and graduation rule implementation funded; declining pupil aid created, and additional days repealed.

HF903—Winter (DFL) **K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 175, Westbrook, high school student entrepreneurship program appropriated money.

HF904—Folliard (DFL) **Transportation Policy**

Highway traffic noise barrier account established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF905—Westerberg (R) **Crime Prevention**

Concealing or transporting contraband via motor vehicles with special compartments provided criminal penalties, and vehicle forfeiture authorized.

HF906—Jennings (DFL) **Commerce**

Uninsured motorist recovery of non-economic detriment damages limited.

HF907—Cassell (R) **K-12 Education Finance**

School administrators recruitment program established and money appropriated.

HF908—Dawkins (DFL) **Local Government &** **Metropolitan Affairs**

County recorders authorized to require minimum deposits.

HF909—Paymar (DFL) **Transportation Policy**

Additional billboards along roads and highways prohibition expanded, and maintenance restricted.

HF910—Finseth (R) **Health & Human Services Finance**

Rural mental health services grants provided and money appropriated.

HF911—Sykora (R) **Education Policy**

School district and public school entity wage payment method clarified.

HF912—Jennings (DFL) **Health & Human Services Policy**

Medical assistance reimbursement geographic groups redefined, nursing facility rate increase negotiations authorized, and money appropriated.

HF913—Stanek (R) **Judiciary Finance**

Local law enforcement agencies provided grants for high crime area overtime officer assignments and money appropriated.

HF914—Krinkie (R) **Governmental Operations &** **Veterans Affairs Policy**

Charitable organization annual reports required to include government agency funding information.

HF915—Jennings (DFL) **Health & Human Services Finance**

Pine County; nursing home bed moratorium exception provided.

HF916—Rifenberg (R) **Health & Human Services Policy**

Houston County; nursing facility rate spend-up limit exemption created.

HF917—Knoblach (R) **Environment &** **Natural Resources Finance**

Water quality cost-benefit model developed and money appropriated.

HF918—Kielkucki (R) **Jobs & Economic** **Development Finance**

Taconite mining grant program appropriated money.

HF919—Kuisle (R)
Transportation Policy
Right of first refusal extended to railroad right-of-way property leaseholders and interest notice required.

HF920—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare program single adults and households with no children eligibility extended, health care coverage requirement exemption created, senior citizen drug program funded, and money appropriated.

HF921—Jaros (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Duluth; Aerial Lift Bridge repair and restoration provided, and money appropriated.

HF922—Solberg (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Itasca County private sale of tax-forfeited land bordering public water authorized.

HF923—Seifert, J. (R)
Education Policy
School and libraries providing Internet access required to restrict harmful material from minors, and school district Internet use policies adopted.

HF924—Luther (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) block grant excess funds transferred to the child care block grant program.

HF925—Vandevae (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Washington County sale of tax-forfeited land bordering public water authorized.

HF926—Chaudhary (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Fridley historical museum refurbishment grant provided and money appropriated.

HF927—Folliard (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Voter address records updated.

HF928—Hackbarth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Snowmobile metal traction device use on paved public trails prohibited, sticker required, and money appropriated.

HF929—Carlson (DFL)
Education Policy
School district calendar flexibility provided for construction projects.

HF930—Pelowski (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Winona County Historical Society technology upgrade grant provided and money appropriated.

HF931—Larsen, P. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local units of government cooperation and combination tax plan provided.

HF932—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Fishery administrative costs and wall-eye stocking improvements funded, and money appropriated.

HF933—Holberg (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative and congressional districts coordinated.

HF934—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Hennepin County; nursing facility medical assistance reimbursement modified.

HF935—Olson (R)
Education Policy
School bus lap and shoulder belts authorized, student training and local funds match required, levy allowed, and money appropriated.

HF936—Clark, K. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical marijuana act adopted and criminal penalties imposed.

HF937—Tunheim (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Economically disadvantaged area small business state procurement preference awards increase authorized.

HF938—Dawkins (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Nonmetered parking space posted time limit exception provided to vehicles of disabled persons.

HF939—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk highway fund expenditures, traffic fines, and forfeited bail allocated; union contractor preference prohibited; prevailing wage rate modified; and transportation project delivery task force created.

HF940—Kubly (DFL)
Taxes
Agricultural homestead first-tier property tax valuation limit increased, and state aid increased.

HF941—Kubly (DFL)
Taxes
Agricultural property homestead treatment extended.

HF942—Mariani (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) lifetime benefit limit exception provided for families with incapacitated persons, work participation support program established, and money appropriated.

HF943—Jennings (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) additional income exclusion provided.

HF944—Mariani (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) sanctions modified.

HF945—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) employment and training provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF946—Jennings (DFL)
Commerce
Financial institutions required to debit checks in sequence by number.

HF947—Howes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.

HF948—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
St. Louis County; statewide adolescent compulsive gambling prevention and education project grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF949—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Midwifery practice and licensure requirements clarified.

HF950—Daggett (R)
Commerce
Telephone sales calls regulated, remedies provided, and money appropriated.

HF951—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Area agencies on aging provided funding for support and planning services, and money appropriated.

HF952—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Health care providers authorized to designate credential verification entities.

HF953—Gleason (DFL)
Education Policy
Nonresident truant student termination from the enrollment options program provided.

HF954—Buesgens (R)
Education Policy
Substitute teacher licenses provided and probationary period consecutive year provisions modified.

HF955—McCollum (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Ramsey and Washington counties regional trail development around Silver Lake funded, and money appropriated.

HF956—McCollum (DFL)
Crime Prevention
DWI; three-time offender felony penalties imposed.

HF957—McCollum (DFL)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF958—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Employers authorized to provide workers' compensation benefits through health insurance, nursing facility 24-hour coverage contracts authorized, and money appropriated.

HF959—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Supplemental aid recipients with special needs provisions modified.

HF960—Seagren (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Human services commissioner authorized to sell surplus state land to the Bloomington housing and redevelopment authority.

HF961—Pawlenty (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Ramsey action program grant provided for the family asset program and money appropriated.

HF962—Winter (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Murray County; nursing facility medical assistance reimbursement modified.

HF963—Knoblach (R)
Civil Law
Firefighter previous employment background investigations authorized, disclosure requirements and immunity provided, and civil and criminal penalties imposed.

HF964—Bishop (R)
Civil Law
Y2K; contract and product liability damages limited, time of trial specified, and district court panel referral provided.

HF965—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota state colleges and universities (MNSCU) student hepatitis B immunization required.

HF966—Rhodes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Perspectives, Inc. transitional housing services funded and money appropriated.

HF967—Seifert, M. (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Centers of independent living appropriated money.

HF968—Tingelstad (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Plumbers required to give bond to the state and provisions modified.

HF969—Mulder (R)
Commerce
Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design abolished.

HF970—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Undyed kerosene and racing gasoline tax refund authorized.

HF971—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Rock County; private conveyance of surplus state land authorized.

HF972—McCollum (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Employee invention agreements regulated.

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HF973—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education Policy
Lola and Rudy Perpich Minnesota Center for Arts Education name changed to Perpich Center for Arts Education.

HF974—Workman (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Advantage Minnesota grant provided and money appropriated.

HF975—Ness (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Prevailing wage calculation formula provided.

HF976—Ness (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Labor and industry commissioner and data services organizations cooperation required in prevailing wage determinations.

HF977—Tunheim (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Corporate farm land ownership restrictions modified.

HF978—Harder (R)
Agriculture Policy
Agricultural water quality and quantity management initiative funded, and money appropriated.

HF979—Lindner (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.

HF980—Pugh (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle emissions inspection program repealed.

HF981—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Deer, bear, elk, and moose tag requirements modified.

HF982—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Board of Psychology enforcement provisions modified and psychological test security provided.

HF983—Entenza (DFL)
Commerce
St. Paul authorized to issue an on-sale liquor license to the Fitzgerald Theatre.

HF984—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Psychologist licensing provisions modified.

HF985—Workman (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Chanhassen tax increment financing district extended and requirements modified.

HF986—Vanderveer (R)
Commerce
Chisago Lakes township detached banking facility authorized.

HF987—Davids (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Intergovernmental advisory council for technology established, Intergovernmental Information Systems Advisory Council abolished, funds transferred, and money appropriated.

HF988—Jennings (DFL)
Commerce
Public utility commissioners advisory selection process created and ex parte communication regulated.

HF989—Mullery (DFL)
Civil Law
Uniform probate code provisions, and conservator and guardian nomination provisions modified.

HF990—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Health care purchasing alliances development grants provided to local organizations and money appropriated.

HF991—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Corporate farm land ownership restricted and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF992—Luther (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota utilization review act modified, and practice of medicine definition expanded to include certain mental health and substance abuse determinations.

HF993—Boudreau (R)
Commerce
Electrician and plumber licensure requirements exemption provided for volunteers.

HF994—Skoe (DFL)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF995—Skoe (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Upper Red Lake business loan program created for businesses affected by the decline of walleye fishing and money appropriated.

HF996—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Minnesota donor decision campaign funding provided for organ, eye, and tissue donation initiatives; and money appropriated.

HF997—Osskopp (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Public school employee health care plan study provided and money appropriated.

HF998—Nornes (R)
Crime Prevention
Camp Ripley work program eligible offender sentencing discretion provided and judges greater use of local correctional resources authorized.

HF999—Entenza (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Geographic education excellence grant program established and money appropriated.

HF1000—Nornes (R)
Taxes
Local units of government authorized to forgive deferred property tax payment interest and penalties, and payment schedule required.

HF1001—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Commodity checkoff fee refund additional options provided.

HF1002—Workman (R)
Commerce
Sign contractor voluntary registration provided.

HF1003—McElroy (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative Audit Commission and auditor powers and duties prescribed, and technical changes provided.

HF1004—Goodno (R)
Crime Prevention
DWI; maximum allowable blood alcohol level lowered for hunting, handling explosives, criminal vehicular operation, and operating a motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, or watercraft.

HF1005—Goodno (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Job skills partnership board duties expanded, health care and human services worker training and retention program established, short-term health care and human services course offering required, and money appropriated.

HF1006—Milbert (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Inver Grove Heights tax increment financing district duration extended and tax increment use specified.

HF1007—Lindner (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, year-round school/extended week or day grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1008—Huntley (DFL)
Commerce
Roth IRA exemption from court ordered garnishment, attachment, or levy provided.

HF1009—Broecker (R)
Taxes
Green acres property tax treatment extended to certain dissected agricultural property.

HF1010—Tuma (R)
Education Policy
Behavioral intervention continuing education credits required for K-12 teachers renewing their licenses.

HF1011—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Utility property tax class rate modified.

HF1012—Abrams (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Redistricting commission created to recommend legislative and congressional district boundaries, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1013—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Dark house and fish house licensure requirement exemption provided to occupied shelters left on the ice less than a day.

HF1014—Lindner (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Dayton wastewater infrastructure program grant provided, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1015—Abrams (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Election redistricting provided and money appropriated.

HF1016—Rifenberg (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 300, La Cresent-Hokah, city-county-school district administration and community education facility planning grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1017—Howes (R)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

American Indian youth prevention program grants established and money appropriated.

**HF1018—Jennings (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Commission on culture and recreation established; arts, professional sports, and University of Minnesota facilities construction and rehabilitation grants provided; bond issuance authorized; and money appropriated.

**HF1019—Bakk (DFL)
Higher Education Finance**

Vermillion Community College and Elys school district joint secondary and higher education environmental studies magnet school feasibility studied, and money appropriated.

**HF1020—Knoblach (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Census; Congress memorialized to ensure the 2000 decennial census is conducted in a fair and legal manner.

**HF1021—Erhardt (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Environment and natural resources appropriations bill.

**HF1022—Abrams (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**

Health maintenance organizations regulatory authority transferred to commissioner of commerce.

**HF1023—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**

Employer-subsidized health coverage program established.

**HF1024—Abrams (R)
Taxes**

Tax-exempt bond allocation eligibility, scoring system, income and purchase price limits, and reservation of authority provided.

HF1025—Murphy (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Carlton County nursing facility moratorium project deadline extended, medical assistance reimbursement rates modified, and money appropriated.

HF1026—Lindner (R)**Civil Law**

Housing discrimination status with regard to public assistance definition modified related to Section 8 certificates.

**HF1027—Molnau (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Waconia Ridgeview Medical Center employee privatization pension benefit accommodation provided.

HF1028—Leppik (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Rule 80; Golden Valley nursing facility medical assistance reimbursement rate modified for residential rehabilitation services.

**HF1029—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Underwater video camera use for the purpose of taking fish prohibited.

**HF1030—Seifert, M. (R)
Health & Human Services Finance**

Canby nursing facility property related per diem rate increased.

**HF1031—Broecker (R)
Crime Prevention**

County or municipal attorney authorized to prosecute domestic assault misdemeanors in Ramsey County, domestic assault and child abuse protection unit funded, and money appropriated.

**HF1032—Rest (DFL)
Judiciary Finance**

Northwest community law enforcement project in Hennepin County funded and money appropriated.

**HF1033—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention**

Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (POST) new part-time peace officer license issuance prohibited, training course completion required for license renewal, agency employment caps provided, and money appropriated.

**HF1034—Abrams (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**

Health care liability act adopted, health care plan coverage and treatment classification regulated, and remedies provided.

**HF1035—Larsen, P. (R)
Civil Law**

Temporary restraining summons required to include alternative dispute resolution process notice.

HF1036—Seifert, M. (R)**Agriculture & Rural Development Finance**

Agricultural education expansion feasibility studied by Southwest State University and money appropriated.

**HF1037—Holberg (R)
Civil Law**

Revisor's bill correcting erroneous, ambiguous, and omitted text and obsolete references; and making miscellaneous technical corrections.

HF1038—Boudreau (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Employment and training data classification provisions modified.

HF1039—Rostberg (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

State health care program language interpreter services coverage provided.

HF1040—Trimble (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Minnesota Technology, Inc.; Minnesota council for quality grant provided, and money appropriated.

**HF1041—Gleason (DFL)
Commerce**

ATM; electronic financial terminal surcharges regulated.

HF1042—Finseth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Red Lake County authorized to privately sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

**HF1043—Haake (R)
Crime Prevention**

DNA; sex offenders required to give biological specimens for analysis upon arrival at a correctional facility.

**HF1044—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Cass County authorized to privately sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF1045—Stang (R)**Taxes**

Social security individual state income tax exemption provided.

**HF1046—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy**

Commercial motor vehicle operator out-of-service order violator civil penalties and disqualifications imposed, and penalty proceeds allocated.

HF1047—Wejcman (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Anorexia; medical assistance coverage of anorexics authorized.

HF1048—Westerberg (R)**Crime Prevention**

Sex offender release notification expanded to include additional county attorneys.

HF1049—Ozment (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County administrative penalty order issuance authority sunset repealed.

HF1050—Gunther (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Rural policy and development center base funding continued, and money appropriated.

HF1051—Gunther (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Employment and training program information collected by the commissioner of economic security.

HF1052—Molnau (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural crop security interests regulated and collateral treatment modified.

**HF1053—Opatz (DFL)
Transportation Policy**

Disability parking regulatory provisions modified, certain vehicle registration fee credits abolished, and local ordinances regulating long-term parking authorized.

**HF1054—Rostberg (R)
Crime Prevention**

Local correctional fee collection provided.

**HF1055—Van Dellen (R)
Crime Prevention**

Methamphetamine crime provisions expanded, booby trap criminal penalties imposed, child neglect and endangerment conviction provisions clarified and consecutive sentencing authorized, and money appropriated.

**HF1056—Dawkins (DFL)
Civil Law**

Child support determination to include mother's lost wages as reasonable expenses of pregnancy and confinement.

**HF1057—Bakk (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Voluntary service credit purchase in the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) and first-class city teachers retirement fund authorized.

**HF1058—Reuter (R)
Education Policy**

Business, trade, and correspondence schools legislative review required; and training firms operation authorized.

HF1059—Dorman (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Public defense employee prior service credit purchase in the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) authorized.

HF1060—Osskopp (R)
Crime Prevention
Second-degree murder scope expanded to include repeat criminal vehicular homicide offenders.

HF1061—Boudreau (R)
Taxes
Income tax credit provided to employers providing hepatitis A immunizations to employees.

HF1062—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Lewis and Clark rural water system joint powers board grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1063—Paymar (DFL)
Taxes
Senior citizen's property tax deferral program maximum allowable household income increased.

HF1064—Hackbarth (R)
Taxes
Manufactured home parks property tax class rate modified, and homestead and agricultural credit aid adjustment provided.

HF1065—Mulder (R)
Transportation Policy
New Life Treatment Center directional signs erected along Pipestone County state-aid highway No. 18.

HF1066—Seifert, M. (R)
Commerce
Township mutual insurance company territories of operation regulated.

HF1067—Fuller (R)
Crime Prevention
Orders for protection service short form notification authorized, domestic assault crime sentences modified, cash bail increased, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF1068—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Juvenile out-of-home placement requirements and work groups established, and rule required.

HF1069—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Koochiching County authorized to exercise power of eminent domain for trust fund land acquisition.

HF1070—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Resident lifetime game and fish licenses provided, trust fund established, fees imposed, and report required.

HF1071—Rifenberg (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Persons with developmental disabilities crisis intervention project carryforward authorized.

HF1072—Dawkins (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Army school; President and Congress memorialized to close the United States Army School of the Americas located at Fort Benning, Georgia.

HF1073—Dawkins (DFL)
Commerce
Fire safety sprinkler installation in existing high-rise buildings required.

HF1074—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Volunteer firefighter relief association service pension maximums increased.

HF1075—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Volunteer firefighter deferred service pension provisions modified.

HF1076—Rifenberg (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Volunteer firefighter supplemental retirement benefit maximum increased.

HF1077—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis employees retirement fund death-while-active survivor, and disability and long-service survivor provisions clarified and modified.

HF1078—Hasskamp (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Economic development authority multi-year revenue bond levy pledges authorized.

HF1079—Paulsen (R)
Commerce
Tour boat liquor license season extended.

HF1080—Boudreau (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Rice County correctional employees public employees police and fire plan coverage ratified.

HF1081—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Possessing and disseminating pornographic work depicting minors criminal penalties provided, and computer-generated or altered images included in pornographic work definition.

HF1082—Clark, K. (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Native American women re-entry pilot grant program established and money appropriated.

HF1083—Swenson (R)
Agriculture Policy
Crop or revenue insurance assistance, and feedlot manure processing and odor control technology development assistance provided; and money appropriated.

HF1084—Davids (R)
Agriculture Policy
Crop owners compensated for crop damage and destruction caused by deer, and money appropriated.

HF1085—Davids (R)
Agriculture Policy
Land owners and occupiers authorized to take one deer causing damage per year.

HF1086—Reuter (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
800 Megahertz radio purchase authority cancelled.

HF1087—Harder (R)
Taxes
Farmer income averaging authorized for income tax purposes.

HF1088—Westfall (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
University of Minnesota crop disease research funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1089—Rifenberg (R)
Taxes
Agricultural property debt service and referendum levy property tax credit provided, and money appropriated.

HF1090—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Probation officer caseload reduction program grants provided and money appropriated.

HF1091—Westrom (R)
Agriculture Policy
Minnesota Marketplace grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1092—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lottery ticket in-lieu tax deposit in the game and fish fund provided.

HF1093—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Koochiching County tax-forfeited land conveyance authorized.

HF1094—McElroy (R)
Commerce
Intangible property definition provided relating to unclaimed property.

HF1095—Tingelstad (R)
Transportation Policy
Authorized newspaper delivery vehicles allowed to operate on left half of roadway under certain circumstances.

HF1096—Seifert, M. (R)
Higher Education Finance
Assigned family responsibility definition modified relating to student grants-in-aid, and grant stipends prorated for part-time students.

HF1097—Kuisle (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Municipal bid minimum dollar amount increased for public bid solicitation.

HF1098—Van Dellen (R)
Civil Law
Uniform statutory rule against perpetuities amended relating to trusts.

HF1099—Kuisle (R)
Taxes
Vehicles used by interstate carriers exempted from sales tax.

HF1100—Sykora (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Micro-enterprise technical assistance requirements modified, and money appropriated.

HF1101—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Owner notification required for drainage surveys, and petition signature requirement increased.

HF1102—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Certain hospitals and clinics authorized to bill county for services provided to a resident.

HF1103—Goodno (R)
Higher Education Finance
Moorhead State University capital improvements provided, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.

HF1104—Pugh (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Special School District No. 6, South St. Paul, full-day kindergarten program grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1105—Larsen, P. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Sexually transmitted infections prevention and treatment grants, and HIV and substance use prevention grants created; HIV case management medical assistance coverage provided; and money appropriated.

HF1106—Larsen, P. (R)**Commerce**

Insurance underwriters limited in use of health information secured as part of HIV vaccine research.

HF1107—Entenza (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

HIV education training sites provided, and money appropriated.

HF1108—Gunter (R)**Commerce**

Lending limits on forward contracts sale of grain provided.

HF1109—Munger (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Fishing guide license required on St. Louis river estuary.

HF1110—Munger (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Game fish health and residues research program implemented and extended to include lakes and rivers and toxic loadings to Lake Superior, and money appropriated.

HF1111—McGuire (DFL)**Taxes**

Alternative property tax refund formula based on percentage of household income provided.

HF1112—Biernat (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Juvenile court jurisdiction over habitual truants extended to age 18.

HF1113—McGuire (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Drivers' license issuance refusal prohibited for licensees or applicants wearing bioptic lenses.

HF1114—Tomassoni (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 707, Nett Lake, provided grants for insurance premiums, unemployment compensation, maintenance costs, and a media specialist.

HF1115—Haas (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Charity care equity fund established providing health care services to certain low-income or uninsured persons, and money appropriated.

HF1116—Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

City of Duluth appropriated money for a family practice residency program for northeastern Minnesota.

HF1117—Seagren (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

K-12 education bill providing funding for general education, special programs, lifework development, facilities and technology, education excellence, nutrition, libraries, prevention, and lifelong learning.

HF1118—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Criminal and juvenile justice task force membership increased, funding requests reviewed by task force, grants provided to develop integrated criminal justice information systems, and money appropriated.

HF1119—Osskopp (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing assistants required to comply with educational requirements, and competency evaluations required.

HF1120—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Trespassing on railroad tracks provided criminal penalties.

HF1121—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Grants provided to nonprofit community dental clinics, dental hygienists permitted to perform certain services with limited supervision, medical assistance reimbursement rate increased for certain dentists, and money appropriated.

HF1122—Gray (DFL)**Civil Law**

Mediated settlement agreements under the Minnesota civil mediation act considered binding when all parties are represented by counsel.

HF1123—McCollum (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

St. Paul flood mitigation holding pond grant provided.

HF1124—Smith (R)**Civil Law**

Bleacher safety requirements provided, penalties provided, and money appropriated.

HF1125—McGuire (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Local correctional agencies authorized to impose local correctional fees on offenders.

HF1126—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Date restrictions removed on definitions relating to day care licensing.

HF1127—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Noncertified boarding care homes provisions, Medicaid reimbursements, and client records for assisted living home care providers modified.

HF1128—Carruthers (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Definition of day provided for purposes of incarceration in a county jail or workhouse.

HF1129—Carruthers (DFL)**Education Policy**

School boards required to allow home school students to fully participate in extracurricular activities.

HF1130—Hackbarth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area expanded, advisory committee expanded, management plan provided, and money appropriated.

HF1131—Broecker (R)**Civil Law**

Tax collection and payment process for action revised.

HF1132—Broecker (R)**Civil Law**

Duplicate filing of documents eliminated relating to delinquent real estate taxes, and court administrator governing laws updated.

HF1133—Goodno (R)**Taxes**

Commissioner of revenue authorized to waive limitations on border city tax reduction amounts.

HF1134—McGuire (DFL)**Civil Law**

Access to data on employees reporting violations of the law clarified and modified.

HF1135—McGuire (DFL)**Civil Law**

Government data on elected officials considered public information.

HF1136—Carlson (DFL)**Education Policy**

Higher education income tax credit provided.

HF1137—Greiling (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Special education reciprocity agreements developed, special education funding provided, state revenue source provided for court-placed unreimbursed tuition, and money appropriated.

HF1138—Kuisle (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Property tax equity provided for school districts, and money appropriated.

HF1139—Mulder (R)**Crime Prevention**

Sale of tobacco and tobacco-related devices prohibited to persons under 21 years of age, and criminal penalties provided.

HF1140—Leighton (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

License fees on coin and currency activated amusement machines limited.

HF1141—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Physical examinations required for certain high school athletes, and practice of medicine definition modified.

HF1142—Rostberg (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Animal cruelty provisions modified, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF1143—Goodno (R)**Taxes**

Additional allocation for certain border city enterprise zones authorized.

HF1144—Lindner (R)**Civil Law**

Public nuisance definition and provisions modified,

HF1145—Clark, K. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Funding provided for education employers about HIV/AIDS in the workplace, housing programs for individuals with HIV/AIDS coordinated, and money appropriated.

HF1146—Howes (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Indian Child Welfare Defense Corporation provided grants to promote Indian Child Welfare Act compliance.

HF1147—Greiling (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Medical assistance reimbursement for special education services provisions modified.

HF1148—Buesgens (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Net proceeds received from sale or rental of forfeited lands available for general purposes.

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Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.

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MONDAY, March 1

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF272 (Abrams) State partisan primary name changed to state party nominating election; date changed; party support of candidate required prior to ballot listing; and procedures, deadlines, and terms modified.

HF122 (Rukavina) Elective office age eligibility lowered.

(Meeting continued at 2:30 p.m.)

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Gov. Ventura's budget book presentation by Department of Health.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Gov. Ventura's recommendation for sunset of certain Department of Trade and Economic Development incentive grants: Hennepin and Ramsey County CDC's; Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans; Advantage Minnesota; city and district agricultural societies; community development corporations; community resources.

HF878, Sec. 5 (Bishop) Department of Economic Security, State Services for the Blind deficiency appropriation.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Presentations by Minnesota Highway Safety Center Director Prof. John Palmer and Department of Transportation Office of Alternative Transportation Financing Director Adeel Lari.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF650 (Hackbarth) Shooting range servitudes provided and operator liability limited. HF310 (Knoblach) Job reference information disclosure protection provided.

HF243 (Dawkins) Public building code violations data classification provided.

HF680 (Jaros) Income calculation modified in cases of split physical custody.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources budget overview continued.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Higher Education Services Office budget presentation by Dr. Robert Poch.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: Deficiency bill presentation by Mark Levinger, attorney general's office.

HF582 (Kielkucki) School finance system provided increased equity, general education formula allowance increased, and money appropriated.

HF269 (Ness) General education revenue equity aid created and money appropriated.

Canceled

Property Tax Division/ TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: Canceled.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Head Start presentation by Connie Greer, Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Community and systems collaboration accounts presentations by Joyce Krupey, Department of Children, Families and Learning.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF196 (Anderson, B.) Drainage systems transfer of access easements to storm sewer improvement districts authorized.

HF399 (Kielkucki) Home rule charter and statutory cities authorized to establish sidewalk utilities.

HF742 (Howes) Right to practice forestry; local government authority limited and irrebuttal presumption created.

HF864 (Howes) Hubbard County sheriff part-time peace officer positions authorized.

HF875 (Bakk) Small business government contract bid preference limited to two years.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

30 minutes after session

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF441 (Knoblach) Campaign finance provisions modified.

TUESDAY, March 2

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF610 (Tingelstad) State safe drinking water act public water supply definition modified. HF529 (Anderson, I.) Improving state employee access to medical claims.

HF746 (Stang) Health maintenance organization mental health provider geographic accessibility requirements modified.

HF598 (McCollum) Physician assistants and supervising physicians provided immunity from civil liability for rendering care in disasters.

HF615 (Bradley) Nursing facility provider training and education program established, and money appropriated.

HF636 (Paymar) Tobacco manufacturers required to report hazardous substances to assist in local ordinance enforcement.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF689 (Lindner) Payment of wages upon discharge provisions modified.

HF649 (Rostberg) Persons with mental illness employment support services and programs standards established, and money appropriated. Final affordable housing presentations by Pat Gustafson, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; Rosemarie Zipoy and Barb Tomalla, Interfaith Action Organization.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HF633 (Seagren) Cornerstone Advocacy Services, Inc. battered women shelter services grant provided and money appropriated.

HF294 (Broecker) Extraordinary local disaster expense aid provided and money appropriated. HF570 (Clark, K.) Intensive case management services provided for prostituted individuals and money appropriated.

Department of Public Safety appropriation for state match for disaster relief payments (addition

to appropriation in Minn. Laws 1997, ch. 239, art. 1, sec. 7, subd. 2).
Tax Court budget presentation.
Department of Corrections budget presentation.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman
Agenda: Motorcycle Day.
HF766 (Broecker) Motorcycle display of a blue light as part of the rear brake light authorized.
HF858 (Workman) Motorcycle helmet use evidence admissibility prohibited in cases involving the operation of a motor vehicle.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda: Budget presentations by State Board of Investment and governor's office.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HFXXXX (Goodno) Lowering per se level for alcohol impairment offenses from .10 to .08.
HF621 (Fuller) Arson definition expanded to include flammable and combustible gas, first degree arson plea agreements prohibited involving sprinklers, and juvenile fireball ignition penalties provided.
HF172 (Skoglund) Substantial bodily harm definition expanded.
HF245 (Murphy) Furnishing alcohol to a person under age 21 provided increased penalties if, as a result of intoxication, the person causes or suffers death or great bodily harm.
HF261 (Entenza) Furnishing alcohol to person under age 21 provided increased penalties if, as a result of intoxication, the person causes or suffers death or great bodily harm.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares
Agenda: HF709 (Cassell) Educational facility construction and remodeling prevailing wage provision repealed.
HF605 (Tuma) Mourning dove hunting season authorized, and stamps and impact report required.
HF321 (Lindner) All school-age children authorized to participate in resident school district sponsored extracurricular activities.
HF911 (Sykora) School district and public school entity wage payment method clarified.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: HF513 (Mares) Ramsey and Washington counties regional trail land acquisition and development around White Bear Lake provided, and money appropriated.
HF699 (Gunter) Blue Earth River basin initiative supported and money appropriated.
HF645 (Tingelstad) Water supply and wastewater treatment operator certification requirements federal conformity provided, and advisory council expiration date eliminated.
HF653 (Osskopp) Legal firearm requirements for taking big game modified.

HF55 (Tomassoni) Trained force of firefighters maintained by the commissioner of natural resources, and public employee definition expanded.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: To be announced.

11:30 a.m.

The House meets in session.

12 noon

State of the State Address.

**30 minutes after
State of the State Address**

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: HF838 (Harder) Soybean diseases and genetics additional research provided, and money appropriated.
HF755 (Wenzel) Ethanol development fund balance retained and additional loan provided.
HF155 (Seifert, M.) Passing on the Farm Center appropriated money.

12:30 p.m. or immediately following State of the State Address

*****Canceled*****

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach
Agenda: Canceled.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gregory M. Davids
Agenda: HF48 (Wolf) Performance-based gas purchasing plans sunset abolished.
HF812 (Wolf) Legislative Electric Energy Task Force house chairs modified.
HF700 (Davids) Fire protection notification required in contracts for the sale of newly constructed residential dwellings.
HF62 (Rukavina) Automobile insurance nonrenewals regulated relating to physical damage portion of policies.
HF564 (Ozment) Automatic landscape irrigation system rain checks required.
HF595 (Holsten) Petrofund reimbursement reductions standard of proof provided, above-ground storage tank upgrade or closure reimbursed, and contaminated land cleanup regulated.

2:30 p.m.

Subcommittee on Land/ ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Osskopp
Agenda: HF191 (Rifenberg) Houston County surplus state land sale authorized.
HF195 (Howes) Hubbard County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public waters.
HF276 (Leighton) Mower County tax-forfeited land bordering public water sale authorized.
HF280 (Schumacher) Sherburne County tax-

forfeited land bordering public water conveyance authorized.

HF843 (Anderson, B.) Sherburne County authorized to convey tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF285 (Haake) Ramsey County tax-forfeited land conveyance authorized.

HF286 (Cassell) Douglas County tax-forfeited land bordering public water sale authorized.

HF306 (Workman) Hennepin County tax-forfeited land bordering public water or wetlands conveyance authorized.

HF368 (Reuter) Steele County land conveyances authorized in connection with a state land transfer.

HF373 (Ozment) Goodhue County private sales of county land authorized.

HF398 (Howes) Hubbard County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF421 (Haas) Hennepin County authorized to convey tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF502 (Osskopp) Wabasha County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF567 (Hackbarth) Anoka County authorized to convey or sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water or wetlands.

3 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF670 (Goodno) Medical assistance eligibility expanded to include employed persons with disabilities.
HF499 (Seifert, J.) Health care provider reimbursement and nonadministrative staff pay increased, and money appropriated.
HF383 (Goodno) Nursing home employee compensation enhancement provided and money appropriated.
HF345 (Bradley) Home and community-based waived services for persons with mental retardation waiting list eliminated, unspent resources reallocated, county partnerships required, reserve account authorized, and money appropriated.

3:45 p.m.

Child Care Workgroup/ FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

400N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Child care issues.

WEDNESDAY, March 3

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: HF879 (Knoblach) Providing for regulatory relief for local units of government.
HF801 (Knoblach) Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco not considered a state agency, and report required.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: Gov. Ventura's budget book presentation by Department of Human Services.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Gov. Ventura's recommendation for sunset of certain Department of Trade and Economic Development incentive grants; St. Paul Rehabilitation Center; Microenterprise - Technical Assistance; Women Venture; MEDA; and Rural Policy and Development Center.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF878 (Bishop) Governor's deficiency bill.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF90 (Sviggum) Joint and several liability apportionment regulated.
HF541 (Stanek) Tort liability relief provided to 911 dispatchers giving prearrival medical advice.
HF232 (Bishop) Petit juries provided in certain civil and criminal cases.
HF351 (Bishop) Court taxation of parties in a civil action for juror hardship expenses authorized.

HF836 (Goodno) Business corporations regulated and uniform partnership act conforming changes provided.
HF377 (Goodno) Abortion notification data reporting required and civil penalties imposed.
HFXXXX (Broecker) Eliminating filing of duplicate documents; updating the law governing court administrators.
HFXXXX (Broecker) Revising the process for action for payment collection of taxes.
HFXXXX (Smith) Providing for the withholding of conciliation court judgements from tax refunds.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources budget overview continued.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Higher Education Services Office presentation by Dr. Robert Poch.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF130 (Finseth) Independent school district nos. 2854, Ada-Borup; 2176 Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; 846, Breckenridge; and 595, East Grand Forks provided declining pupil unit aid.
HF315 (Tomassoni) School district declining pupil unit aid created, definition modified, and money appropriated.
HF485 (Tomassoni) School district declining pupil unit aid established and money appropriated.
HF754 (Tomassoni) Range association of municipalities and schools declining enrollment grant provided, and money appropriated.

Property Tax Division/ TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: To be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: HF678 (Davids) Crop and revenue insurance assistance, agricultural property tax relief and assistance, feedlot manure processing and odor control technology development assistance, and right-to-harvest provided; and money appropriated.
HF487 (Storm) Foreign ownership of agricultural land used for poultry production allowed.
HF479 (Westrom) Agricultural producer contract advisory task force established; livestock, agricultural commodity, and specialty crop contracts studied; and money appropriated.
HF816 (Peterson) Feedlot and manure management advisory committee composition modified.

FAMILY & EARLY

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Adult Basic Education. Self-sufficiency accounts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF849 (Haake) Minor and intermediate use airports defined for metro expansion and upgrade purposes, and reliever airport sound abatement council established.
HF896 (Larsen, P.) Precluding the termination of lawful land uses by amortization.
HF608 (Rukavina) Municipal unincorporated land annexation procedures and criteria provided. Additional bills to be announced.

Subcommittee on Regulated Industries/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: Low income energy issues presentation by Energy Cents Coalition.
HF358 (Wolf) Coin-operated and public pay telephones deregulated, and telecommunication provider anticompetitive activity administrative penalties assessed.

2:30 p.m.

Subcommittee on Land/ ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Osskopp

Agenda: HF275 (Stang) Stearns County tax-forfeited land bordering public water sale authorized.
HF354 (Solberg) Itasca County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public waters.
HF433 (Howes) Cass County authorized to exchange and sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.
HF852 (Anderson, I.) Itasca County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.
HF922 (Solberg) Tax-forfeited land in Itasca County.

Subcommittee on Liquor/ COMMERCE

Room to be announced
Chr. Rep. Erik Paulsen

Agenda: Mark-up of omnibus liquor bill.
HFXXXX (Paulsen) Extending tour boat liquor license season.
HF32 (Anderson, I.) International Falls authorized to issue a temporary on-sale liquor license.
HF153 (Seifert, M.) Marshall authorized to issue additional on-sale liquor licenses.
HF314 (Entenza) St. Paul authorized to issue temporary liquor licenses to Macalester College.
HF430 (Kahn) St. Paul authorized to issue a temporary license to sell beer on State Capitol grounds in connection with the Twin Cities Marathon.
HF439 (Orfield) Minneapolis authorized to issue an on-sale liquor license to Dudley Riggs Theatre.
HF496 (Hilty) Farm winery sales regulations modified.
HF603 (Murphy) Proctor authorized to issue an additional on-sale liquor license.

3:30 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Tobacco prevention discussion.

4 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: HF678 (Davids) Crop and revenue insurance assistance, agricultural property tax relief and assistance, feedlot manure processing and odor control technology development assistance, and right-to-harvest provided; and money appropriated.
HF487 (Storm) Foreign ownership of agricultural land used for poultry production allowed.
HF479 (Westrom) Agricultural producer contract advisory task force established; livestock, agricultural commodity, and specialty crop contracts studied; and money appropriated.
HF816 (Peterson) Feedlot and manure management advisory committee composition modified.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: Bills to be announced.

6 p.m.

Subcommittee on Health Care Directives/ HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lynda Boudreau

Agenda: HF408 (Goodno) Practice of pharmacy definition modified and patient counseling defined.

6:30 p.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: State Services for the Blind program.

THURSDAY, March 4

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF203 (Greenfield) Medical education and research endowment fund, children's endowment fund, and tobacco prevention endowment fund created; and money appropriated.

HF223 (Leppik) Tobacco prevention board and endowment fund created, and money appropriated.

HF719 (Seifert, J.) Tobacco; Congress memorialized to enact legislation prohibiting federal recoupment of state tobacco settlement funds.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF872 (Holsten) Building and construction contacts regulated, and environmental liability indemnification enforceability provided.

HF792 (Chaudhary) Rental housing application disclosure requirements and penalties provided, and penalties prescribed for providing false information on rental applications.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HF542 (Bishop) Number of district court judges increased.

Department of Corrections budget presentation continued.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF698 (Workman) Major transportation projects commission established and report required.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Deficiency request presentation, secretary of state's office.

Department of Revenue budget presentation.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF665 (Wenzel) Marijuana; possession or sale of small amounts provided increased criminal penalties.

HF741 (Knoblach) Inmate bloodborne pathogen testing procedures created, safeguards provided, and penalties imposed.

HF839 (Pawlenty) Defense of dwelling clarified related to use of deadly force, and duty to retreat in self-defense situations limited.

HF70 (Daggett) Law enforcement agencies authorized to sell forfeited firearms, ammunition, and accessories to eligible persons.

HF763 (Smith) Theft crimes to include tenant issuance of dishonored check to landlord for rent.

HF868 (Hackbarth) Crimes constituting theft

modified to include situations involving rental personal property or equipment.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: HF333 (Buesgens) Board of educational administration established and money appropriated.

HF336 (Leppik) State High School League and governing board provisions modified.

HF648 (Kielkucki) State High School League provisions modified.

HF219 (Wagenius) Staff development grants established to ensure reading ability by the end of second grade, and money appropriated.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HFXXXX (Howes) Modifying harmful exotic species provisions.

HFXXXX (Vandeveer) State park boundary bill.

HF865 (Bakk) Combined firearm and archery antlered deer license created, and the taking of one by each method authorized.

TAXES

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and agriculture education.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: HF18 (Anderson, I.) School district bond sale limitations removed for certain outstanding capital loans.

Presentation by Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources regarding their coordination bonding.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Gregory M. Davids

Agenda: HF727 (Davids) Real property loans, private mortgage insurance (PMI), and lending practices regulated; prepayment penalties prohibited; escrow account interest required; and mortgage originators and servicers net worth requirements repealed.

HF744 (Haas) Motor vehicle retail installment sales regulated and contract uniformity prescribed.

HF111 (Rest) Homeowner's insurance policy nonrenewals regulated, and automobile and homeowner's insurance discriminatory practices prohibited.

HF747 (McElroy) Mandatory dram shop liability insurance minimum coverage increased.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, March 5

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF853 (Rostberg) Fire sprinklers required in newly constructed state-owned buildings, fire suppression system review and inspection plan responsibilities clarified, and approval requirements provided.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Governor's budget book presentation, Department of Human Services.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Gov. Ventura's recommendation for sunset of certain Minnesota Technology, Inc. incentive grants: Natural Resources Research Institute; Minnesota Council for Quality; Minnesota Cold Weather Resource Center; Minnesota Project Innovation, Inc.; and Minnesota Inventors Congress.

9 a.m.

Joint CIVIL LAW/ CRIME PREVENTION

118 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Steve Smith,

Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Approval of Feb. 26 meeting minutes. Data privacy.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: To be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources budget overview continued.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: To be announced.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF519 (Sykora) School district cost of living index created, general education formula allowance modified, and money appropriated. HF493 (Greiling) School district teacher training and experience revenue restored, and money appropriated.

HF752 (Tomassoni) School district supplemental revenue reduction provided.

TAXES

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

1999 House Membership Statistics

71 Republican members
63 DFL members
99 men
35 women
20 DFL women
15 Republican women
21 newly elected members*
1 newly elected member previously served in the House
14 newly elected Republican members
7 newly elected DFL members
15.7 percent of House members did not serve last session
16 newly elected members are men
5 newly elected members are women
23.8 percent of newly elected members are women
26.1 percent of all House members are women
94.9 percent of incumbents were re-elected
0 Republican incumbents lost
6 DFL incumbents lost
15 seats were open
6 uncontested House races
0 uncontested races in DFL-held districts

New House Republican members

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Jim Abeler | 49A |
| Mark Buesgens | 35B |
| George Cassell | 10B |
| Dan Dorman | 27A |
| Doug Fuller | 4A |
| Chris Gerlach | 36A |
| Barb Haake | 52B |
| Tom Hackbarth | 50A |
| Mary Liz Holberg | 37B |
| Larry Howes | 4B |
| Jim Seifert | 57A |
| Julie Storm | 24B |
| Andy Westerberg | 51A |
| Tim Wilkin | 38A |

New House DFL members

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Mark S. Gleason | 63B |
| Gregory Gray | 58B |
| Margaret Anderson Kelliher | 60A |
| Dan Larson | 40A |
| Ann Lenczewski | 40B |
| Tim Mahoney | 67A |
| Rod Skoe | 2B |

* Count includes Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) who was elected in 1994 to one term in the House.



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1298

Speaker of the House: Steve Sviggum
Majority Leader: Tim Pawlenty
Minority Leader: Thomas W. Pugh

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota's students

| | |
|--|------|
| Percent of Minnesota eighth-graders that received passing scores (at least 75 percent) on basic skills reading test in 1998 | 68 |
| Percent of African-American eighth-graders that passed | 32 |
| Percent of American Indian eighth-graders that passed | 38 |
| Percent of Asian-American eighth-graders that passed | 48 |
| Percent of Hispanic eighth-graders that passed | 39 |
| Percent of eighth-graders that received passing scores (at least 75 percent) on basic skills math test in 1998 | 71 |
| Percent of African-American eighth-graders that passed | 26 |
| Percent of American Indian eighth-graders that passed | 39 |
| Percent of Asian-American eighth-graders that passed | 53 |
| Percent of Hispanic eighth-graders that passed | 38 |
| Percent of eighth-graders that received passing scores (at least 75 percent) on basic skills reading test in 1997 | 59 |
| On math test | 70 |
| Percent of eighth-graders that received passing scores (at least 70 percent) on basic skills reading test in 1996 | 53 |
| On math test | 69 |
| Percent of Minnesota eighth-graders in 1994 that dropped out of school by 1998 | 11 |
| Percent of African-Americans that dropped out | 40 |
| Percent of American Indians that dropped out | 38 |
| Percent of Asian-Americans that dropped out | 18 |
| Percent of Hispanics that dropped out | 38 |
| Number of states that had a lower high school dropout rate than Minnesota in 1995 | 1 |
| Percent of Minnesota ninth-graders that said they had used tobacco within the past 30 days in 1998 | 30.4 |
| In 1995 | 31 |
| Percent of Minnesota ninth-graders that said they had used alcohol in past 12 months in 1998 | 54 |
| In 1995 | 51 |
| Percent of Minnesota ninth-graders that said they had used marijuana in past 12 months in 1998 | 24.1 |
| In 1995 | 21.4 |
| Percent of male Minnesota ninth-graders that said they do not feel safe in school in 1998 | 11 |
| In 1995 | 13 |

Sources: 1999 Agency Performance Report, 1999, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning; Minnesota Milestones 1998: Measures that Matter, 1998, Minnesota Planning; State and Local Sourcebook 1999, 1999, Governing magazine.

For more information



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